

Triennial Torah Study – 3rd Year 21/07/2012



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Num 11	Job 30-32	Hebrews 12-13
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Numbers Chapter 11

The people were setting out for the Promised Land with high hopes and expectations. It is interesting to compare this episode with the departure of the Israelites from their great deliverance from Egypt at the Red Sea. Only three days' journey into the wilderness from that point, the people turned to murmuring against God for lack of water (Exodus 15:22-24). And here, too, it is only three days from leaving Mount Sinai (Numbers 10:33) that the people again turn to complaining (11:1-3).

Again we see just how wrong it is to be ungrateful. After all God had done for them, they griped and complained. To teach them how sorely displeased He was, God struck the outskirts of the camp with fire, possibly lightning, as a lesson to those who would be unappreciative. That lesson was meant for us today as well, for God hasn't changed the way He views things like ingratitude and rebellion. But despite the warning, ingratitude increased—to the point of the people weeping for what they didn't have (thus showing little regard for the extent to which God had incredibly blessed them). Amazingly, they even said they wanted to be back in Egypt, where they had been whipped and beaten as slave laborers!

The insanely needless moaning and crying takes its toll on Moses. Not only is he helpless to deal with the situation himself, but the people hold him personally responsible for the predicament they are in. It all gets to be more than Moses can deal with, so he pleads to God. He didn't father all these people; he doesn't have food for them; why does he have all the responsibility? Just to get a feel for the burden Moses thought he was carrying, consider the size of this encampment of people. For Moses to give every Israelite a quarter-pounder, just one hamburger each, it would have required 375 tons of fresh ground meat! Moses asked to be put out of his misery.

Indeed, Moses was so upset that he was actually blaming God of evildoing. The King James and New King James Versions, however, give only a hint of this—in verse 11, where Moses asks God, "Why have you afflicted your servant?," and in the first words of verse 15, "If you treat me like this...." This shows that Moses considered God responsible for His plight but not that Moses

actually thought God morally wrong because of it. Yet of great interest in this regard are the last words of Moses in verse 15—"my wretchedness." This should literally be translated "my evil" (J.P. Green, *The Interlinear Bible*). Yet Moses is certainly not confessing His own faults in this passage. Rather, what he must be saying is, "the evil of my situation" or "the evil that has come upon me," which, in either case, by direct implication, means "the evil that You [God] are doing to me." To see this more clearly, notice how *The New English Bible* translates verse 15: "But if I have won thy favor, let me suffer this trouble at thy hands no longer." And even more poignantly, notice the same verse in the *Good News Bible*: "If you are going to treat me like this, have pity on me and kill me, so that I won't have to endure your cruelty any longer." So Moses was actually accusing God of evil—of deliberate cruelty.

Yet God, who knows the heart, was merciful to Moses. Remember always that God has promised that He will put no burden on us we can't bear (compare 1 Corinthians 10:13). In His lovingkindness, God responded to Moses' plea by calling for the appointment of 70 elders to help carry the burden of the people—men who would be helped by God's Holy Spirit.

Nevertheless, God was sorely displeased with the ungrateful attitude of the people who were saying it was better back in Egypt. Did they consider it a small thing that God was giving them manna enough for all their needs? Evidently. And rather than be content with that—or at least pray to God to supply the desires of their hearts—the people just moaned and bellyached for the meat they didn't have. Moses had doubted whether it was possible to find enough meat for the whole congregation. To carry the previous analogy a little further, two Big Macs a day, for a month, would come to more than 30,000 tons of meat altogether! We can't imagine that much meat—and neither could Moses. Are there that many fish in the sea? Yet God was able to provide—and did. But angered by the voracious lust of such rebellious ingrates, God smote the people with a great plague, killing many. The place where this happened, now named Kibroth Hataavah or "Graves of Lust," was a vast graveyard of needlessly ravenous, ungrateful people. (For more information about this miracle, see "Archaeology and the Book of Exodus: Exit From Egypt," *The Good News*, May-June 1997, pp. 22-24.)

Job Chapter 30

Chapter 30 snaps back to the grim here and now. Rather than respect, Job now receives contempt even from those viewed as the lowlife of that society, the sons of outcast ruffians (verses 1-11). "To demonstrate the unfairness of God Job takes each of the themes he introduced in chap. 29 and contrasts his past and present state. Now [in chapter 30] Job is mocked by young and old (vv. 1-8) and verbally attacked (vv. 9-15). Now there is no blessing from God, but only suffering (vv. 16-17) and affliction (vv. 18-19), however urgently Job pleads (vv. 20-23). Perhaps worst of all, there is no compassion for one who constantly showed his compassion for others (vv. 24-31). No matter how great Job's suffering, there is no relief" (Lawrence Richards, *The Bible Reader's Companion*, 1991, note on chap. 30).

Job's statements in chapters 29-30 regarding his help and compassion for others in need rebuts Eliphaz's contrived charges against him in 22:5-9. We have no reason to doubt Job's description of himself, as it is well in keeping with God's description of him as blameless and upright. Job will have more to say on the issue of his treatment of others when he concludes this summary discourse in the next chapter.

Job Rests His Case (Job 31:1-32:1)

Job brings his discourse to a close. He basically places himself under an oath of innocence, inviting God to impose curses on him if he can be proven guilty. Where the New King James Version in verse 35 has the words, "Here is my mark," the NIV has "I sign now my defense." In other words, with this chapter, Job is resting his case—waiting, as the same verse explains, for God to answer him. It is clear from the chapter that Job must be extremely confident of acquittal.

The Nelson Study Bible states that Job's oath "bears a general similarity to the oath of clearance, widely used in ancient Mesopotamia. In this oath, an accused person would swear his innocence at a trial. However, the ethical content of Job's confession, with its emphasis on inward motivation (see vv. 1, 2, 24, 25, 33, 34) and attitude (see vv. 1, 7, 9, 26, 27, 29, 30), is unique and unparalleled until Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (see Matt. 5-7)" (note on Job 31:140).

Indeed, Job in the first verse mentions having made a covenant with his eyes not to look on a young woman. The typical Hebrew word for "look" is not used here. Rather, the word here, translated "think" in the old KJV, is *biyn*, which conveys a sense of setting apart mentally (Strong, No. 995)—really focusing. The obvious implication is that this looking is with lustful intent. Job knew it was wrong to sexually desire a woman other than his wife, as Christ would later make clear (see Matthew 5:27). In an Old Testament setting, this seems rather remarkable and demonstrates that Job well understood the spirit of God's law. He also realized that violation of even the spirit of the law would ultimately bring punishment from God (Job 31:2-3). Of course, it is not wrong to merely look at a beautiful woman. Nor is it wrong to appreciate beauty. Most likely, Job's determination was that if the sight of a woman began to entice him to lust, then he would look away and think about other things. This is the approach all of us should take.

No doubt Job, in trying to understand what was happening to him, had for months been taking a sweeping personal inventory of his life—including his inward thoughts and motivations. And here we see his concluding declaration on the various aspects of his life.

Besides avoiding sexual lust, we see that Job was not a person of falsehood and deceit (verse 5). In verse 7 he says that his heart has not walked after his eyes, probably meaning here that he has not been motivated by "the lust of the eyes" (1 John 2:16) in coveting things he sees. Job then remarks further on his commitment to not even entertain adulterous thoughts, much less act on them or to even allow himself to be in a compromising or tempting situation (Job 31:9).

In verses 13-15 Job addresses his treatment of his servants. Though a great ruler, Job's approach and reasoning here is again remarkable. He realized that it was important to properly esteem them or he would face divine retribution. Moreover, he saw that this esteem was utterly legitimate. Unlike other rulers of his day, Job would well agree with the words in the U.S. Declaration of Independence defying Old World aristocracy: "All men are created equal." Since God made all people, all people must be respected for that very fact—and they must all be treated according to the standards God has given for dealing with all other human beings.

In verses 16-23, Job comments on his treatment of the needy—the poor, widows and orphans. Again, as in the previous chapter, he rebuts Eliphaz's specific accusations against him in 22:59. In verses 24-25, Job rejects his friends' earlier implied accusations that he was motivated by greed and wealth or made proud by it (see 20:18-22; 22:23-26).

In verses 26-28 of chapter 31, Job maintains that he has not observed the sun and moon and been motivated to kiss his hand, referring to "the apparent ancient custom of kissing the hand as a prelude to the superstitious and idolatrous act of throwing a kiss to the heavenly bodies" (Nelson, note on verse 27).

In verse 29-30, we may again be surprised at Job's "New Testament approach" to dealing with enemies—not cursing them or gloating over their misfortunes. Yet we should realize that this approach is mentioned in the Old Testament as well as the New (compare Exodus 23:4-5; Proverbs 24:17-18; Matthew 5:43-47; Romans 12:17-21). Interestingly, Job understood these principles before Exodus and Proverbs were written. It is not improbable that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were familiar with these concepts.

In verses 31-32 we see that Job freely shared his food and home with his servants and all who came his way.

The translation of verse 33 is disputed since the word adam can mean the first man Adam or man in general. So Job could be saying either "If I have covered my transgressions as Adam did..." (compare NKJV) or "If I have covered my transgressions as men do..." (compare NIV). The latter seems more likely since the first man Adam was not motivated by fear of contempt from groups of people (compare verse 34). In any case, Job's point here is that he has not been hiding secret sins.

In verse 35, as already noted, Job essentially declares that he rests his case. Note again the NIV rendering, along with the end of the verse: "I sign now my defense—let the Almighty answer me; let my accuser put his indictment in writing." Job says he would then carry the list of accusations to God and answer everyone, approaching God boldly as a prince would (verses 36-37).

Finally, Job remembers one more area in which he might be accused—his stewardship over the land God had entrusted to his care. Here, too, Job is confident of his innocence (verses 38-40). And with this statement, Job ends his words.

His three friends have no more to say either. They are convinced that Job is a hopeless cause because he remains righteous or innocent in his own eyes (32:1). Their mistake of course is that Job has accurately detailed the course of his life—he has not committed some great sin to bring his suffering as they believe. There is a problem with Job’s self-proclaimed innocence, though they are far from comprehending it, as we will see.

With all fallen silent, what will happen next? How will God answer?

A Wound-Up Young Bystander Speaks Out (Job 32:2-33:33)

We are now introduced to a new character in the narrative—Elihu. His words occupy six chapters and thus constitute one of the major addresses in the book. Some today accuse him of simply rehashing the arguments of Job’s three friends. Yet we should note up front that when God later rebukes Job’s three friends for their words, He has nothing to say about Elihu (42:7-9). This would seem to imply that Elihu’s assessment was for the most part correct, as it does not seem likely that God would single out the three friends and ignore, if it were likewise wrong, the longest speech given just prior to His own address. It may even be that God, as Elihu believed, gave him his valuable insight to inject into the discussion before God arrived on the scene Himself.

This would not necessarily mean that everything Elihu said was correct or that he exemplified a perfect approach and attitude—his own affirmations notwithstanding. For consider that at the end of the book, God commends Job for speaking of Him what is right—and yet we know that Job made some mistakes in his remarks about God and that his attitude was not always the best (as understandable as that may be given his circumstances). Consider also that we sometimes regard sermons in the Church of God today as inspired without believing every word in them to be inspired. In any event, it does appear that God wanted Job to hear what Elihu had to say as part of God’s answer to Job.

Elihu is introduced with details of his family background (32:2). Recall that Job and his three friends were identified by only their respective lands. It is likely that they were all well-known figures. Conversely, it appears that Elihu needs more to identify him because he is, comparatively, a young nobody. The fact that he has listened to the entire conversation thus far illustrates that there were probably a number of bystanders during the exchanges between Job and his friends—though this is the first real indication of it in the book.

Given what he has heard, Elihu is angry with Job’s three friends for baselessly condemning Job (verse 3). He is also angry with Job because he has been justifying himself rather than God (verse 2)—that is, Job’s primary concern has become one of defending his innocence to the point of impugning God’s justice. God Himself will later affirm Elihu’s assessment in this regard (see 40:8). While Job’s suffering certainly makes his remarks understandable, there is no doubt that he has gone too far in what he has said—though he probably didn’t fully mean all of it.

Elihu is so moved that he is about to burst at the seams with what he has to say (verses 18-20). He is insistent about being heard (verse 10; 33:1, 31, 33). Many in modern times have criticized Elihu for being insufferably verbose and pompous. For instance, he takes 24 verses to say he is going to speak (see 32:6-33:7). Yet loquaciousness was a prized attribute in the ancient world. Moreover, Elihu was, as mentioned, a virtual nobody compared to Job and his three friends—so he deems it important to establish why they should listen to him. He does seem somewhat overconfident in his ability to help Job “see the light,” perhaps because of his belief that God has blessed his perception of matters. That combined with youthful brashness and zeal probably accounts for his coming on a bit strong in places.

Elihu begins by explaining why he has waited to speak—he is younger and he wanted to hear what older, wiser people had to say (verses 6-7). This should illustrate that he is perhaps not so arrogant as some believe him to be. Elihu’s mention of the human spirit and breath of the Almighty in verse 8 in context would seem to imply not just God giving intellectual ability to mankind generally through the imparting of the human spirit (which He has certainly done)—but, in contrast to wisdom coming with age, that God can impart wisdom directly to a man’s spirit through His own divine Spirit. So Elihu, it appears, believes God has inspired him. And this may well be the case. Yet, as already mentioned, this would not necessarily mean that everything Elihu said was from God. He makes no claim to being a prophet.

The exact meaning of verse 13 is disputed. The NKJV has Elihu quoting the sentiment of the friends in the first part of the verse and giving his own opinion in the second part. The Good News Bible paraphrases this as: “How can you claim you have discovered wisdom? God must answer Job, for you have failed.” Other versions have Elihu quoting the sentiment of the friends in both parts of the verse. For example the New International Version has: “Do not say, ‘We have found wisdom; let God refute him, not man.’” That is, the friends are portrayed as saying that they have done all that can humanly be done and Elihu is here contradicting that.

Elihu then addresses Job. He is much more personal and direct than the three friends. Unlike them, Elihu repeatedly addresses Job by name. For a young man to address his elders so casually—especially someone like Job who, though presently removed from his position due to his condition, had served as a ruler over the people—would surely have seemed impertinent in the society of that day. However, this was evidently part of Elihu’s commitment to show no partiality or flattery (verses 21-22). It is interesting to note that the Hebrew verb translated “flatter,” *kanah*, means “to call someone by his honorific title” (Expositor’s Bible Commentary, footnote on verses 21-22).

Hebrews Chapter 12 (Taken this week from Matthew Henry’s commentary)

1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2 Looking unto Yeshua the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right

hand of the throne of God. 3 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

Here observe what is the great duty which the apostle urges upon the Hebrews, and which he so much desires they would comply with, and that is, to lay aside every weight, and the sin that did so easily beset them, and run with patience the race set before them. The duty consists of two parts, the one preparatory, the other perfective.

Preparatory: Lay aside every weight, and the sin, &c. 1. Every weight, that is, all inordinate affection and concern for the body, and the present life and world. Inordinate care for the present life, or fondness for it, is a dead weight upon the soul, that pulls it down when it should ascend upwards, and pulls it back when it should press forward; it makes duty and difficulties harder and heavier than they would be. 2. The sin that doth so easily beset us; the sin that has the greatest advantage against us, by the circumstances we are in, our constitution, our company. This may mean either the damning sin of unbelief or rather the darling sin of the Jews, an over-fondness for their own dispensation. Let us lay aside all external and internal hindrances.

II. Perfective: Run with patience the race that is set before us. The apostle speaks in the gymnastic style, taken from the Olympic and other exercises.

Believers have a race to run, a race of service and a race of sufferings, a course of active and passive obedience. This race is set before them; it is marked out unto them, both by the word of God and the examples of the faithful servants of God, that cloud of witnesses with which they are compassed about. It is set out by proper limits and directions; the mark they run to, and the prize they run for, are set before them.

This race must be run with patience and perseverance. There will be need of patience to encounter the difficulties that lie in our way, of perseverance to resist all temptations to desist or turn aside. Faith and patience are the conquering graces, and therefore must be always cultivated and kept in lively exercise.

What our Deliverer is to his people: he is the author and finisher of their faith—the beginning, perfecter, and rewarder of it. [1.] He is the author of their faith; not only the object, but the author. He is the great leader and precedent of our faith, he trusted in God; he is the purchaser of the Spirit of faith, the publisher of the rule of faith, the efficient cause of the grace of faith, and in all respects the author of our faith. [2.] He is the finisher of our faith; he is the fulfiller and the fulfilling of all scripture-promises and prophecies; he is the perfecter of the canon of scripture; he is the finisher of grace, and of the work of faith with power in the souls of his people; and he is the judge and the rewarder of their faith; he determines who they are that reach the mark, and from him, and in him, they have the prize.

What trials Yeshua met with in his race and course. [1.] He endured the contradiction of sinners against himself (v. 3); he bore the opposition that they made to him, both in their words and behavior. They were continually contradicting him, and crossing in upon his great designs; and though he could easily have both confuted and confounded them, and sometimes gave them a

specimen of his power, yet he endured their evil manners with great patience. Their contradictions were levelled against Christ himself, against his person as Godman, against his authority, against his preaching, and yet he endured all. [2.]

He endured the cross—all those sufferings that he met with in the world; for he took up his cross betimes, and was at length nailed to it, and endured a painful, ignominious, and accursed death, in which he was numbered with the transgressors, the vilest malefactors; yet all this he endured with invincible patience and resolution. [3.] He despised the shame. All the reproaches that were cast upon him, both in his life and at his death, he despised; he was infinitely above them; he knew his own innocency and excellency, and despised the ignorance and malice of his despisers.

What it was that supported the human soul of Christ under these unparalleled sufferings; and that was the joy that was set before him. He had something in view under all his sufferings, which was pleasant to him; he rejoiced to see that by his sufferings he should make satisfaction to the injured justice of God and give security to his honour and government, that he should make peace between God and man, that he should seal the covenant of grace and be the Mediator of it, that he should open a way of salvation to the chief of sinners, and that he should effectually save all those whom the Father had given him, and himself be the first-born among many brethren. This was the joy that was set before him.

The reward of his suffering: he has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Christ, as Mediator, is exalted to a station of the highest honour, of the greatest power and influence; he is at the right hand of the Father. Nothing passes between heaven and earth but by him; he does all that is done; he ever lives to make intercession for his people.

What is our duty with respect to this Yeshua. We must, [1.] Look unto him; that is, we must set him continually before us as our example, and our great encouragement; we must look to him for direction, for assistance, and for acceptance, in all our sufferings. [2.] We must consider him, meditate much upon him, and reason with ourselves from his case to our own. We must analogize, as the word is; compare Christ's sufferings and ours; and we shall find that as his sufferings far exceeded ours, in the nature and measure of them, so his patience far excels ours, and is a perfect pattern for us to imitate.

The advantage we shall reap by thus doing: it will be a means to prevent our weariness and fainting (v. 3): Lest you be weary and faint in your minds. Observe, [1.] There is a proneness in the best to grow weary and to faint under their trials and afflictions, especially when they prove heavy and of long continuance: this proceeds from the imperfections of grace and the remains of corruption. [2.] The best way to prevent this is to look unto Jesus, and to consider him. Faith and meditation will fetch in fresh supplies of strength, comfort, and courage; for he has assured them, if they suffer with him, they shall also reign with him: and this hope will be their helmet.

4 Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. 5 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening

of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: 6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. 7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? 8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. 9 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?

10 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. 11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. 12 Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; 13 And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed. 14 Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: 15 Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; 16 Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. 17 For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.

Here the apostle presses the exhortation to patience and perseverance by an argument taken from the gentle measure and gracious nature of those sufferings which the believing Hebrews endured. From the gentle and moderate degree and measure of their sufferings: You have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin, v. 4. Observe,

He owns that they had suffered much, they had been striving to an agony against sin. Here, (1.) The cause of the conflict was sin, and to be engaged against sin is to fight in a good cause, for sin is the worst enemy both to God and man. Our spiritual warfare is both honourable and necessary; for we are only defending ourselves against that which would destroy us, if it should get the victory over us; we fight for ourselves, for our lives, and therefore ought to be patient and resolute. (2.) Every believer is enlisted under Christ's banner, to strive against sin, against sinful doctrines, sinful practices, and sinful habits and customs, both in himself and in others.

He puts them in mind that they might have suffered more, that they had not suffered as much as others; for they had not yet resisted unto blood, they had not been called to martyrdom as yet, though they knew not how soon they might be. Learn here, (1.) Our Lord Jesus, the captain of our salvation, does not call his people out to the hardest trials at first, but wisely trains them up by less sufferings to be prepared for greater. He will not put new wine into weak vessels, he is the gentle shepherd, who will not overdrive the young ones of the flock. (2.)

It becomes believers to take notice of the gentleness of Christ in accommodating their trial to their strength. They should not magnify their afflictions, but should take notice of the mercy that is mixed with them, and should pity those who are called to the fiery trials to resist to blood; not to shed the blood of their enemies, but to seal their testimony with their own blood. (3.) Believers

should be ashamed to faint under less trials, when they see others bear up under greater, and do not know how soon they may meet with greater themselves. If we have run with the footmen and they have wearied us, how shall we contend with horses? If we be wearied in a land of peace, what shall we do in the swellings of Jordan? Jer. xii. 5.

He argues from the peculiar and gracious nature of those sufferings that befall the people of God. Though their enemies and persecutors may be the instruments of inflicting such sufferings on them, yet they are divine chastisements; their heavenly Father has his hand in all, and his wise end to serve by all; of this he has given them due notice, and they should not forget it, v. 5. Observe,

Those afflictions which may be truly persecution as far as men are concerned in them are fatherly rebukes and chastisements as far as God is concerned in them. Persecution for religion is sometimes a correction and rebuke for the sins of professors of religion. Men persecute them because they are religious; God chastises them because they are not more so: men persecute them because they will not give up their profession; God chastises them because they have not lived up to their profession.

God has directed his people how they ought to behave themselves under all their afflictions; they must avoid the extremes that many run into. (1.) They must not despise the chastening of the Lord; they must not make light of afflictions, and be stupid and insensible under them, for they are the hand and rod of God, and his rebukes for sin. Those who make light of affliction make light of God and make light of sin. (2.) They must not faint when they are rebuked; they must not despond and sink under their trial, nor fret and repine, but bear up with faith and patience. (3.) If they run into either of these extremes, it is a sign they have forgotten their heavenly Father's advice and exhortation, which he has given them in true and tender affection.

Afflictions, rightly endured, though they may be the fruits of God's displeasure, are yet proofs of his paternal love to his people and care for them (v. 6, 7): Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. Observe, (1.) The best of God's children need chastisement. They have their faults and follies, which need to be corrected. (2.) Though God may let others alone in their sins, he will correct sin in his own children; they are of his family, and shall not escape his rebukes when they want them. (3.) In this he acts as becomes a father, and treats them like children; no wise and good father will wink at faults in his own children as he would in others; his relation and his affections oblige him to take more notice of the faults of his own children than those of others. (4.)

To be suffered to go on in sin without a rebuke is a sad sign of alienation from God; such are bastards, not sons. They may call him Father, because born in the pale of the assembly; but they are the spurious offspring of another father, not of God, v. 7, 8.

Those that are impatient under the discipline of their heavenly Father behave worse towards him than they would do towards earthly parents, v. 9, 10. Here, (1.) The apostle commends a dutiful and submissive behavior in children towards their earthly parents We gave them reverence,

even when they corrected us. It is the duty of children to give the reverence of obedience to the just commands of their parents, and the reverence of submission to their correction when they have been disobedient. Parents have not only authority, but a charge from God, to give their children correction when it is due, and he has commanded children to take such correction well: to be stubborn and discontented under due correction is a double fault; for the correction supposes there has been a fault already committed against the parent's commanding power, and super adds a further fault against his chastening power. Hence, (2.)

He recommends humble and submissive behavior towards our heavenly Father, when under his correction; and this he does by an argument from the less to the greater. [1.] Our earthly fathers are but the fathers of our flesh, but God is the Father of our spirits. Our fathers on earth were instrumental in the production of our bodies, which are but flesh, a mean, mortal, vile thing, formed out of the dust of the earth, as the bodies of the beasts are; and yet as they are curiously wrought, and made parts of our persons, a proper tabernacle for the soul to dwell in and an organ for it to act by, we owe reverence and affection to those who were instrumental in their procreation; but then we must own much more to him who is the Father of our spirits.

Our souls are not of a material substance, not of the most refined sort; they are not ex traduce—by traduction; to affirm it is bad philosophy, and worse divinity: they are the immediate offspring of God, who, after he had formed the body of man out of the earth, breathed into him a vital spirit, and so he became a living soul. [2.] Our earthly parents chastened us for their own pleasure. Sometimes they did it to gratify their passion rather than to reform our manners. This is a weakness the fathers of our flesh are subject to, and this they should carefully watch against; for hereby they dishonour that parental authority which God has put upon them and very much hinder the efficacy of their chastisements. But the Father of our spirits never grieves willingly, nor afflicts the children of men, much less his own children.

It is always for our profit; and the advantage he intends us thereby is no less than our being partakers of his holiness; it is to correct and cure those sinful disorders which make us unlike to God, and to improve and to increase those graces which are the image of God in us, that we may be and act more like our heavenly Father. God loves his children so that he would have them to be as like himself as can be, and for this end he chastises them when they need it. [3.] The fathers of our flesh corrected us for a few days, in our state of childhood, when minors; and, though we were in that weak and peevish state, we owed them reverence, and when we came to maturity we loved and honoured them the more for it. Our whole life here is a state of childhood, minority, and imperfection, and therefore we must submit to the discipline of such a state; when we come to a state of perfection we shall be fully reconciled to all the measures of God's discipline over us now. [4.]

God's correction is no condemnation. His children may at first fear lest affliction should come upon that dreadful errand, and we cry, Do not condemn me, but show me wherefore thou contendest with me, Job x. 2. But this is so far from being the design of God to his own people that he therefore chastens them now that they may not be condemned with the world, 1 Cor. xi.

32. He does it to prevent the death and destruction of their souls, that they may live to God, and be like God, and for ever with him.

The children of God, under their afflictions, ought not to judge of his dealings with them by present sense, but by reason, and faith, and experience: No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness, v. 11. Here observe,

The judgment of sense in this case—Afflictions are not grateful to the sense, but grievous; the flesh will feel them, and be grieved by them, and groan under them.

The judgment of faith, which corrects that of sense, and declares that a sanctified affliction produces the fruits of righteousness; these fruits are peaceable, and tend to the quieting and comforting of the soul. Affliction produces peace, by producing more righteousness; for the fruit of righteousness is peace. And if the pain of the body contribute thus to the peace of the mind, and short present affliction produce blessed fruits of a long continuance, they have no reason to fret or faint under it; but their great concern is that the chastening they are under may be endured by them with patience, and improved to a greater degree of holiness. [1.]

That their affliction may be endured with patience, which is the main drift of the apostle's discourse on this subject; and he again returns to exhort them that for the reason before mentioned they should lift up the hands that hang down and the feeble knees, v. 12. A burden of affliction is apt to make the believer's hands hang down, and his knees grow feeble, to dispirit him and discourage him; but this he must strive against, and that for two reasons:—

First, That he may the better run his spiritual race and course. Faith, and patience, and holy courage and resolution, will make him walk more steadily, keep a straighter path, prevent wavering and wandering. Secondly, That he may encourage and not dispirit others that are in the same way with him. There are many that are in the way to heaven who yet walk but weakly and lamely in it. Such are apt to discourage one another, and hinder one another; but it is their duty to take courage, and act by faith, and so help one another forward in the way to heaven. [2.]

That their affliction may be improved to a greater degree of holiness. Since this is God's design, it ought to be the design and concern of his children, that with renewed strength and patience they may follow peace with all men, and holiness, v. 14. If the children of God grow impatient under affliction, they will neither walk so quietly and peaceably towards men, nor so piously towards God, as they should do; but faith and patience will enable them to follow peace and holiness too, as a man follows his calling, constantly, diligently, and with pleasure. Observe, First, It is the duty of believers, even when in a suffering state, to follow peace with all men, yea, even with those who may be instrumental in their sufferings. This is a hard lesson, and a high attainment, but it is what Christ has called his people to. Sufferings are apt to sour the spirit and sharpen the passions; but the children of God must follow peace with all men. Secondly, Peace and holiness are connected together; there can be no true peace without holiness.

There may be prudence and discreet forbearance, and a show of friendship and good-will to all; but this true peaceableness is never found separate from holiness. We must not, under pretence of living peaceably with all men, leave the ways of holiness, but cultivate peace in a way of holiness. Thirdly, Without holiness no man shall see the Lord. The vision of God our Savior in heaven is reserved as the reward of holiness, and the stress of our salvation is laid upon our holiness, though a placid peaceable disposition contributes much to our meetness for heaven.

Where afflictions and sufferings for the sake of Christ are not considered by men as the chastisement of their heavenly Father, and improved as such, they will be a dangerous snare and temptation to apostasy, which every believer should most carefully watch against (v. 15, 16): Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God.

Here the apostle enters a serious caveat against apostasy, and backs it with an awful example. He enters a serious caveat against apostasy, v. 15. Here you may observe, First, The nature of apostasy: it is failing of the grace of God; it is to become bankrupts in religion, for want of a good foundation, and suitable care and diligence; it is failing of the grace of God, coming short of a principle of true grace in the soul, notwithstanding the means of grace and a profession of religion, and so coming short of the love and favor of God here and hereafter.

Secondly, The consequences of apostasy: where persons fail of having the true grace of God, a root of bitterness will spring up, corruption will prevail and break forth. A root of bitterness, a bitter root, producing bitter fruits to themselves and others. It produces to themselves corrupt principles, which lead to apostasy and are greatly strengthened and radicated by apostasy—damnable errors (to the corrupting of the doctrine and worship of the Assembly) and corrupt practices. Apostates generally grow worse and worse, and fall into the grossest wickedness, which usually ends either in downright atheism or in despair. It also produces bitter fruits to others, to the churches to which these men belonged; by their corrupt principles and practices many are troubled, the peace of the church is broken, the peace of men's minds is disturbed, and many are defiled, tainted with those bad principles, and drawn into defiling practices; so that the churches suffer both in their purity and peace. But the apostates themselves will be the greatest sufferers at last.

The apostle backs the caution with an awful example, and that is, that of Esau, who though born within the pale of Abraham and Isaac, and having the birthright as the eldest son, and so entitled to the privilege of being prophet, priest, and king, in his family, was so profane as to despise these sacred privileges, and to sell his birthright for a morsel of meat. Where observe, First, Esau's sin. He profanely despised and sold the birthright, and all the advantages attending it. So do apostates, who to avoid persecution, and enjoy sensual ease and pleasure, though they bore the character of the children of God, and had a visible right to the blessing and inheritance, give up all pretensions thereto. Secondly, Esau's punishment, which was suitable to his sin.

His conscience was convinced of his sin and folly, when it was too late: He would afterwards have inherited the blessing, &c. His punishment lay in two things: 1. He was condemned by his

own conscience; he now saw that the blessing he had made so light of was worth the having, worth the seeking, though with much carefulness and many tears. 2. He was rejected of God: He found no place of repentance in God or in his father; the blessing was given to another, even to him to whom he sold it for a mess of pottage. Esau, in his great wickedness, had made the bargain, and God in his righteous judgment, ratified and confirmed it, and would not suffer Isaac to reverse it.

We may hence learn, [1.] That apostasy from Christ is the fruit of preferring the gratification of the flesh to the blessing of God and the heavenly inheritance. [2.] Sinners will not always have such mean thoughts of the divine blessing and inheritance as now they have. The time is coming when they will think no pains too great, no cares no tears too much, to obtain the lost blessing. [3.] When the day of grace is over (as sometimes it may be in this life), they will find no place for repentance: they cannot repent aright of their sin; and God will not repent of the sentence he has passed upon them for their sin. And therefore, as the design of all, believers should never give up their title, and hope of their Father's blessing and inheritance, and expose themselves to his irrevocable wrath and curse, by deserting their holy religion, to avoid suffering, which, though this may be persecution as far as wicked men are concerned in it, is only a rod of correction and chastisement in the hand of their heavenly Father, to bring them near to himself in conformity and communion. This is the force of the apostle's arguing from the nature of the sufferings of the people of God even when they suffer for righteousness' sake; and the reasoning is very strong.

18 For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, 19 And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: 20 (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: 21 And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:)

22 But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, 23 To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, 24 And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. 25 See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven: 26 Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. 27 And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. 28 Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: 29 For our God is a consuming fire.

(2.) To the general assembly of the first-born, that are written in heaven, that is, to the

universal church, however dispersed. By faith we come to them, have communion with them in the same head, by the same Spirit, and in the same blessed hope, and walk in the same way of holiness, grappling with the same spiritual enemies, and hastening to the same rest, victory, and glorious triumph. Here will be the general assembly of the first-born, the saints of former and earlier times, who saw the promises of the gospel state, but received them not, as well as those who first received them under the gospel, and were regenerated thereby, and so were the first-born, and the first-fruits; and thereby, as the first-born, advanced to greater honors and privileges than the rest of the world. Indeed all the children of God are heirs, and everyone has the privileges of the first-born.

The names of these are written in heaven, in the records here: they have a name in God's house, are written among the living in Jerusalem; they have a good repute for their faith and fidelity, and are enrolled in the Lamb's book of life, as citizens are enrolled in the livery-books. (3.) To God the Judge of all.

(4.) To the spirits of just men made perfect; to the best sort of men, the righteous, who are more excellent than their neighbors; to the best part of just men, their spirits, and to these in their best state, made perfect. Believers have union with departed saints in one and the same head and Spirit, and a title to the same inheritance, of which those on earth are heirs, those in heaven possessors. (5.) To Messiah the Mediator of the re-newed covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. This is none of the least of many encouragements there are to perseverance, since it is a state of communion with Christ the Mediator of the renewed covenant, and of communication of his blood, that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel. [1.]

This covenant is ratified by the blood of Christ sprinkled upon our consciences, as the blood of the sacrifice was sprinkled upon the altar and the sacrifice. This blood of Christ pacifies God and purifies the consciences of men. [4.] This is speaking blood, and it speaks better things than that of Abel. First, It speaks to God in behalf of sinners; it pleads not for vengeance, as the blood of Abel did on him who shed it, but for mercy. Secondly, To sinners, in the name of God. It speaks pardon to their sins, peace to their souls; and bespeaks their strictest obedience and highest love and thankfulness.

See then that you refuse not him that speaketh—that speaketh by his blood; and not only speaketh after another manner than the blood of Abel spoke from the ground, but then God spoke by the angels, and by Moses spoke on mount Sinai; then he spoke on earth, now he speaks from heaven. Here observe,

When God speaks to men in the most excellent manner he justly expects from them the most strict attention and regard. Now it is in the gospel that God speaks to men in the most excellent manner. For, (1.) He now speaks from a higher and more glorious seat and throne.

Chapter 13

1 Let brotherly love continue. 2 Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. 3 Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body. 4 Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge. 5 Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. 6 So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

7 Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation. 8 Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever. 9 Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein. 10 We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. 11 For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp.

12 Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. 13 Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. 14 For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come. 15 By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. 16 But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. 17 Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

The design of Christ in giving himself for us is that he may purchase to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. Now the apostle calls the believing Hebrews to the performance of many excellent duties, in which it becomes believers to excel. To brotherly love (v. 1), by which he does not only mean a general affection to all men, as our brethren by nature, all made of the same blood, nor that more limited affection which is due to those who are of the same immediate parents, but that special and spiritual affection which ought to exist among the children of God. 1. It is here supposed that the Hebrews had this love one for another.

Though, at this time, that nation was miserably divided and distracted among themselves, both about matters of religion and the civil state, yet there was true brotherly love left among those of them who believed on Christ; and this appeared in a very eminent manner presently after the shedding forth of the Spirit, when they had all things common, and sold their possessions to make a general fund of subsistence to their brethren. The spirit of fellowship is a spirit of love. Faith works by love. The true faith is the strongest bond of friendship; if it be not so, it has its name for nothing. 2. This brotherly love was in danger of being lost, and that in a time of persecution, when it would be most necessary; it was in danger of being lost by those disputes that were among them concerning the respect they ought still to have to the ceremonies of the traditions of men. Disputes about traditions too often produce a decay of affection; but this must

be guarded against, and all proper means used to preserve brotherly love. Believers should always love and live as brethren, and the more they grow in devout affection to God their heavenly Father the more they will grow in love to one another for his sake.

To hospitality: Be not forgetful to entertain strangers for his sake, v. 2. We must add to brotherly kindness charity. Here observe, 1. The duty required—to entertain strangers, both those that are strangers to the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to our persons, especially those who know themselves to be strangers here and are seeking another country, which is the case of the people of God, and was so at this time. But he seems to speak of strangers as such; though we know not who they are, nor whence they come, yet, seeing they are without any certain dwelling place, we should allow them room in our hearts and in our houses, as we have opportunity and ability.

The motive: Thereby some have entertained angels unawares; so Abraham did (Gen. xviii.), and Lot (Gen. xix.), and one of those that Abraham entertained was the Son of God; and, though we cannot suppose this will ever be our case, yet what we do to strangers, in obedience to him, he will reckon and reward as done to himself. Matt. xxv. 35, I was a stranger, and you took me in. God has often bestowed honors and favors upon his hospitable servants, beyond all their thoughts, unawares.

To sympathy: Remember those that are in bonds, v. 3. Here observe, The duty—to remember those that are in bonds and in adversity. (1.) God often orders it so that while some believers and assemblies are in adversity others enjoy peace and liberty. All are not called at the same time to resist unto blood. (2.) Those that are themselves at liberty must sympathize with those that are in bonds and adversity, as if they were bound with them in the same chain: they must feel the sufferings of their brethren.

The reason of the duty: As being yourselves in the body; not only in the body natural, and so liable to the like sufferings, and you should sympathize with them now that others may sympathize with you when your time of trial comes; but in the same mystical body, under the same head, and if one member suffer all the rest suffer with it, 1 Cor. xii. 26. It would be unnatural in believers not to bear each other's burdens.

To purity and chastity, v. 4. Here you have, 1. A recommendation of God's ordinance of marriage, that it is honourable in all, and ought to be so esteemed by all, and not denied to those to whom God has not denied it. It is honourable, for God instituted it for man in paradise, knowing it was not good for him to be alone. He married and blessed the first couple, the first parents of mankind, to direct all to look unto God in that great concern, and to marry in the Lord. Christ honoured marriage with his presence and first miracle. It is honourable as a means to prevent impurity and a defiled bed.

It is honourable and happy, when persons come together pure and chaste, and preserve the marriage bed undefiled, not only from unlawful but inordinate affections. 2. A dreadful but just censure of impurity and lewdness: Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge. (1.) God

knows who are guilty of such sins, no darkness can hide them from him. (2.) He will call such sins by their proper names, not by the names of love and gallantry, but of whoredom and adultery, whoredom in the single state and adultery in the married state. (3.) He will bring them into judgment, he will judge them, either by their own consciences here, and set their sins in order before them for their deep humiliation (and conscience, when awakened, will be very severe upon such sinners), or he will set them at his tribunal at death, and in the last day; he will convict them, condemn them, and cast them out for ever, if they die under the guilt of this sin.

To contentment, v. 5, 6. Here observe, 1. The sin that is contrary to this grace and duty—covetousness, an over eager desire of the wealth of this world, envying those who have more than we. This sin we must allow no place in our conversation; for, though it be a secret lust lurking in the heart, if it be not subdued it will enter into our conversation, and discover itself in our manner of speaking and acting. We must take care not only to keep this sin down, but to root it out of our souls. 2. The duty and grace that is contrary to covetousness—being satisfied and pleased with such things as we have; present things, for past things cannot be recalled, and future things are only in the hand of God. What God gives us from day to day we must be content with, though it fall short of what we have enjoyed heretofore, and though it do not come up to our expectations for the future.

We must be content with our present lot. We must bring our minds to our present condition, and this is the sure way to contentment; and those who cannot do it would not be contented though God should raise their condition to their minds, for the mind would rise with the condition. Haman was the great court-favorite, and yet not contented—Ahab on the throne, and yet not contented—Adam in paradise, and yet not contented; yea, the angels in heaven, and yet not contented; but Paul, though abased and empty, had learned in every state, in any state, therewith to be content. 3. What reason believers have to be contented with their lot. (1.) God hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee, v. 5, 6. This was said to Joshua (ch. i. 5), but belongs to all the faithful servants of God.

I will never, no, never leave thee, nor ever forsake thee. Here are no fewer than five negatives heaped together, to confirm the promise; the true believer shall have the gracious presence of God with him in life, at death, and for ever. (2.) From this comprehensive promise they may assure themselves of help from God: So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper; I will not fear what man shall do unto me, v. 6. Men can do nothing against God, and God can make all that men do against his people to turn to their good.

To the duty believers owe to their ministers, and that both to those that are dead and to those that are yet alive. To those that are dead: Remember those that have had the rule over you, v. 7. Here observe, The description given of them. They were such as had the rule over them, and had spoken to them the word of God; their guides and governors, who had spoken to them the word of God. Here is the dignity to which they were advanced—to be rulers and leaders of the people, not according to their own will, but the will and word of God; and this character they filled up with suitable duty: they did not rule at a distance, and rule by others, but they ruled by personal presence and instruction, according to the word of God.

The duties owing to them, even when they were dead. “Remember them—their preaching, their praying, their private counsel, their example.” “Follow their faith; be steadfast in the profession of the faith they preached to you, and labour after the grace of faith by which they lived and died so well. Consider the end of their conversation, how quickly, how comfortably, how joyfully, they finished their course!” Now this duty of following the same true faith in which they had been instructed the apostle enlarges much upon, and presses them earnestly to it, not only from the remembrance of their faithful deceased guides, but from several other motives.

18 Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly. 19 But I beseech you the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner. 20 Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, 21 Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. 22 And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation: for I have written a letter unto you in few words. 23 Know ye that our brother Timothy is set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you. 24 Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you. 25 Grace be with you all. Amen.

Here, I. The apostle recommends himself, and his fellow-sufferers, to the prayers of the Hebrew believers (v. 18): “Pray for us; for me and Timothy” (mentioned v. 23), “and for all those of us who labour in the ministry of the gospel.” “We trust we have a good conscience, an enlightened and well-informed conscience, a clean and pure conscience, a tender and faithful conscience, a conscience testifying for us, not against us: a good conscience in all things, in the duties both of the first and second table, towards God and towards men, and especially in all things pertaining to our ministry; we would act honestly and sincerely in all things.” Observe, [1.] A good conscience has a respect to all God’s commands and all our duty. [2.] Those who have this good conscience, yet need the prayers of others. [3.]

Another reason why he desires their prayers is that he hoped thereby to be the sooner restored to them (v. 19), intimating that he had been formerly among them,—that, now he was absent from them, he had a great desire and real intention to come again to them,—and that the best way to facilitate his return to them, and to make it a mercy to him and them, was to make it a matter of their prayer. When ministers come to a people as a return of prayer, they come with greater satisfaction to themselves and success to the people. We should fetch in all our mercies by prayer.

He offers up his prayers to God for them, being willing to do for them as he desired they should do for him: Now the God of peace, &c., v. 20. In this excellent prayer observe, 1. The title given to God—the God of peace, who was found out a way for peace and reconciliation between himself and sinners, and who loves peace on earth and especially in his churches. 2. The great work ascribed to him: He hath brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, &c. Jesus raised himself by his own power; and yet the Father was concerned in it, attesting thereby that

justice was satisfied and the law fulfilled. He rose again for our justification; and that divine power by which he was raised is able to do everything for us that we stand in need of. 3. The titles given to Christ—our Lord Jesus, our sovereign, our Saviour, and the great shepherd of the sheep, promised in Isa. xl. 11, declared by himself to be so, John x. 14, 15. Ministers are under-shepherds, Christ is the great shepherd. This denotes his interest in his people.

They are the flock of his pasture, and his care and concern are for them. He feeds them, and leads them, and watches over them. 4. The way and method in which God is reconciled, and Christ raised from the dead: Through the blood of the everlasting covenant. The blood of Christ satisfied divine justice, and so procured the grace, as having paid our debt, according to an eternal covenant or agreement between the Father and the Son; and this blood is the sanction and seal of an everlasting covenant between God and his people. 5. The mercy prayed for: Make you perfect in every good work, &c., v. 21. Observe, (1.) The perfection of the saints in every good work is the great thing desired by them and for them, that they may here have a perfection of integrity, a clear mind, a clean heart, lively affections, regular and resolved wills, and suitable strength for every good work to which they are called now, and at length a perfection of degrees to fit them for the employment and felicity of heaven. (2.)

The way in which God makes his people perfect; it is by working in them always what is pleasing in his sight, and that through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever. Observe, [1.] There is no good thing wrought in us but it is the work of God; he works in us, before we are fit for any good work. [2.] No good thing is wrought in us by God, but through Jesus Christ, for his sake and by his Spirit. And therefore, [3.] Eternal glory is due to him, who is the cause of all the good principles wrought in us and all the good works done by us. To this everyone should say, Amen.