

Epistle to the Hebrews
RSV

Chapter 1

1 ¶ In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets;

2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.

3 He reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his nature, upholding the universe by his word of power. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

4 ¶ having become as much superior to angels as the name he has obtained is more excellent than theirs.

5 For to what angel did God ever say, "Thou art my Son, today I have begotten thee"? Or again, "I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son"?

6 And again, when he brings the first-born into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him."

7 Of the angels he says, "Who makes his angels winds, and his servants flames of fire."

8 But of the Son he says, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever, the righteous scepter is the scepter of thy kingdom.

9 Thou hast loved righteousness and hated

lawlessness; therefore God, thy God, has anointed thee with the oil of gladness beyond thy comrades."

10 And, "Thou, Lord, didst found the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of thy hands;

11 they will perish, but thou remainest; they will all grow old like a garment,

12 like a mantle thou wilt roll them up, and they will be changed. But thou art the same, and thy years will never end."

13 But to what angel has he ever said, "Sit at my right hand, till I make thy enemies a stool for thy feet"?

14 Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to serve, for the sake of those who are to obtain salvation?

(RSV)

Chapter 2

1 ¶ Therefore we must pay the closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it.

2 For if the message declared by angels was valid and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution,

3 how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard him,

4 while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his own will.

5 ¶ For it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come, of which we are speaking.

6 It has been testified somewhere, "What is man that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man, that thou carest for him?

7 Thou didst make him for a little while lower than the angels, thou hast crowned him with glory and honor,

8 putting everything in subjection under his feet." Now in putting everything in subjection to him, he left nothing outside his control. As it is, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him.

9 But we see Jesus, who for a little while was made lower than the angels, crowned with glory

and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for every one.

10 ¶ For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through suffering.

11 For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified have all one origin. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brethren,

12 saying, "I will proclaim thy name to my brethren, in the midst of the congregation I will praise thee."

13 And again, "I will put my trust in him." And again, "Here am I, and the children God has given me."

14 ¶ Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same nature, that through death he might destroy him who has the power of death, that is, the devil,

15 and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage.

16 For surely it is not with angels that he is concerned but with the descendants of Abraham.

17 Therefore he had to be made like his brethren

in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make expiation for the sins of the people.

18 For because he himself has suffered and been tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted.
(RSV)

Chapter 3

1 ¶ Therefore, holy brethren, who share in a heavenly call, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession.

2 He was faithful to him who appointed him, just as Moses also was faithful in God's house.

3 Yet Jesus has been counted worthy of as much more glory than Moses as the builder of a house has more honor than the house.

4 (For every house is built by some one, but the builder of all things is God.)

5 Now Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant, to testify to the things that were to be spoken later,

6 but Christ was faithful over God's house as a son. And we are his house if we hold fast our confidence and pride in our hope.

7 ¶ Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, "Today, when you hear his voice,

8 do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness,

9 where your fathers put me to the test and saw my works for forty years.

10 Therefore I was provoked with that generation, and said, 'They always go astray in their hearts; they have not known my ways.'

11 As I swore in my wrath, 'They shall never enter my rest.'

12 Take care, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God.

13 But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

14 For we share in Christ, if only we hold our first confidence firm to the end,

15 while it is said, "Today, when you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion."

16 Who were they that heard and yet were rebellious? Was it not all those who left Egypt under the leadership of Moses?

17 And with whom was he provoked forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness?

18 And to whom did he swear that they should never enter his rest, but to those who were disobedient?

19 So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief.

(RSV)

Chapter 4

1 ¶ Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest remains, let us fear lest any of you be judged to have failed to reach it.

2 For good news came to us just as to them; but the message which they heard did not benefit them, because it did not meet with faith in the hearers.

3 For we who have believed enter that rest, as he has said, "As I swore in my wrath, 'They shall never enter my rest,'" although his works were finished from the foundation of the world.

4 For he has somewhere spoken of the seventh day in this way, "And God rested on the seventh day from all his works."

5 And again in this place he said, "They shall never enter my rest."

6 Since therefore it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly received the good news failed to enter because of disobedience,

7 again he sets a certain day, "Today," saying through David so long afterward, in the words already quoted, "Today, when you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts."

8 For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not speak later of another day.

9 So then, there remains a sabbath rest for the

people of God;

10 for whoever enters God's rest also ceases from his labors as God did from his.

11 ¶ Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, that no one fall by the same sort of disobedience.

12 For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

13 And before him no creature is hidden, but all are open and laid bare to the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

14 Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

15 For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

16 Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

(RSV)

Chapter 5

1 ¶ For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins.

2 He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness.

3 Because of this he is bound to offer sacrifice for his own sins as well as for those of the people.

4 And one does not take the honor upon himself, but he is called by God, just as Aaron was.

5 So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him, "Thou art my Son, today I have begotten thee";

6 as he says also in another place, "Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek."

7 In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard for his godly fear.

8 Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered;

9 and being made perfect he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him,

10 ¶ being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

11 About this we have much to say which is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.

12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need some one to teach you again the first principles of God's word. You need milk, not solid food;

13 for every one who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a child.

14 But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their faculties trained by practice to distinguish good from evil.

(RSV)

Chapter 6

1 ¶ Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,

2 with instruction about ablutions, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.

3 And this we will do if God permits.

4 For it is impossible to restore again to repentance those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit,

5 and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come,

6 if they then commit apostasy, since they crucify the Son of God on their own account and hold him up to contempt.

7 For land which has drunk the rain that often falls upon it, and brings forth vegetation useful to those for whose sake it is cultivated, receives a blessing from God.

8 But if it bears thorns and thistles, it is worthless and near to being cursed; its end is to be burned.

9 ¶ Though we speak thus, yet in your case, beloved, we feel sure of better things that belong to

salvation.

10 For God is not so unjust as to overlook your work and the love which you showed for his sake in serving the saints, as you still do.

11 And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness in realizing the full assurance of hope until the end,

12 so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

13 For when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore by himself,

14 saying, "Surely I will bless you and multiply you."

15 And thus Abraham, having patiently endured, obtained the promise.

16 Men indeed swear by a greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation.

17 So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he interposed with an oath,

18 so that through two unchangeable things, in

which it is impossible that God should prove false, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to seize the hope set before us.

19 We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner shrine behind the curtain,

20 where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

(RSV)

Chapter 7

1 ¶ For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him;

2 and to him Abraham apportioned a tenth part of everything. He is first, by translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then he is also king of Salem, that is, king of peace.

3 He is without father or mother or genealogy, and has neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God he continues a priest for ever.

4 See how great he is! Abraham the patriarch gave him a tithe of the spoils.

5 And those descendants of Levi who receive the priestly office have a commandment in the law to take tithes from the people, that is, from their brethren, though these also are descended from Abraham.

6 But this man who has not their genealogy received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises.

7 It is beyond dispute that the inferior is blessed by the superior.

8 Here tithes are received by mortal men; there, by one of whom it is testified that he lives.

9 One might even say that Levi himself, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham,
10 for he was still in the loins of his ancestor when Melchizedek met him.

11 ¶ Now if perfection had been attainable through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need would there have been for another priest to arise after the order of Melchizedek, rather than one named after the order of Aaron?

12 For when there is a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law as well.

13 For the one of whom these things are spoken belonged to another tribe, from which no one has ever served at the altar.

14 For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, and in connection with that tribe Moses said nothing about priests.

15 This becomes even more evident when another priest arises in the likeness of Melchizedek,

16 who has become a priest, not according to a legal requirement concerning bodily descent but by the power of an indestructible life.

17 For it is witnessed of him, "Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek."

18 On the one hand, a former commandment is set aside because of its weakness and uselessness

19 (for the law made nothing perfect); on the other hand, a better hope is introduced, through which we draw near to God.

20 And it was not without an oath.

21 Those who formerly became priests took their office without an oath, but this one was addressed with an oath, "The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, 'Thou art a priest for ever.'"

22 This makes Jesus the surety of a better covenant.

23 The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office;

24 but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues for ever.

25 Consequently he is able for all time to save those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

26 For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, blameless, unstained, separated from sinners, exalted above the heavens.

27 He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for

those of the people; he did this once for all when he offered up himself.

28 Indeed, the law appoints men in their weakness as high priests, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect for ever.

(RSV)

Chapter 8

1 ¶ Now the point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven,

2 a minister in the sanctuary and the true tent which is set up not by man but by the Lord.

3 For every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices; hence it is necessary for this priest also to have something to offer.

4 Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, since there are priests who offer gifts according to the law.

5 They serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly sanctuary; for when Moses was about to erect the tent, he was instructed by God, saying, "See that you make everything according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain."

6 ¶ But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry which is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises.

7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion for a second.

8 For he finds fault with them when he says: "The days will come, says the Lord, when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel

and with the house of Judah;

9 not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; for they did not continue in my covenant, and so I paid no heed to them, says the Lord.

10 This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

11 And they shall not teach every one his fellow or every one his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for all shall know me, from the least of them to the greatest.

12 For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more."

13 In speaking of a new covenant he treats the first as obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

(RSV)

Chapter 9

1 ¶ Now even the first covenant had regulations for worship and an earthly sanctuary.

2 For a tent was prepared, the outer one, in which were the lampstand and the table and the bread of the Presence; it is called the Holy Place.

3 Behind the second curtain stood a tent called the Holy of Holies,

4 having the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, which contained a golden urn holding the manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant;

5 above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail.

6 These preparations having thus been made, the priests go continually into the outer tent, performing their ritual duties;

7 but into the second only the high priest goes, and he but once a year, and not without taking blood which he offers for himself and for the errors of the people.

8 ¶ By this the Holy Spirit indicates that the way into the sanctuary is not yet opened as long as the outer tent is still standing

9 (which is symbolic for the present age).

According to this arrangement, gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper,

10 but deal only with food and drink and various ablutions, regulations for the body imposed until the time of reformation.

11 But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation)

12 he entered once for all into the Holy Place, taking not the blood of goats and calves but his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.

13 For if the sprinkling of defiled persons with the blood of goats and bulls and with the ashes of a heifer sanctifies for the purification of the flesh,

14 how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

15 ¶ Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred which redeems them from the

transgressions under the first covenant.

16 For where a will is involved, the death of the one who made it must be established.

17 For a will takes effect only at death, since it is not in force as long as the one who made it is alive.

18 Hence even the first covenant was not ratified without blood.

19 For when every commandment of the law had been declared by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people,

20 saying, "This is the blood of the covenant which God commanded you."

21 And in the same way he sprinkled with the blood both the tent and all the vessels used in worship.

22 Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.

23 ¶ Thus it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

24 For Christ has entered, not into a sanctuary

made with hands, a copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf.

25 Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the Holy Place yearly with blood not his own;

26 for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the age to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

27 And just as it is appointed for men to die once, and after that comes judgment,

28 so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

(RSV)

Chapter 10

1 ¶ For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices which are continually offered year after year, make perfect those who draw near.

2 Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered? If the worshipers had once been cleansed, they would no longer have any consciousness of sin.

3 But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sin year after year.

4 For it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins.

5 Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, "Sacrifices and offerings thou hast not desired, but a body hast thou prepared for me;

6 in burnt offerings and sin offerings thou hast taken no pleasure.

7 ¶ Then I said, 'Lo, I have come to do thy will, O God,' as it is written of me in the roll of the book."

8 When he said above, "Thou hast neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings" (these are offered according to the law),

9 then he added, "Lo, I have come to do thy will."

He abolishes the first in order to establish the second.

10 And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

11 And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.

12 But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God,

13 then to wait until his enemies should be made a stool for his feet.

14 For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.

15 And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying,

16 "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put my laws on their hearts, and write them on their minds,"

17 then he adds, "I will remember their sins and their misdeeds no more."

18 Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.

19 ¶ Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus,

20 by the new and living way which he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh,

21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God,

22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful;

24 and let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works,

25 not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

26 For if we sin deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,

27 but a fearful prospect of judgment, and a fury of fire which will consume the adversaries.

28 A man who has violated the law of Moses dies without mercy at the testimony of two or three

witnesses.

29 How much worse punishment do you think will be deserved by the man who has spurned the Son of God, and profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and outraged the Spirit of grace?

30 For we know him who said, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge his people."

31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

32 But recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings,

33 sometimes being publicly exposed to abuse and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated.

34 For you had compassion on the prisoners, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one.

35 Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward.

36 For you have need of endurance, so that you may do the will of God and receive what is

promised.

37 "For yet a little while, and the coming one shall come and shall not tarry;

38 but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him."

39 But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and keep their souls.

(RSV)

Chapter 11

1 ¶ Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

2 For by it the men of old received divine approval.

3 By faith we understand that the world was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was made out of things which do not appear.

4 ¶ By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he received approval as righteous, God bearing witness by accepting his gifts; he died, but through his faith he is still speaking.

5 By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death; and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was attested as having pleased God.

6 And without faith it is impossible to please him. For whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

7 By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, took heed and constructed an ark for the saving of his household; by this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness which comes by faith.

8 By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place which he was to receive as an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was to go.

9 By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise.

10 For he looked forward to the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

11 By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised.

12 Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.

13 These all died in faith, not having received what was promised, but having seen it and greeted it from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.

14 For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland.

15 If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return.

16 But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.

17 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was ready to offer up his only son,

18 of whom it was said, "Through Isaac shall your descendants be named."

19 He considered that God was able to raise men even from the dead; hence, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back.

20 By faith Isaac invoked future blessings on Jacob and Esau.

21 By faith Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, bowing in worship over the head of his staff.

22 By faith Joseph, at the end of his life, made mention of the exodus of the Israelites and gave directions concerning his burial.

23 By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid for three months by his parents, because they saw that the child was beautiful; and they were not afraid of the king's edict.

24 By faith Moses, when he was grown up,

refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter,
25 choosing rather to share ill-treatment with the
people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures
of sin.

26 He considered abuse suffered for the Christ
greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he
looked to the reward.

27 By faith he left Egypt, not being afraid of the
anger of the king; for he endured as seeing him
who is invisible.

28 By faith he kept the Passover and sprinkled the
blood, so that the Destroyer of the first-born might
not touch them.

29 By faith the people crossed the Red Sea as if on
dry land; but the Egyptians, when they attempted
to do the same, were drowned.

30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after
they had been encircled for seven days.

31 By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish with
those who were disobedient, because she had given
friendly welcome to the spies.

32 ¶ And what more shall I say? For time would
fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah,
of David and Samuel and the prophets--

33 who through faith conquered kingdoms,

enforced justice, received promises, stopped the mouths of lions,

34 quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.

35 Women received their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, that they might rise again to a better life.

36 Others suffered mocking and scourging, and even chains and imprisonment.

37 They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, ill-treated--

38 of whom the world was not worthy--wandering over deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

39 And all these, though well attested by their faith, did not receive what was promised,

40 since God had foreseen something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

(RSV)

Chapter 12

1 ¶ Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, 2 looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

3 Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.

4 ¶ In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.

5 And have you forgotten the exhortation which addresses you as sons? --"My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor lose courage when you are punished by him.

6 For the Lord disciplines him whom he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives."

7 It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline?

8 If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.

9 Besides this, we have had earthly fathers to discipline us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live?

10 For they disciplined us for a short time at their pleasure, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness.

11 For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant; later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

12 Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees,

13 and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed.

14 Strive for peace with all men, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.

15 See to it that no one fail to obtain the grace of God; that no "root of bitterness" spring up and cause trouble, and by it the many become defiled;

16 that no one be immoral or irreligious like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal.

17 For you know that afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he

found no chance to repent, though he sought it with tears.

18 ¶ For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire, and darkness, and gloom, and a tempest,

19 and the sound of a trumpet, and a voice whose words made the hearers entreat that no further messages be spoken to them.

20 For they could not endure the order that was given, "If even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned."

21 Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, "I tremble with fear."

22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering,

23 and to the assembly of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven, and to a judge who is God of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,

24 and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks more graciously than the blood of Abel.

25 See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less

shall we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven.

26 His voice then shook the earth; but now he has promised, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heaven."

27 This phrase, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of what is shaken, as of what has been made, in order that what cannot be shaken may remain.

28 Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe;

29 for our God is a consuming fire.
(RSV)

Chapter 13

1 ¶ Let brotherly love continue.

2 Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

3 Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them; and those who are ill-treated, since you also are in the body.

4 Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled; for God will judge the immoral and adulterous.

5 Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have; for he has said, "I will never fail you nor forsake you."

6 Hence we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid; what can man do to me?"

7 Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God; consider the outcome of their life, and imitate their faith.

8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever.

9 Do not be led away by diverse and strange teachings; for it is well that the heart be strengthened by grace, not by foods, which have not benefited their adherents.

10 We have an altar from which those who serve the tent have no right to eat.

11 For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest as a sacrifice for sin are burned outside the camp.

12 So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood.

13 Therefore let us go forth to him outside the camp and bear the abuse he endured.

14 For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city which is to come.

15 Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.

16 Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

17 Obey your leaders and submit to them; for they are keeping watch over your souls, as men who will have to give account. Let them do this joyfully, and not sadly, for that would be of no advantage to you.

18 ¶ Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a clear conscience, desiring to act honorably in all things.

19 I urge you the more earnestly to do this in order

that I may be restored to you the sooner.

20 Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant,

21 equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in you that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

22 I appeal to you, brethren, bear with my word of exhortation, for I have written to you briefly.

23 You should understand that our brother Timothy has been released, with whom I shall see you if he comes soon.

24 Greet all your leaders and all the saints. Those who come from Italy send you greetings.

25 Grace be with all of you. Amen.

(RSV)