

Forbrarum & Long Suffering

Reverend Sir

Do respect them the riches of his goodness
 of Forbrarum & Long Suffering; not knowing that the
 goodness of God leadeth them to repentance.

Ambler	March 13 th	37	
Pen. Guild	Sunday Feb'y	57	Ballton July '75
Crawfordville	Aug	58	Williamston Aug '75
Lexington	Aug	58	
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There is nothing connected with the character of God more
worthy our admiration or more deserving our gratitude
than the patience long suffering he exhibits towards us
perhaps nothing would more readily excite the
admiration of gratitude if we were in a condition to appreciate
- it & perceive it. It is however unfortunately so with us
that the very consideration which magnifies God's long suf-
- fering - is the demonstration of his long suffering is wholly
unappreciated by us - namely the exceeding sinfulness of
sin in the execution of God's just desert of unmerciful
punishment. We understand by God's long suffering towards
us that disposition of the divine mind which withholds de-
- merited punishment - does not immediately inflict it but
- us for our sins but bears with us for a long time day after day
- year after year in hope of our amendment. We readily under-
- stand what patience long suffering are when exercised towards
- sinners - by the parent towards a wayward child or the mas-
- ter towards an unprofitable servant. And we readily perceive
- that long suffering becomes good in us in degree in proportion
- to the degree of waywardness in the child or unprofitableness in
- the servant - in other words in proportion as punishment
- is deserved. The greater the case for punishment the greater
- the long suffering in withholding that punishment. Now could
- we appreciate the sinfulness of sin - could we see how
- justly its deserved punishment has justly been given for its
- punishment which the righteous law of the holy character
- of God make we should be able to appreciate the great-
- ness the amazing greatness of God's long suffering in with-
- holding that punishment from day to day & from year to
- year. But we do not perceive this. One of the disastrous effects
- which ~~is~~ the transgression of God's law has had upon us is to
- blind our moral sense to a perception of its guilt & ex-
- - pose us to punishment. This is a peculiarity which does not
- characterize the transgression of any other law. A man may
- be a very bad citizen he may have no regard to the laws of
- the land he may rob he may murder but he never becomes
- so abandoned as to claim impunity for his transgressions
- he never becomes so abandoned as to feel that he ought not to
- be punished - but with all his violations of law he perceives the
- guilt he incurs by those violations & his just exposure to the pun-
- - ishment of the local law is therefore in a condition to appreciate the
- claim of the execution of the law who would grant him
- a reprieve. But the transgressor of God's law stands against
- God is the most blinded & the most abandoned of all
- sinners. His transgression has so perverted his moral sense
- as to blind him to the perception of his guilt - it has

So lost to any perception & appreciation of sin, & its
consequences, as not to see their weight with all his sense & mind
strength & might. But then lies the difficulty - We do not
see sin as it really is - we do not see its enormity, & its
distance do not properly appreciate the forbearance of God in with-
holding its punishment, & that we may be led to repentance. But
consider what God's word describes sin to be - that it is re-
-sults as rebellion against God not figuratively but literally
a turning off the authority of God, & saying in the heart
No God & a disposition that would tear him if possible
from his throne - that its very principle is one of
enmity - the worst bitter & unconfessing enmity against
him - that it reflects the greatest dishonor & contempt
upon the character of God - Who is the Lord that should
do such a thing is its - contemptuous language. Consider how
God must look upon sin - think how it must appear
in the light of his countenance - Place yourself before the
throne of God - suppose you could now for a short while be
translated suddenly upon that throne around which two
thousands, angels, & cherubs, holy, pure, glorious, intelligent
worship him unceasingly, & delight to do his commands
when all is purity & holiness, when you could see the un-
-mixed glory of God, the essential & infinite holiness of his
nature & could hear him saying or ye holy for all the Lord
your God are holy - suppose yourself to be suddenly trans-
-ported into the midst of this circle of seraphim, & intelligences
with the infinite God, seeing around you the effluence
of his own holiness, & then think how that holy God would
look upon sin as seen through the hallowed light of heaven.
Consider what he has declared to be his feeling towards
sin - that it is the abominable thing which he hates
- that it is that which provokes him to anger - that his
feeling against it is so strong that in order to describe to us
the nature of that feeling, he can do so only by using those
figures & modes of speech which are employed by us when
we would describe our feelings of detestation, & abhorrence.
In addition to all this consider that the blood of ^{all} the prophets
& martyrs is crying out from the ground against sin & calling
for punishment that from under the altar the souls of them that
were slain for the word of God are ever crying with a loud
voice saying How long O Lord Holy & True dost thou rest among
our blood on the earth - that dwell on the earth. Put all these
considerations together bring them all to bear into one burning
focus - the partly nature of sin loudly calling for punishment
the infinitely holy nature of God strongly urging him to punish-
-ment - his feelings of anger & abhorrence against sin loudly
their appeals - & the cry of the slain prophets & martyrs

backing their ^{addition} of sinning every person tolling whole their part
much to their forbearance that withstand such a fearful
array of considerations urging in to persecute & withhold their
persecution from delay & year by year of men's sinful
life. The whom we see ourselves sensibly to consider the matter
is it not a wonder of wonder, that God should ex-
cuse for bearing down by us - that he does ^{not} at once discern
- readily discharge the pointed thunderbolt of his vengeance
& sweep this sin-defiled earth with the breath of destruction
But yet he forbears. And not only so: to improve you still
more with God's goodness in this respect he not only forbears
but he forbears long - he exercises not only forbearing but
long suffering. See how long he suffered with the antediluvian
- sin world. And this not because he did not see their
wickedness. He knew it all - his omniscient eye took in the
whole compass of it in all its enormity, He looked down from
heaven, ~~and~~ it was with an eye of observation, of searching
- & saw that there was more than did good - that
they had all gone astray - that they had become altogether
corrupt - that every thought & imagination of their heart was
only corrupt & that continually. Not because he conceived
at their wickedness - not because he did not abhor
& detest it. Nay, so great was ^{his} abhorrence that it should
be repented that he had made them. ^{over given in his mercy} Not that we are
understand this in the same sense we would understand
it when we say that we repent of doing anything. God
repents not. He is never sorry for doing anything in the
sense that we can sorry. This is only the imperfection of human
language to express the feeling of his divine mind. The meaning
is that God had such a feeling against their sin that in order
to give us some idea of how strong that feeling was he employed
such language as expresses the strongest human feelings under
the same circumstances. He saw all their wickedness & being
it with the strongest feeling of opposition to it that his intelligence
against it. Yet he stays the vented persecutions & waits wonderful
long suffering bears with them for more than 1500 years.
Look how long he suffered with the ungodly cities of Sodom &
Gomorrah since he stayed altogether the persecutions due
to their enormity, coming in even the small number of their
inhabitants. Look how he bore & suffered for forty years with
the murmuring & rebellion of the Israelites in the wilderness.
Moses brought the Lord down with their children of Israel for the
very reason that they were a stiff-necked & rebellious people.
As much as to say that human patience would be worn out
human forbearance would be exhausted - nothing but
divine patience nothing but the long suffering of God

could endure with such a people. But why look at
their history & at other people for exhibiting of God's long
suffering. Look at yourselves, at your own history. How
old are you? Ten years - 15 years young Sunday - 20
30 40 or more years. For so many years has God's for-
bearance borne with you this long suffering stage, the pen-
-itence which your sins have so justly merited. How could you
for. ^{Why} is it that you can bear to day listening to the preaching
of the gospel & going in songs of praise rather than going
listening to the preaching of death & going in the weeping mourning
of despair? What is it that the blood courses vigorously through
your veins & the bloom of health tints your cheeks, rather than
the decay of mortality & the corruption of the grave. God's for-
-bearance & forbearance - long suffering to you could be less forbearance
suffered than long with you not because he has not seen
your sins. He has seen every one of them & they have been re-
-corded day by day, others by heart & minute by minute.
You have given him not a few provocations - your whole
life has been but one continued series of provocations. He
has stored & noted all these provocations & recorded them
upon the tables of his everlasting remembrance. He has
forborne with you not because he was indifferently to
your sins. His holy nature has been angry with you every day
his righteous indignation has raged upon you sleeping &
waking his stern justice has held the uplifted sword
above you in striking attitude & ready to fall at every
moment yet his forbearance has stayed the uplifted sword
has checked the outbreak of his hot displeasure & this
morning here in the house of God you are the
living monuments of God's long suffering. Consider
further that not is his forbearance long suffering exhibited in
this withholding the merited punishment year after year but
also in giving timely notice & warning that it is coming. He
does not withhold it that he may suddenly unawares &
with the greater collected fury let it fall upon us but
that he may give us warning to flee from it. He sends pre-
-monitory symptoms as it were frequent foretells of the final down-
-fall brings on such final doom after warning & provocation
have been disregarded divine patience exhausted & mere-
-ly with drawn absolutely compelled the divine catastrophe
He gave the old world 120 years notice of the coming pen-
-itence & in the natural day then repeated & constant warning
to flee that punishment & only inflicted after an obstinate
persistence in wickedness compelled this dreadful necessity.
He brought judgment upon Pharaoh & his
house & his army & his people as the Lord God & the waters of the
Red Sea swallowed him up only after he had disregarded

its permissum, when you look back upon your past life
see how they have been spent - to how little good you
- from you have kind - how little you have thought or cared
of for God - how wayward you have been - how eagerly you
have chased the vain & frivolous shows of this world - how you have
immured yourself in worldly-mindedness & God-forsakenness - is not
the thought calculated to touch your heart & move it to a pen-
-itence that would be all your waywardness & sinfulness &
forgetfulness of God he has borne patiently with you - he
has forgiven & long-suffered. Is not the thought enough
to make to say Nay but I yield I yield I can hold out
no more. I could have held out longer if God had
chided - I could have struck my head against him if
he had upbraided me & scourged me and so very wayward-
ness but to be so patient with me to be so forbearing
to be so long-suffering - to give mercies to me for the cause
I give to him to give blessing to me for the ingratitude
I returned to him - Oh this is too heart-affecting I yield
I yield I can hold out no more I sink by patient
love compelled & own the conqueror. God keep you to
do so



