

**AN EXPOSITION, WITH PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS, OF****THE EPISTLE TO****THE HEBREWS**

This epistle shows Christ as the end, foundation, body, and truth of the figures of the law, which of themselves were no virtue for the soul. The great truth set forth in this epistle is that Jesus of Nazareth is the true God. The unconverted Jews used many arguments to draw their converted brethren from the Christian faith. They represented the law of Moses as superior to the Christian dispensation, and spoke against every thing connected with the Savior. The apostle, therefore, shows the superiority of Jesus of Nazareth, as the Son of God, and the benefits from his sufferings and death as the sacrifice for sin, so that the Christian religion is much more excellent and perfect than that of Moses. And the principal design seems to be, to bring the converted Hebrews forward in the knowledge of the gospel, and thus to establish them in the Christian faith, and to prevent their turning from it, against which they are earnestly warned. But while it contains many things suitable to the Hebrews of early times, it also contains many which can never cease to interest the church of God; for the knowledge of Jesus Christ is the very marrow and kernel of all the Scriptures. The ceremonial law is full of Christ, and all the gospel is full of Christ; the blessed lines of both Testaments meet in Him; and how they both agree and sweetly unite in Jesus Christ, is the chief object of the epistle to the Hebrews to discover.

## CHAPTER 1

*The surpassing dignity of the Son of God in his Divine person, and in his creating and mediatorial work. (1-3) And in his superiority to all the holy angels. (4-14)*

### **Hebrews 1:1**

**Vs. 1-3:** God spake to his ancient people at sundry times, through successive generations, and in divers manners, as he thought proper; sometimes by personal directions, sometimes by dreams, sometimes by visions, sometimes by Divine influences on the minds of the prophets. The gospel revelation is excellent above the former; in that it is a revelation which God has made by his Son. In beholding the power, wisdom, and goodness of the Lord Jesus Christ, we behold the power, wisdom, and goodness of the Father, <sup>340</sup>John 14:7; the fullness of the Godhead dwells, not typically, or in a figure, but really, in him. When, on the fall of man, the world was breaking to pieces under the wrath and curse of God, the Son of God, undertaking the work of redemption, sustained it by his almighty power and goodness. From the glory of the person and office of Christ, we proceed to the glory of his grace. The glory of His person and nature, gave to his sufferings such merit as was a full satisfaction to the honor of God, who suffered an infinite injury and affront by the sins of men. We never can be thankful enough that God has in so many ways, and with such increasing clearness, spoken to us fallen sinners concerning salvation. That he should by himself cleanse us from our sins is a wonder of love beyond our utmost powers of admiration, gratitude, and praise.

### **Hebrews 1:4**

**Vs. 4-14:** Many Jews had a superstitious or idolatrous respect for angels, because they had received the law and other tidings of the Divine will by their ministry. They looked upon them as mediators between God and men, and some went so far as to pay them a kind of religious homage or worship. Thus it was necessary that the apostle should insist, not only on Christ's being the Creator of all things, and therefore of angels themselves, but as being the risen and exalted Messiah in human nature, to whom angels, authorities, and powers are made subject. To prove this, several

passages are brought from the Old Testament. On comparing what God there says of the angels, with what he says to Christ, the inferiority of the angels to Christ plainly appears. Here is the office of the angels; they are God's ministers or servants, to do his pleasure. But, how much greater things are said of Christ by the Father! And let us own and honor him as God; for if he had not been God, he had never done the Mediator's work, and had never worn the Mediator's crown. It is declared how Christ was qualified for the office of Mediator, and how he was confirmed in it: he has the name Messiah from his being anointed. Only as Man he has his fellows, and as anointed with the Holy Spirit; but he is above all prophets, priests, and kings, that ever were employed in the service of God on earth. Another passage of Scripture, <sup><B>1422</sup> Psalm 102:25-27: is recited, in which the Almighty power of the Lord Jesus Christ is declared, both in creating the world and in changing it. Christ will fold up this world as a garment, not to be abused any longer, not to be used as it has been. As a sovereign, when his garments of state are folded and put away, is a sovereign still, so our Lord, when he has laid aside the earth and heavens like a vesture, shall be still the same. Let us not then set our hearts upon that which is not what we take it to be, and will not be what it now is. Sin has made a great change in the world for the worse, and Christ will make a great change in it for the better. Let the thoughts of this make us watchful, diligent, and desirous of that better world. The Savior has done much to make all men his friends, yet he has enemies. But they shall be made his footstool, by humble submission, or by utter destruction. Christ shall go on conquering and to conquer. The most exalted angels are but ministering spirits, mere servants of Christ, to execute his commands. The saints, at present, are heirs, not yet come into possession. The angels minister to them in opposing the malice and power of evil spirits, in protecting and keeping their bodies, instructing and comforting their souls, under Christ and the Holy Ghost. Angels shall gather all the saints together at the last day, when all whose hearts and hopes are set upon perishing treasures and fading glories, will be driven from Christ's presence into everlasting misery.

## CHAPTER 2

*The duty of steadfastly adhering to Christ and his gospel. (1-4) His sufferings are no objection against his pre-eminence. (5-9) The reason of his sufferings, and the fitness of them. (10-13) Christ's taking the nature of man, and not his taking the nature of angels, was necessary to his priestly office. (14-18)*

### Hebrews 2:1

**Vs. 1-4:** Christ being proved to be superior to the angels, this doctrine is applied. Our minds and memories are like a leaky vessel, they do not, without much care, retain what is poured into them. This proceeds from the corruption of our nature, temptations, worldly cares, and pleasures. Sinning against the gospel is neglect of this great salvation; it is a contempt of the saving grace of God in Christ, making light of it, not caring for it, not regarding either the worth of gospel grace, or the want of it, and our undone state without it. The Lord's judgments under the gospel dispensation are chiefly spiritual, but are on that account the more to be dreaded. Here is an appeal to the consciences of sinners. Even partial neglects will not escape rebukes; they often bring darkness on the souls they do not finally ruin. The setting forth the gospel was continued and confirmed by those who heard Christ, by the evangelists and apostles, who were witnesses of what Jesus Christ began both to do and to teach; and by the gifts of the Holy Ghost, qualified for the work to which they were called. And all this according to God's own will. It was the will of God that we should have sure ground for our faith, and a strong foundation for our hope in receiving the gospel. Let us mind this one thing needful, and attend to the Holy Scriptures, written by those who heard the words of our gracious Lord, and were inspired by his Spirit; then we shall be blessed with the good part that cannot be taken away.

### Hebrews 2:5

**Vs. 5-9:** Neither the state in which the church is at present, nor its more completely restored state, when the prince of this world shall be cast out, and the kingdoms of the earth become the kingdom of Christ, is left to the government of the angels: Christ will take to him his great power, and will

reign. And what is the moving cause of all the kindness God shows to men in giving Christ for them and to them? it is the grace of God. As a reward of Christ's humiliation in suffering death, he has unlimited dominion over all things; thus this ancient scripture was fulfilled in him. Thus God has done wonderful things for us in creation and providence, but for these we have made the basest returns.

### **Hebrews 2:10**

**Vs. 10-13:** Whatever the proud, carnal, and unbelieving may imagine or object, the spiritual mind will see peculiar glory in the cross of Christ, and be satisfied that it became Him, who in all things displays his own perfections in bringing many sons to glory, to make the Author of their salvation perfect through sufferings. His way to the crown was by the cross, and so must that of his people be. Christ sanctifies; he has purchased and sent the sanctifying Spirit: the Spirit sanctifies as the Spirit of Christ. True believers are sanctified, endowed with holy principles and powers, set apart to high and holy uses and purposes. Christ and believers are all of one heavenly Father, who is God. They are brought into relation with Christ. But the words, his not being ashamed to call them brethren, express the high superiority of Christ to the human nature. This is shown from three texts of Scripture. See [Psalm 22:22](#); [18:2](#); [Isaiah 8:18](#).

### **Hebrews 2:14**

**Vs. 14-18:** The angels fell, and remained without hope or help. Christ never designed to be the Savior of the fallen angels, therefore he did not take their nature; and the nature of angels could not be an atoning sacrifice for the sin of man. Here is a price paid, enough for all, and suitable to all, for it was in our nature. Here the wonderful love of God appeared, that, when Christ knew what he must suffer in our nature, and how he must die in it, yet he readily took it upon him. And this atonement made way for his people's deliverance from Satan's bondage, and for the pardon of their sins through faith. Let those who dread death, and strive to get the better of their terrors, no longer attempt to outbrave or to stifle them, no longer grow careless or wicked through despair. Let them not expect help from the world, or human devices; but let them seek pardon, peace, grace, and a lively hope of heaven, by faith in Him who died and rose again, that thus they may rise above the fear of death. The remembrance of his own

sorrows and temptations, makes Christ mindful of the trials of his people, and ready to help them. He is ready and willing to succor those who are tempted, and seek him. He became man, and was tempted, that he might be every way qualified to succor his people, seeing that he had passed through the same temptations himself, but continued perfectly free from sin. Then let not the afflicted and tempted despond, or give place to Satan, as if temptations made it wrong for them to come to the Lord in prayer. Not soul ever perished under temptation, that cried unto the Lord from real alarm at its danger, with faith and expectation of relief. This is our duty upon our first being surprised by temptations, and would stop their progress, which is our wisdom.

## CHAPTER 3

*The superior worth and dignity of Christ above Moses is shown. (1-6) The Hebrews are warned of the sin and danger of unbelief. (7-13) And of necessity of faith in Christ, and of steadfastly following him. (14-19)*

### **Hebrews 3:1**

**Vs. 1-6:** Christ is to be considered as the Apostle of our profession, the Messenger sent by God to men, the great Revealer of that faith which we profess to hold, and of that hope which we profess to have. As Christ, the Messiah, anointed for the office both of Apostle and High Priest. As Jesus, our Savior, our Healer, the great Physician of souls. Consider him thus. Consider what he is in himself, what he is to us, and what he will be to us hereafter and for ever. Close and serious thoughts of Christ bring us to know more of him. The Jews had a high opinion of the faithfulness of Moses, yet his faithfulness was but a type of Christ's. Christ was the Master of this house, of his church, his people, as well as their Maker. Moses was a faithful servant; Christ, as the eternal Son of God, is rightful Owner and Sovereign Ruler of the Church. There must not only be setting out well in the ways of Christ, but steadfastness and perseverance therein to the end. Every meditation on his person and his salvation, will suggest more wisdom, new motives to love, confidence, and obedience.

### **Hebrews 3:7**

**Vs. 7-13:** Days of temptation are often days of provocation. But to provoke God, when he is letting us see that we entirely depend and live upon him, is a provocation indeed. The hardening of the heart is the spring of all other sins. The sins of others, especially of our relations, should be warnings to us. All sin, especially sin committed by God's professing, privileged people, not only provokes God, but it grieves him. God is loath to destroy any in, or for their sin; he waits long to be gracious to them. But sin, long persisted in, will make God's wrath discover itself in destroying the impenitent; there is no resting under the wrath of God. "Take heed:" all who would get safe to heaven must look about them; if once we allow ourselves to distrust God, we may soon desert him. Let

those that think they stand, take heed lest they fall. Since tomorrow is not ours, we must make the best improvement of this day. And there are none, even the strongest of the flock, who do not need help of other Christians. Neither are there any so low and despised, but the care of their standing in the faith, and of their safety, belongs to all. Sin has so many ways and colors, that we need more eyes than our own. Sin appears fair, but is vile; it appears pleasant, but is destructive; it promises much, but performs nothing. The deceitfulness of sin hardens the soul; one sin allowed makes way for another; and every act of sin confirms the habit. Let every one beware of sin.

### **Hebrews 3:14**

**Vs. 14-19:** The saints' privilege is, they are made partakers of Christ, that is, of the Spirit, the nature, graces, righteousness, and life of Christ; they are interested in all Christ is, in all he has done, or will do. The same spirit with which Christians set out in the ways of God, they should maintain unto the end. Perseverance in faith is the best evidence of the sincerity of our faith. Hearing the word often is a means of salvation, yet, if not hearkened to, it will expose more to the Divine wrath. The happiness of being partakers of Christ and his complete salvation, and the fear of God's wrath and eternal misery, should stir us up to persevere in the life of obedient faith. Let us beware of trusting to outward privileges or professions, and pray to be numbered with the true believers who enter heaven, when all others fail because of unbelief. As our obedience follows according to the power of our faith, so our sins and want of care are according to the prevailing of unbelief in us.



## CHAPTER 4

*Humble, cautious fear is urged, lest any should come short of the promised rest, through unbelief. (1-10) Arguments and motives to faith and hope in our approaches to God. (11-16)*

### **Hebrews 4:1**

**Vs. 1-10:** The privileges we have under the gospel, are greater than any had under the law of Moses, though the same gospel for substance was preached under both Testaments. There have been in all ages many unprofitable hearers; and unbelief is at the root of all unfruitfulness under the word. Faith in the hearer is the life of the word. But it is a painful consequence of partial neglect, and of a loose and wavering profession, that they often cause men to seem to come short. Let us then give diligence, that we may have a clear entrance into the kingdom of God. As God finished his work, and then rested from it, so he will cause those who believe, to finish their work, and then to enjoy their rest. It is evident, that there is a more spiritual and excellent Sabbath remaining for the people of God, than that of the seventh day, or that into which Joshua led the Jews. This rest is, a rest of grace, and comfort, and holiness, in the gospel state. And a rest in glory, where the people of God shall enjoy the end of their faith, and the object of all their desires. The rest, or sabbatism, which is the subject of the apostle's reasoning, and as to which he concludes that it remains to be enjoyed, is undoubtedly the heavenly rest, which remains to the people of God, and is opposed to a state of labor and trouble in this world. It is the rest they shall obtain when the Lord Jesus shall appear from heaven. But those who do not believe, shall never enter into this spiritual rest, either of grace here or glory hereafter. God has always declared man's rest to be in him, and his love to be the only real happiness of the soul; and faith in his promises, through his Son, to be the only way of entering that rest.

### **Hebrews 4:11**

**Vs. 11-16:** Observe the end proposed: rest spiritual and eternal; the rest of grace here, and glory hereafter; in Christ on earth, with Christ in heaven. After due and diligent labor, sweet and satisfying rest shall follow; and

labor now, will make that rest more pleasant when it comes. Let us labor, and quicken each other to be diligent in duty. The Holy Scriptures are the word of God. When God sets it home by his Spirit, it convinces powerfully, converts powerfully, and comforts powerfully. It makes a soul that has long been proud, to be humble; and a perverse spirit, to be meek and obedient. Sinful habits, that are become as it were natural to the soul, and rooted deeply in it, are separated and cut off by this sword. It will discover to men their thoughts and purposes, the vileness of many, the bad principles they are moved by, the sinful ends they act to. The word will show the sinner all that is in his heart. Let us hold fast the doctrines of Christian faith in our heads, its enlivening principles in our hearts, the open profession of it in our lips, and be subject to it in our lives. Christ executed one part of his priesthood on earth, in dying for us; the other he executes in heaven, pleading the cause, and presenting the offerings of his people. In the sight of Infinite Wisdom, it was needful that the Savior of men should be one who has the fellow-feeling which no being but a fellow-creature could possibly have; and therefore it was necessary he should have actual experience of all the effects of sin that could be separated from its actual guilt. God sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, ~~EXX~~ Romans 8:3: but the more holy and pure he was, the more he must have been unwilling in his nature to sin, and must have had deeper impression of its evil; consequently the more must he be concerned to deliver his people from its guilt and power. We should encourage ourselves by the excellence of our High Priest, to come boldly to the throne of grace. Mercy and grace are the things we want; mercy to pardon all our sins, and grace to purify our souls. Besides our daily dependence upon God for present supplies, there are seasons for which we should provide in our prayers; times of temptation, either by adversity or prosperity, and especially our dying time. We are to come with reverence and godly fear, yet not as if dragged to the seat of justice, but as kindly invited to the mercy-seat, where grace reigns. We have boldness to enter into the holiest only by the blood of Jesus; he is our Advocate, and has purchased all our souls want or can desire.

## CHAPTER 5

*The office and duty of a high priest abundantly answered in Christ. (1-10) The Christian Hebrews reproved for their little progress in the knowledge of the gospel. (11-14)*

### **Hebrews 5:1**

**Vs. 1-10:** The High Priest must be a man, a partaker of our nature. This shows that man had sinned. For God would not suffer sinful man to come to him alone. But every one is welcome to God, that comes to him by this High Priest; and as we value acceptance with God, and pardon, we must apply by faith to this our great High Priest Christ Jesus, who can intercede for those that are out of the way of truth, duty, and happiness; one who has tenderness to lead them back from the by-paths of error, sin, and misery. Those only can expect assistance from God, and acceptance with him, and his presence and blessing on them and their services, that are called of God. This is applied to Christ. In the days of his flesh, Christ made himself subject to death: he hungered: he was a tempted, suffering, dying Jesus. Christ set an example, not only to pray, but to be fervent in prayer. How many dry prayers, how few wetted with tears, do we offer up to God! He was strengthened to support the immense weight of suffering laid upon him. There is no real deliverance from death but to be carried through it. He was raised and exalted, and to him was given the power of saving all sinners to the uttermost, who come unto God through him. Christ has left us an example that we should learn humble obedience to the will of God, by all our afflictions. We need affliction, to teach us submission. His obedience in our nature encourages our attempts to obey, and for us to expect support and comfort under all the temptations and sufferings to which we are exposed. Being made perfect for this great work, he is become the Author of eternal salvation to all that obey him. But are we of that number?

### **Hebrews 5:11**

**Vs. 11-14:** Dull hearers make the preaching of the gospel difficult, and even those who have some faith may be dull hearers, and slow to believe. Much is looked for from those to whom much is given. To be unskillful,

denotes want of experience in the things of the gospel. Christian experience is a spiritual sense, taste, or relish of the goodness, sweetness, and excellence of the truths of the gospel. And no tongue can express the satisfaction which the soul receives, from a sense of Divine goodness, grace, and love to it in Christ.

## CHAPTER 6

*The Hebrews are urged to go forward in the doctrine of Christ, and the consequences of apostasy, or turning back, are described. (1-8)  
The apostle expresses satisfaction, as to the most of them. (9, 10)  
And encourages them to persevere in faith and holiness. (11-20)*

### **Hebrews 6:1**

**Vs. 1-8:** Every part of the truth and will of God should be set before all who profess the gospel, and be urged on their hearts and consciences. We should not be always speaking about outward things; these have their places and use, but often take up too much attention and time, which might be better employed. The humbled sinner who pleads guilty, and cries for mercy, can have no ground from this passage to be discouraged, whatever his conscience may accuse him of. Nor does it prove that any one who is made a new creature in Christ, ever becomes a final apostate from him. The apostle is not speaking of the falling away of mere professors, never convinced or influenced by the gospel. Such have nothing to fall away from, but an empty name, or hypocritical profession. Neither is he speaking of partial declinings or backslidings. Nor are such sins meant, as Christians fall into through the strength of temptations, or the power of some worldly or fleshly lust. But the falling away here mentioned, is an open and avowed renouncing of Christ, from enmity of heart against him, his cause, and people, by men approving in their minds the deeds of his murderers, and all this after they have received the knowledge of the truth, and tasted some of its comforts. Of these it is said, that it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance. Not because the blood of Christ is not sufficient to obtain pardon for this sin; but this sin, in its very nature, is opposite to repentance and every thing that leads to it. If those who through mistaken views of this passage, as well as of their own case, fear that there is no mercy for them, would attend to the account given of the nature of this sin, that it is a total and a willing renouncing of Christ, and his cause, and joining with his enemies, it would relieve them from wrong fears. We should ourselves beware, and caution others, of every approach near to a gulf so awful as apostasy; yet in doing this we should keep close to the word of God, and be careful not to wound

and terrify the weak, or discourage the fallen and penitent. Believers not only taste of the word of God, but they drink it in. And this fruitful field or garden receives the blessing. But the merely nominal Christian, continuing unfruitful under the means of grace, or producing nothing but deceit and selfishness, was near the awful state above described; and everlasting misery was the end reserved for him. Let us watch with humble caution and prayer as to ourselves.

### **Hebrews 6:9**

**Vs. 9, 10:** There are things that are never separated from salvation; things that show the person to be in a state of salvation, and which will end in eternal salvation. And the things that accompany salvation, are better things than ever any dissembler or apostate enjoyed. The works of love, done for the glory of Christ, or done to his saints for Christ's sake, from time to time, as God gives occasion, are evident marks of a man's salvation; and more sure tokens of saving grace given, than the enlightenings and tastings spoken of before. No love is to be reckoned as love, but working love; and no works are right works, which flow not from love to Christ.

### **Hebrews 6:11**

**Vs. 11-20:** The hope here meant, is a sure looking for good things promised, through those promises, with love, desire, and valuing of them. Hope has its degrees, as faith also. The promise of blessedness God has made to believers, is from God's eternal purpose, settled between the eternal Father, Son, and Spirit. These promises of God may safely be depended upon; for here we have two things which cannot change, the counsel and the oath of God, in which it is not possible for God to lie; it would be contrary to his nature as well as to his will. And as He cannot lie, the destruction of the unbeliever, and the salvation of the believer, are alike certain. Here observe, those to whom God has given full security of happiness, have a title to the promises by inheritance. The consolations of God are strong enough to support his people under their heaviest trials. Here is a refuge for all sinners who flee to the mercy of God, through the redemption of Christ, according to the covenant of grace, laying aside all other confidences. We are in this world as a ship at sea, tossed up and down, and in danger of being cast away. We need an anchor to keep us

sure and steady. Gospel hope is our anchor in the storms of this world. It is sure and steadfast, or it could not keep us so. The free grace of God, the merits and mediation of Christ, and the powerful influences of his Spirit, are the grounds of this hope, and so it is a steadfast hope. Christ is the object and ground of the believer's hope. Let us therefore set our affections on things above, and wait patiently for his appearance, when we shall certainly appear with him in glory.

## CHAPTER 7

*A comparison between the priesthood of Melchisedec and that of Christ. (1-3) The excellence of Christ's priesthood above the Levitical priesthood is shown. (4-10) This is applied to Christ. (11-25) The faith and hope of the church encouraged from this. (26-28)*

### **Hebrews 7:1**

**Vs. 1-3:** Melchisedec met Abraham when returning from the rescue of Lot. His name, "King of Righteousness," doubtless suitable to his character, marked him as a type of the Messiah and his kingdom. The name of his city signified "Peace;" and as king of peace he typified Christ, the Prince of Peace, the great Reconciler of God and man. Nothing is recorded as to the beginning or end of his life; thus he typically resembled the Son of God, whose existence is from everlasting to everlasting, who had no one that was before him, and will have no one come after him, in his priesthood. Every part of Scripture honors the great King of Righteousness and Peace, our glorious High Priest and Savior; and the more we examine it, the more we shall be convinced, that the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

### **Hebrews 7:4**

**Vs. 4-10:** That High Priest who should afterward appear, of whom Melchisedec was a type, must be much superior to the Levitical priests. Observe Abraham's great dignity and happiness; that he had the promises. That man is rich and happy indeed, who has the promises, both of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. This honor have all those who receive the Lord Jesus. Let us go forth in our spiritual conflicts, trusting in his word and strength, ascribing our victories to his grace, and desiring to be met and blessed by him in all our ways.

### **Hebrews 7:11**

**Vs. 11-25:** The priesthood and law by which perfection could not come, are done away; a Priest is risen, and a dispensation now set up, by which



true believers may be made perfect. That there is such a change is plain. The law which made the Levitical priesthood, showed that the priests were frail, dying creatures, not able to save their own lives, much less could they save the souls of those who came to them. But the High Priest of our profession holds his office by the power of endless life in himself; not only to keep himself alive, but to give spiritual and eternal life to all who rely upon his sacrifice and intercession. The better covenant, of which Jesus was the Surety, is not here contrasted with the covenant of works, by which every transgressor is shut up under the curse. It is distinguished from the Sinai covenant with Israel, and the legal dispensation under which the church so long remained. The better covenant brought the church and every believer into clearer light, more perfect liberty, and more abundant privileges. In the order of Aaron there was a multitude of priests, of high priests one after another; but in the priesthood of Christ there is only one and the same. This is the believer's safety and happiness, that this everlasting High Priest is able to save to the uttermost, in all times, in all cases. Surely then it becomes us to desire a spirituality and holiness, as much beyond those of the Old Testament believers, as our advantages exceed theirs.

### **Hebrews 7:26**

**Vs. 26-28:** Observe the description of the personal holiness of Christ. He is free from all habits or principles of sin, not having the least disposition to it in his nature. No sin dwells in him, not the least sinful inclination, though such dwells in the best of Christians. He is harmless, free from all actual transgression; he did no violence, nor was there any deceit in his mouth. He is undefiled. It is hard to keep ourselves pure, so as not to partake the guilt of other men's sins. But none need be dismayed who come to God in the name of his beloved Son. Let them be assured that he will deliver them in the time of trial and suffering, in the time of prosperity, in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment.

## CHAPTER 8

*The excellence of Christ's priesthood above that of Aaron is shown.*

*(1-6) The great excellence of the new covenant above the former.*

*(7-13)*

### ~~8:1~~ Hebrews 8:1

**Vs. 1-6:** The substance, or summary, of what had been declared was, that Christians had such a High Priest as they needed. He took upon himself human nature, appeared on earth, and there gave himself as a sacrifice to God for the sins of his people. We must not dare to approach God, or to present any thing to him, but in and through Christ, depending upon his merits and mediation; for we are accepted only in the Beloved. In all obedience and worship, we should keep close to God's word, which is the only and perfect standard. Christ is the substance and end of the law of righteousness. But the covenant here referred to, was that made with Israel as a nation, securing temporal benefits to them. The promises of all spiritual blessings, and of eternal life, revealed in the gospel, and made sure through Christ, are of infinitely greater value. Let us bless God that we have a High Priest that suits our helpless condition.

### ~~8:7~~ Hebrews 8:7

**Vs. 7-13:** The superior excellence of the priesthood of Christ, above that of Aaron, is shown from that covenant of grace, of which Christ was Mediator. The law not only made all subject to it, liable to be condemned for the guilt of sin, but also was unable to remove that guilt, and clear the conscience from the sense and terror of it. Whereas, by the blood of Christ, a full remission of sins was provided, so that God would remember them no more. God once wrote his laws to his people, now he will write his laws in them; he will give them understanding to know and to believe his laws; he will give them memories to retain them; he will give them hearts to love them, courage to profess them, and power to put them in practice. This is the foundation of the covenant; and when this is laid, duty will be done wisely, sincerely, readily, easily, resolutely, constantly, and with comfort. A plentiful outpouring of the Spirit of God will make the ministration of the gospel so effectual, that there shall be a mighty

increase and spreading of Christian knowledge in persons of all sorts. Oh that this promise might be fulfilled in our days, that the hand of God may be with his ministers so that great numbers may believe, and be turned to the Lord! The pardon of sin will always be found to accompany the true knowledge of God. Notice the freeness of this pardon; its fullness; its fixedness. This pardoning mercy is connected with all other spiritual mercies: unpardoned sin hinders mercy, and pulls down judgments; but the pardon of sin prevents judgment, and opens a wide door to all spiritual blessings. Let us search whether we are taught by the Holy Spirit to know Christ, so as uprightly to love, fear, trust, and obey him. All worldly vanities, outward privileges, or mere notions of religion, will soon vanish away, and leave those who trust in them miserable for ever.

## CHAPTER 9

*The Jewish tabernacle and its utensils. (1-5) Their use and meaning. (6-10) These fulfilled in Christ. (11-22) The necessity, superior dignity, and power of his priesthood and sacrifice. (23-28)*

### **Hebrews 9:1**

**Vs. 1-5:** The apostle shows to the Hebrews the typical reference of their ceremonies to Christ. The tabernacle was a movable temple, shadowing forth the unsettled state of the church upon earth, and the human nature of the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom the fullness of the Godhead dwelt bodily. The typical meaning of these things has been shown in former remarks, and the ordinances and articles of the Mosaic covenant point out Christ as our Light, and as the Bread of life to our souls; and remind us of his Divine Person, his holy priesthood, perfect righteousness, and all-prevailing intercession. Thus was the Lord Jesus Christ, all and in all, from the beginning. And as interpreted by the gospel, these things are a glorious representation of the wisdom of God, and confirm faith in Him who was prefigured by them.

### **Hebrews 9:6**

**Vs. 6-10:** The apostle goes on to speak of the Old Testament services. Christ, having undertaken to be our High Priest, could not enter into heaven till he had shed his blood for us; and none of us can enter, either into God's gracious presence here, or his glorious presence hereafter, but by the blood of Jesus. Sins are errors, great errors, both in judgment and practice; and who can understand all his errors? They leave guilt upon the conscience, not to be washed away but by the blood of Christ. We must plead this blood on earth, while he is pleading it for us in heaven. A few believers, under the Divine teaching, saw something of the way of access to God, of communion with him, and of admission into heaven through the promised Redeemer, but the Israelites in general looked no further than the outward forms. These could not take away the defilement or dominion of sin. They could neither discharge the debts, nor resolve the doubts, of him who did the service. Gospel times are, and should be, times of reformation, of clearer light as to all things needful to be known, and of greater love,

causing us to bear ill-will to none, but goodwill to all. We have greater freedom, both of spirit and speech, in the gospel, and greater obligations to a more holy living.

### **Hebrews 9:11**

**Vs. 11-14:** All good things past, present, and to come, were and are founded upon the priestly office of Christ, and come to us from thence. Our High Priest entered into heaven once for all, and has obtained eternal redemption. The Holy Ghost further signified and showed that the Old Testament sacrifices only freed the outward man from ceremonial uncleanness, and fitted him for some outward privileges. What gave such power to the blood of Christ? It was Christ's offering himself without any sinful stain in his nature or life. This cleanses the most guilty conscience from dead, or deadly, works to serve the living God; from sinful works, such as pollute the soul, as dead bodies did the persons of the Jews who touched them; while the grace that seals pardon, new-creates the polluted soul. Nothing more destroys the faith of the gospel, than by any means to weaken the direct power of the blood of Christ. The depth of the mystery of the sacrifice of Christ, we cannot dive into, the height we cannot comprehend. We cannot search out the greatness of it, or the wisdom, the love, the grace that is in it. But in considering the sacrifice of Christ, faith finds life, food, and refreshment.

### **Hebrews 9:15**

**Vs. 15-22:** The solemn transactions between God and man, are sometimes called a covenant, here a testament, which is a willing deed of a person, bestowing legacies on such persons as are described, and it only takes effect upon his death. Thus Christ died, not only to obtain the blessings of salvation for us, but to give power to the disposal of them. All, by sin, were become guilty before God, had forfeited every thing that is good; but God, willing to show the greatness of his mercy, proclaimed a covenant of grace. Nothing could be clean to a sinner, not even his religious duties; except as his guilt was done away by the death of a sacrifice, of value sufficient for that end, and unless he continually depended upon it. May we ascribe all real good works to the same all-procuring cause, and offer our spiritual sacrifices as sprinkled with Christ's blood, and so purified from their defilement.

**Hebrews 9:23**

**Vs. 23-28:** It is evident that the sacrifices of Christ are infinitely better than those of the law, which could neither procure pardon for sin, nor impart power against it. Sin would still have been upon us, and have had dominion over us; but Jesus Christ, by one sacrifice, has destroyed the works of the devil, that believers may be made righteous, holy, and happy. As no wisdom, learning, virtue, wealth, or power, can keep one of the human race from death, so nothing can deliver a sinner from being condemned at the day of judgment, except the atoning sacrifice of Christ; nor will one be saved from eternal punishment who despises or neglects this great salvation. The believer knows that his Redeemer liveth, and that he shall see him. Here is the faith and patience of the church, of all sincere believers. Hence is their continual prayer as the fruit and expression of their faith, Even so come, Lord Jesus.

## CHAPTER 10

*The insufficiency of sacrifices for taking away sin, The necessity and power of the sacrifice of Christ for that purpose. (1-18) An argument for holy boldness in the believer's access to God through Jesus Christ, And for steadfastness in faith, and mutual love and duty. (19-25) The danger of apostasy. (26-31) The sufferings of believers, and encouragement to maintain their holy profession. (32-39)*

### **Hebrews 10:1**

**Vs. 1-10:** The apostle having shown that the tabernacle, and ordinances of the covenant of Sinai, were only emblems and types of the gospel, concludes that the sacrifices the high priests offered continually, could not make the worshippers perfect, with respect to pardon, and the purifying of their consciences. But when "God manifested in the flesh," became the sacrifice, and his death upon the accursed tree the ransom, then the Sufferer being of infinite worth, his free-will sufferings were of infinite value. The atoning sacrifice must be one capable of consenting, and must of his own will place himself in the sinner's stead: Christ did so. The fountain of all that Christ has done for his people, is the sovereign will and grace of God. The righteousness brought in, and the sacrifice once offered by Christ, are of eternal power, and his salvation shall never be done away. They are of power to make all the comers thereunto perfect; they derive from the atoning blood, strength and motives for obedience, and inward comfort.

### **Hebrews 10:11**

**Vs. 11-18:** Under the new covenant, or gospel dispensation, full and final pardon is to be had. This makes a vast difference between the new covenant and the old one. Under the old, sacrifices must be often repeated, and after all, only pardon as to this world was to be obtained by them. Under the new, one Sacrifice is enough to procure for all nations and ages, spiritual pardon, or being freed from punishment in the world to come. Well might this be called a new covenant. Let none suppose that human inventions can avail those who put them in the place of the sacrifice of the

Son of God. What then remains, but that we seek an interest in this Sacrifice by faith; and the seal of it to our souls, by the sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience? So that by the law being written in our hearts, we may know that we are justified, and that God will no more remember our sins.

### **Hebrews 10:19**

**Vs. 19-25:** The apostle having closed the first part of the epistle, the doctrine is applied to practical purposes. As believers had an open way to the presence of God, it became them to use this privilege. The way and means by which Christians enjoy such privileges, is by the blood of Jesus, by the merit of that blood which he offered up as an atoning sacrifice. The agreement of infinite holiness with pardoning mercy, was not clearly understood till the human nature of Christ, the Son of God, was wounded and bruised for our sins. Our way to heaven is by a crucified Savior; his death is to us the way of life, and to those who believe this, he will be precious. They must draw near to God; it would be contempt of Christ, still to keep at a distance. Their bodies were to be washed with pure water, alluding to the cleansings directed under the law: thus the use of water in baptism, was to remind Christians that their conduct should be pure and holy. While they derived comfort and grace from their reconciled Father to their own souls, they would adorn the doctrine of God their Savior in all things. Believers are to consider how they can be of service to each other, especially stirring up each other to the more vigorous and abundant exercise of love, and the practice of good works. The communion of saints is a great help and privilege, and a means of steadfastness and perseverance. We should observe the coming of times of trial, and be thereby quickened to greater diligence. There is a trying day coming on all men, the day of our death.

### **Hebrews 10:26**

**Vs. 26-31:** The exhortations against apostasy and to perseverance, are urged by many strong reasons. The sin here mentioned is a total and final falling away, when men, with a full and fixed will and resolution, despise and reject Christ, the only Savior; despise and resist the Spirit, the only Sanctifier; and despise and renounce the gospel, the only way of salvation, and the words of eternal life. Of this destruction God gives some notorious



sinner, while on earth, a fearful foreboding in their consciences, with despair of being able to endure or to escape it. But what punishment can be sorer than to die without mercy? We answer, to die by mercy, by the mercy and grace which they have despised. How dreadful is the case, when not only the justice of God, but his abused grace and mercy call for vengeance! All this does not in the least mean that any souls who sorrow for sin will be shut out from mercy, or that any will be refused the benefit of Christ's sacrifice, who are willing to accept these blessings. Him that cometh unto Christ, he will in no wise cast out.

### **Hebrews 10:32**

**Vs. 32-39:** Many and various afflictions united against the early Christians, and they had a great conflict. The Christian spirit is not a selfish spirit; it puts us upon pitying others, visiting them, helping them, and pleading for them. All things here are but shadows. The happiness of the saints in heaven will last for ever; enemies can never take it away as earthly goods. This will make rich amends for all we may lose and suffer here. The greatest part of the saints' happiness, as yet, is in promise. It is a trial of the patience of Christians, to be content to live after their work is done, and to stay for their reward till God's time to give it is come. He will soon come to them at death, to end all their sufferings, and to give them a crown of life. The Christian's present conflict may be sharp, but will be soon over. God never is pleased with the formal profession and outward duties and services of such as do not persevere; but he beholds them with great displeasure. And those who have been kept faithful in great trials for the time past, have reason to hope for the same grace to help them still to live by faith, till they receive the end of their faith and patience, even the salvation of their souls. Living by faith, and dying in faith, our souls are safe for ever.

## CHAPTER 11

*The nature and power of faith described. (1-3) It is set forth by instances from Abel to Noah. (4-7) By Abraham and his descendants. (8-19) By Jacob, Joseph, Moses, the Israelites, and Rahab. (20-31) By other Old Testament believers. (32-38) The better state of believers under the gospel. (39, 40)*

### Hebrews 11:1

**Vs. 1-3:** Faith always has been the mark of God's servants, from the beginning of the world. Where the principle is planted by the regenerating Spirit of God, it will cause the truth to be received, concerning justification by the sufferings and merits of Christ. And the same things that are the object of our hope, are the object of our faith. It is a firm persuasion and expectation, that God will perform all he has promised to us in Christ. This persuasion gives the soul to enjoy those things now; it gives them a subsistence or reality in the soul, by the first-fruits and foretastes of them. Faith proves to the mind, the reality of things that cannot be seen by the bodily eye. It is a full approval of all God has revealed, as holy, just, and good. This view of faith is explained by many examples of persons in former times, who obtained a good report, or an honorable character in the word of God. Faith was the principle of their holy obedience, remarkable services, and patient sufferings. The Bible gives the most true and exact account of the origin of all things, and we are to believe it, and not to wrest the Scripture account of the creation, because it does not suit with the differing fancies of men. All that we see of the works of creation, were brought into being by the command of God.

### Hebrews 11:4

**Vs. 4-7:** Here follow some illustrious examples of faith from the Old Testament. Abel brought a sacrifice of atonement from the firstlings of the flock, acknowledging himself a sinner who deserved to die, and only hoping for mercy through the great Sacrifice. Cain's proud rage and enmity against the accepted worshipper of God, led to the awful effects the same principles have produced in every age; the cruel persecution, and even murder of believers. By faith Abel, being dead, yet speaketh; he left an

instructive and speaking example. Enoch was translated, or removed, that he should not see death; God took him into heaven, as Christ will do the saints who shall be alive at his second coming. We cannot come to God, unless we believe that he is what he has revealed himself to be in the Scripture. Those who would find God, must seek him with all their heart. Noah's faith influenced his practice; it moved him to prepare an ark. His faith condemned the unbelief of others; and his obedience condemned their contempt and rebellion. Good examples either convert sinners or condemn them. This shows how believers, being warned of God to flee from the wrath to come, are moved with fear, take refuge in Christ, and become heirs of the righteousness of faith.

### **Hebrews 11:8**

**Vs. 8-19:** We are often called to leave worldly connections, interests, and comforts. If heirs of Abraham's faith, we shall obey and go forth, though not knowing what may befall us; and we shall be found in the way of duty, looking for the performance of God's promises. The trial of Abraham's faith was, that he simply and fully obeyed the call of God. Sarah received the promise as the promise of God; being convinced of that, she truly judged that he both could and would perform it. Many, who have a part in the promises, do not soon receive the things promised. Faith can lay hold of blessings at a great distance; can make them present; can love them and rejoice in them, though strangers; as saints, whose home is heaven; as pilgrims, traveling toward their home. By faith, they overcome the terrors of death, and bid a cheerful farewell to this world, and to all the comforts and crosses of it. And those once truly and savingly called out of a sinful state, have no mind to return into it. All true believers desire the heavenly inheritance; and the stronger faith is, the more fervent those desires will be. Notwithstanding their meanness by nature, their vileness by sin, and the poverty of their outward condition, God is not ashamed to be called the God of all true believers; such is his mercy, such is his love to them. Let them never be ashamed of being called his people, nor of any of those who are truly so, how much soever despised in the world. Above all, let them take care that they are not a shame and reproach to their God. The greatest trial and act of faith upon record is, Abraham's offering up Isaac, <sup>(121)</sup>Genesis 22:2. There, every word shows a trial. It is our duty to reason down our doubts and fears, by looking, as Abraham did, to the

Almighty power of God. The best way to enjoy our comforts is, to give them up to God; he will then again give them as shall be the best for us. Let us look how far our faith has caused the like obedience, when we have been called to lesser acts of self-denial, or to make smaller sacrifices to our duty. Have we given up what was called for, fully believing that the Lord would make up all our losses, and even bless us by the most afflicting dispensations?

### **Hebrews 11:20**

**Vs. 20-31:** Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, concerning things to come. Things present are not the best things; no man knoweth love or hatred by having them or wanting them. Jacob lived by faith, and he died by faith, and in faith. Though the grace of faith is of use always through our whole lives, it is especially so when we come to die. Faith has a great work to do at last, to help the believer to die to the Lord, so as to honor him, by patience, hope, and joy. Joseph was tried by temptations to sin, by persecution for keeping his integrity; and he was tried by honors and power in the court of Pharaoh, yet his faith carried him through. It is a great mercy to be free from wicked laws and edicts; but when we are not so, we must use all lawful means for our security. In this faith of Moses' parents there was a mixture of unbelief, but God was pleased to overlook it. Faith gives strength against the sinful, slavish fear of men; it sets God before the soul, shows the vanity of the creature, and that all must give way to the will and power of God. The pleasures of sin are, and will be, but short; they must end either in speedy repentance or in speedy ruin. The pleasures of this world are for the most part the pleasures of sin; they are always so when we cannot enjoy them without deserting God and his people. Suffering is to be chosen rather than sin; there being more evil in the least sin, than there can be in the greatest suffering. God's people are, and always have been, a reproached people. Christ accounts himself reproached in their reproaches; and thus they become greater riches than the treasures of the richest empire in the world. Moses made his choice when ripe for judgment and enjoyment, able to know what he did, and why he did it. It is needful for persons to be seriously religious; to despise the world, when most capable of relishing and enjoying it. Believers may and ought to have respect to the recompense of reward. By faith we may be fully sure of God's providence, and of his gracious and powerful

presence with us. Such a sight of God will enable believers to keep on to the end, whatever they may meet in the way. It is not owing to our own righteousness, or best performances, that we are saved from the wrath of God; but to the blood of Christ, and his imputed righteousness. True faith makes sin bitter to the soul, even while it receives the pardon and atonement. All our spiritual privileges on earth, should quicken us in our way to heaven. The Lord will make even Babylon fall before the faith of his people, and when he has some great thing to do for them, he raises up great and strong faith in them. A true believer is desirous, not only to be in covenant with God, but in communion with the people of God; and is willing to fare as they fare. By her works Rahab declared herself to be just. That she was not justified by her works appears plainly; because the work she did was faulty in the manner, and not perfectly good, therefore it could not be answerable to the perfect justice or righteousness of God.

### **Hebrews 11:32**

**Vs. 32-38:** After all our searches into the Scriptures, there is more to be learned from them. We should be pleased to think, how great the number of believers was under the Old Testament, and how strong their faith, though the objects of it were not then so fully made known as now. And we should lament that now, in gospel times, when the rule of faith is more clear and perfect, the number of believers should be so small, and their faith so weak. It is the excellence of the grace of faith, that, while it helps men to do great things, like Gideon, it keeps from high and great thoughts of themselves. Faith, like Barak's, has recourse unto God in all dangers and difficulties, and then makes grateful returns to God for all mercies and deliverances. By faith, the servants of God shall overcome even the roaring lion that goeth about seeking whom he may devour. The believer's faith endures to the end, and, in dying, gives him victory over death and all his deadly enemies, like Samson. The grace of God often fixes upon very undeserving and ill-deserving persons, to do great things for them and by them. But the grace of faith, wherever it is, will put men upon acknowledging God in all their ways, as Jephthah. It will make men bold and courageous in a good cause. Few ever met with greater trials, few ever showed more lively faith, than David, and he has left a testimony as to the trials and acts of faith, in the book of Psalm, which has been, and ever will be, of great value to the people of God. Those are likely to grow up to be

distinguished for faith, who begin betimes, like Samuel, to exercise it. And faith will enable a man to serve God and his generation, in whatever way he may be employed. The interests and powers of kings and kingdoms, are often opposed to God and his people; but God can easily subdue all that set themselves against him. It is a greater honor and happiness to work righteousness than to work miracles. By faith we have comfort of the promises; and by faith we are prepared to wait for the promises, and in due time to receive them. And though we do not hope to have our dead relatives or friends restored to life in this world, yet faith will support under the loss of them, and direct to the hope of a better resurrection. Shall we be most amazed at the wickedness of human nature, that it is capable of such awful cruelties to fellow-creatures, or at the excellence of Divine grace, that is able to bear up the faithful under such cruelties, and to carry them safely through all? What a difference between God's judgment of a saint, and man's judgment! The world is not worthy of those scorned, persecuted saints, whom their persecutors reckon unworthy to live. They are not worthy of their company, example, counsel, or other benefits. For they know not what a saint is, nor the worth of a saint, nor how to use him; they hate, and drive such away, as they do the offer of Christ and his grace.

### **Hebrews 11:39**

**Vs. 39, 40:** The world considers that the righteous are not worthy to live in the world, and God declares the world is not worthy of them. Though the righteous and the worldlings widely differ in their judgment, they agree in this, it is not fit that good men should have their rest in this world. Therefore God receives them out of it. The apostle tells the Hebrews, that God had provided some better things for them, therefore they might be sure that he expected as good things from them. As our advantages, with the better things God has provided for us, are so much beyond theirs, so should our obedience of faith, patience of hope, and labor of love, be greater. And unless we get true faith as these believers had, they will rise up to condemn us at the last day. Let us then pray continually for the increase of our faith, that we may follow these bright examples, and be, with them, at length made perfect in holiness and happiness, and shine like the sun in the kingdom of our Father for evermore.

## CHAPTER 12

*An exhortation to be constant and persevere, The example of Christ is set forth, and the gracious design of God in all the sufferings believers endured. (1-11) Peace and holiness are recommended, with cautions against despising spiritual blessings. (12-17) The New Testament dispensation shown to be much more excellent than the Old. (18-29)*

### **Hebrews 12:1**

**Vs. 1-11:** The persevering obedience of faith in Christ, was the race set before the Hebrews, wherein they must either win the crown of glory, or have everlasting misery for their portion; and it is set before us. By the sin that does so easily beset us, understand that sin to which we are most prone, or to which we are most exposed, from habit, age, or circumstances. This is a most important exhortation; for while a man's darling sin, be it what it will, remains unsubdued, it will hinder him from running the Christian race, as it takes from him every motive for running, and gives power to every discouragement. When weary and faint in their minds, let them recollect that the holy Jesus suffered, to save them from eternal misery. By steadfastly looking to Jesus, their thoughts would strengthen holy affections, and keep under their carnal desires. Let us then frequently consider him. What are our little trials to his agonies, or even to our deserts? What are they to the sufferings of many others? There is a proneness in believers to grow weary, and to faint under trials and afflictions; this is from the imperfection of grace and the remains of corruption. Christians should not faint under their trials. Though their enemies and persecutors may be instruments to inflict sufferings, yet they are Divine chastisements; their heavenly Father has his hand in all, and his wise end to answer by all. They must not make light of afflictions, and be without feeling under them, for they are the hand and rod of God, and are his rebukes for sin. They must not despond and sink under trials, nor fret and repine, but bear up with faith and patience. God may let others alone in their sins, but he will correct sin in his own children. In this he acts as becomes a father. Our earthly parents sometimes may chasten us, to gratify their passion, rather than to reform our manners. But the Father of

our souls never willingly grieves nor afflicts his children. It is always for our profit. Our whole life here is a state of childhood, and imperfect as to spiritual things; therefore we must submit to the discipline of such a state. When we come to a perfect state, we shall be fully reconciled to all God's chastisement of us now. God's correction is not condemnation; the chastening may be born with patience, and greatly promote holiness. Let us then learn to consider the afflictions brought on us by the malice of men, as corrections sent by our wise and gracious Father, for our spiritual good.

### **Hebrews 12:12**

**Vs. 12-17:** A burden of affliction is apt to make the Christian's hands hang down, and his knees grow feeble, to dispirit him and discourage him; but against this he must strive, that he may better run his spiritual race and course. Faith and patience enable believers to follow peace and holiness, as a man follows his calling constantly, diligently, and with pleasure. Peace with men, of all sects and parties, will be favorable to our pursuit of holiness. But peace and holiness go together; there can be not right peace without holiness. Where persons fail of having the true grace of God, corruption will prevail and break forth; beware lest any unmortified lust in the heart, which seems to be dead, should spring up, to trouble and disturb the whole body. Falling away from Christ is the fruit of preferring the delights of the flesh, to the blessing of God, and the heavenly inheritance, as Esau did. But sinners will not always have such mean thoughts of the Divine blessing and inheritance as they now have. It agrees with the profane man's disposition, to desire the blessing, yet to despise the means whereby the blessing is to be gained. But God will neither sever the means from the blessing, nor join the blessing with the satisfying of man's lusts. God's mercy and blessing were never sought carefully and not obtained.

### **Hebrews 12:18**

**Vs. 18-29:** Mount Sinai, on which the Jewish church state was formed, was a mount such as might be touched, though forbidden to be so, a place that could be felt; so the Mosaic dispensation was much in outward and earthly things. The gospel state is kind and condescending, suited to our weak frame. Under the gospel all may come with boldness to God's presence. But the most holy must despair, if judged by the holy law given



from Sinai, without a Savior. The gospel church is called Mount Zion; there believers have clearer views of heaven, and more heavenly tempers of soul. All the children of God are heirs, and every one has the privileges of the first-born. Let a soul be supposed to join that glorious assembly and church above, that is yet unacquainted with God, still carnally-minded, loving this present world and state of things, looking back to it with a lingering eye, full of pride and guile, filled with lusts; such a soul would seem to have mistaken its way, place, state, and company. It would be uneasy to itself and all about it. Christ is the Mediator of this new covenant, between God and man, to bring them together in this covenant; to keep them together; to plead with God for us, and to plead with us for God; and at length to bring God and his people together in heaven. This covenant is made firm by the blood of Christ sprinkled upon our consciences, as the blood of the sacrifice was sprinkled upon the altar and the victim. This blood of Christ speaks in behalf of sinners; it pleads not for vengeance, but for mercy. See then that you refuse not his gracious call and offered salvation. See that you do not refuse Him who speaketh from heaven, with infinite tenderness and love; for how can those escape, who turn from God in unbelief or apostasy, while he so graciously beseeches them to be reconciled, and to receive his everlasting favor! God's dealing with men under the gospel, in a way of grace, assures us, that he will deal with the despisers of the gospel, in a way of judgment. We cannot worship God acceptably, unless we worship him with reverence and godly fear. Only the grace of God enables us to worship God aright. God is the same just and righteous God under the gospel as under the law. The inheritance of believers is secured to them; and all things pertaining to salvation are freely given in answer to prayer. Let us seek for grace, that we may serve God with reverence and godly fear.

## CHAPTER 13

*Exhortations to various duties, and to be content with what Providence allots. (1-6) To respect the instructions of faithful pastors, with cautions against being carried away by strange doctrines. (7-15) Further exhortations to duties, that relate to God, to our neighbor, and to those set over us in the Lord. (16-21) This epistle to be seriously considered. (22-25)*

### **Hebrews 13:1**

**Vs. 1-6:** The design of Christ in giving himself for us, is, that he may purchase to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works; and true religion is the strongest bond of friendship. Here are earnest exhortations to several Christian duties, especially contentment. The sin opposed to this grace and duty is covetousness, an over-eager desire for the wealth of this world, with envy of those who have more than ourselves. Having treasures in heaven, we may be content with mean things here. Those who cannot be so, would not be content though God raised their condition. Adam was in paradise, yet not contented; some angels in heaven were not contented; but the apostle Paul, though abased and empty, had learned in every state, in any state, to be content. Christians have reason to be contented with their present lot. This promise contains the sum and substance of all the promises; “I will never, no, never leave thee, no, never forsake thee.” In the original there are no less than five negatives put together, to confirm the promise: the true believer shall have the gracious presence of God with him, in life, at death, and for ever. Men can do nothing against God, and God can make all that men do against his people, to turn to their good.

### **Hebrews 13:7**

**Vs. 7-15:** The instructions and examples of ministers, who honorably and comfortably closed their testimony, should be particularly remembered by survivors. And though their ministers were some dead, others dying, yet the great Head and High Priest of the church, the Bishop of their souls, ever lives, and is ever the same. Christ is the same in the Old Testament day, as in the gospel day, and will be so to his people for ever, equally

merciful, powerful, and all-sufficient. Still he fills the hungry, encourages the trembling, and welcomes repenting sinners: still he rejects the proud and self-righteous, abhors mere profession, and teaches all whom he saves, to love righteousness, and to hate iniquity. Believers should seek to have their hearts established in simple dependence on free grace, by the Holy Spirit, which would comfort their hearts, and render them proof against delusion. Christ is both our Altar and our Sacrifice; he sanctifies the gift. The Lord's supper is the feast of the gospel passover. Having showed that keeping to the Levitical law would, according to its own rules, keep men from the Christian altar, the apostle adds, Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp; go forth from the ceremonial law, from sin, from the world, and from ourselves. Living by faith in Christ, set apart to God through his blood, let us willingly separate from this evil world. Sin, sinners, nor death, will not suffer us to continue long here; therefore let us go forth now by faith and seek in Christ the rest and peace which this world cannot afford us. Let us bring our sacrifices to this altar, and to this our High Priest, and offer them up by him. The sacrifice of praise to God, we should offer always. In this are worship and prayer, as well as thanksgiving.

### **Hebrews 13:16**

**Vs. 16-21:** We must, according to our power, give to the necessities of the souls and bodies of men: God will accept these offerings with pleasure, and will accept and bless the offerers through Christ. The apostle then states what is their duty to living ministers; to obey and submit to them, so far as is agreeable to the mind and will of God, made known in his word. Christians must not think themselves too wise, too good, or too great, to learn. The people must search the Scriptures, and so far as the ministers teach according to that rule, they ought to receive their instructions as the word of God, which works in those that believe. It is the interest of hearers, that the account their ministers give of them may be with joy, and not with grief. Faithful ministers deliver their own souls, but the ruin of a fruitless and faithless people will be upon their own heads. The more earnestly the people pray for their ministers, the more benefit they may expect from their ministry. A good conscience has respect to all God's commands, and all our duty. Those who have this good conscience, yet need the prayers of others. When ministers come to a people who

pray for them, they come with greater satisfaction to themselves, and success to the people. We should seek all our mercies by prayer. God is the God of peace, fully reconciled to believers; who has made a way for peace and reconciliation between himself and sinners, and who loves peace on earth, especially in his churches. He is the Author of spiritual peace in the hearts and consciences of his people. How firm a covenant is that which has its foundation in the blood of the Son of God! The perfecting of the saints in every good work, is the great thing desired by them, and for them; and that they may at length be fitted for the employment and happiness of heaven. There is no good thing wrought in us, but it is the work of God. And no good thing is wrought in us by God, but through Christ, for his sake and by his Spirit.

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**Vs. 22-25:** So bad are men, and even believers, through the remainders of their corruption, that when the most important, comfortable doctrine is delivered to them for their own good, and that with the most convincing evidence, there is need of earnest entreaty and exhortation that they would bear it, and not fall out with it, neglect it, or reject it. It is good to have the law of holy love and kindness written in the hearts of Christians, one towards another. Religion teaches men true civility and good breeding. It is not ill-tempered or uncourteous. Let the favor of God be toward you, and his grace continually working in you, and with you, bringing forth the fruits of holiness, as the first-fruits of glory.