

Hebrews

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[0 : 0 0] as the Lord may help me I will speak again this evening upon the text in the epistle to the Hebrews the 13th chapter 14th and 15th verses for here have we no continuing city thus we seek one to come by him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually that is the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name the 13th chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews the 14th and 15th verses

I will just very briefly outline what has been already considered from this subject before it falls into these three main points of truth first of all here is a solemn consideration that we have here no continuing city but there is there is people of God a blessed prospect if they have no continuing city here they seek one that is to come and then there is thirdly this spiritual exercise of praise and thanksgiving which we are to offer to God continually during our present time

I mention that it is certainly true that we have here no continuing city because there is nothing here continuing everything is passing passing until it finally will pass away altogether and that we ourselves are not continuing either to go to carry us on towards our passing and that in any case everything here is defiled with sin and sorrow that we have no continuing city here because this is not a suitable state nor suitable condition for the people of God to have their continuing city in but we seek one to come the city which is to come

I understand to be the glorified state of the church of God which is represented in that form of a city to the apostle John in the revelation which accounts of it at least for it we read in our worship this evening and this city is to come in two ways first it is to come in its completeness it is not yet fully completed still that glorious city is increasing it increases as one by one those who seek for it are gathered home to it and when the last vessel of mercy is gathered home the last living stone is built into that glorious city when that will be fulfilled of which it is written in Zechariah his hands laid the foundation and his hands will finish it and he will bring forth the top stone trying grace grace unto it then the city will have come in a sense that it will have come to its completeness and that completeness is strikingly represented by the expression that the city is four square the length and the breadth and the height of it are equal and as I understand it it has not yet come to that but when the work is completed then the city the church of God will have come to it in perfect completeness not one will be lacking not one of the chosen redeemed quickened sanctified children of God will be missing from that completely glorious city and then it is to come in the sense of its manifestation for all this is going on invisibly to the world so the work of grace in the heart and the building of this glorious city to its completeness in heaven is going on invisibly to the world but at the last this city will come in the glorious manifestation of the children of God as John saw the holy city coming down from God out of heaven now this city we are said to be seeking we seek a city to come and I spoke a little of that city in its holiness and purity and in its blessedness and in its light the light of that city the glory of God shining unveiled unclouded and forever undiminished in the

Lord Jesus Christ just as even now spiritually the glory of God shines in the face of Jesus Christ and is reflected in the gospel and it shines in the heart as the Holy Spirit reveals it but still that is in a very cloudy way to us we see that glory through a glass darkly we see that a few a few glimpses of it a few beams of it and they often seem hidden again from us but when the city of God comes in its perfection there will be an unclouded unveiled shining force of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ that will fill the city with ineffable light glorious holy ineffable light such light as there's nothing in this world to be compared to it at all for the builder and maker of this city is God throughout when I read that chapter just now my thoughts struck me with regard to that description of the city that the wall of the city had twelve foundations and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the land now now we regard of course this city as having one foundation essentially that is the Lord

[8 : 45] Jesus Christ and his work of redemption and atonement and mediation his personal merit is the foundation of the city of God but by the walls of the city I felt we might understand the truths of the gospel and by the wall of the city having twelve foundations and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the land we may understand that it was the doctrine and teaching of the apostles under the direct inspiration of the holy spirit of God that laid the foundations of all gospel proofs and doctrines and gospel truths and doctrines of the city of God like walls that surround it and therefore there's a speaking of it believing me and I said that it is thought hopefully the reasons

I mentioned that it is thought prayerfully for there are two things that in seeking this city a prayerful soul prays about and one thing is to be prepared for it and picked for it and have an interest in it and to have that interest in it made clear and confirmed in the heart by the testimony of the holy spirit and that there's a speaking this city in that there's a walking in the way that leads to it and the way that leads to it is to go forth unto Jesus Christ without the camp wearing his distroze the way to seek this city which is to come is to walk in the way that leads to it and the way that leads to it is to follow

Jesus Christ he will lead us into the city if we are given grace to follow him but now I must come to the other part of the subject which is closely connected with it as you see by him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually that is the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name that is while our days on earth are lengthened may we give them Lord to thee that's what it amounts to there's a spiritual exercise of praise and thanksgiving that is to fill our passing days while we sit the city which is to come there is something that lies upon us by express exhortation now that city which is to come oh that is full of heavenly praise oh how they bless how they praise how they glorify how they adore him that sitteth upon the throne and the lamb with what burning love with what profound humility with what intense devotion they praise his name in heaven that city which is to come is a city that is full of praising and glorifying and blessing

God and giving thanks unto his holy name for they ascribe everything to him blessing and praise and honour and strength and glory and thanksgiving be unto him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the land that is heavenly praise but his earthly praise as well doesn't rise to such a height as heavenly praise does not so warm so fervent and for this reason that still everything that is spiritual in us is clogged by tin unhindered in all its exercises by that which is so opposite to it in our fallen nature and another thing of course spiritual feelings are responsive spiritual feelings now it is just so far as we have any spiritual discernment and any spiritual feelings of the goodness and grace and mercy and blessedness of God of his glory then as it shines in Jesus

Christ in the gospel it is just so far as we have some discernment of that and some feeling of it that we praise him and bless his name but we see through a glass darkly and therefore our praise is comparatively poor that in the city that is to come his glory is so continually before them and there's nothing in them to hinder or or darken or deaden holy affections in their hearts that they praise him there so much more than we can here because they see the same they are in the light of his glory and they're forever delivered from everything that hinders holy affections in their souls poor living tongues are dumb at best you must die really to praise him as we all yet for all that there is an offering unto God this acceptable sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving although in this present time state it can never reach to a heavenly level but it does reach to an acceptable level and I simply may make a misjudgment of ourselves in this particular that because we feel our praise and our thanksgiving and our worship generally is so poor that it seems like it's altogether unworthy well so it is come to that of what is due to him so we have to think that it cannot be very acceptable in his sight it seems too poor to be acceptable to him too much lacking in that warmth of love and depth of devotion and fervency of spirit that we feel there should be in our spiritual praise and thanksgiving well my friends you must remember this for our encouragement that the

[17 : 29] Lord knows our praise our difficulties all that we have to contend with he knows the struggles that prevail within us between the powers of grace and him and kindly listen when we tell the bitter pangs we feel within about this about the poor woman who could only cast two mites into the treasury because she hadn't any more she was too poor to cast in anything much only two mites you might have thought well that's too poor for anything that's too poor for anything only two mites but the Lord looked upon it with much approbation he knew that he would have put in more if he put but he hadn't got it to put in and he didn't despise two mites such a very small amount because it was so small because he knew he couldn't do more and so

I feel with regard to this matter of the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving the Lord knows he would praise him if we could we would bless him with all the powers of our heart with all our love and all our feeling if we could he knows that it's such a lifting of his praise that we offer that we can put into the church his treasury of his praise such a very such poor feeling so unworthy of him we feel only two mites but the Lord knows we would praise him more if we could if we had warmer feelings we would pour them out to him if we had more fervent affections oh we would we would like the poor woman with her ointment we would pour them on his blessed head he knows that if we could mourn over him repent with more with more tears of real genuine loving sorrow he knows he would wash his feet with him we know it's our praying and he remembers that we are

God now I must come to speak a little of this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving and I want to begin with this now it cannot be too clearly understood and realised and helped that all true religion in every exercise of it towards God springs from a principle of spiritual and in that sense divine life in the soul spiritual life in the soul is the inward essential and only spring from which all real religion can rise in the exercise of it now spiritual life in the heart in the exercise of it is always

God dwells because it comes from God it is something of his own life that is communicable there is a certain sense in which the life of God is communicable that is in a way of grace and love not in a way of his divine perfection that are incommunicable but of his grace and love that is communicable now that which is imparted to the soul from God in the exercise of it always has God for its objective always and it has God for its objective in many ways for instance is there a cry in the heart of great force from within it's

God be merciful to me this is God war and if there's any desire in the heart that springs from that spiritual life it's this oh that thou wouldst bless me indeed you see God war all repentance all faith all hope all love all prayer all praise it's God war because it's in the nature of spiritual life to ascend to its force it finds its objective in its force now in general the exercise of spiritual life towards God is in prayer and compassion and it is in praise and thanksgiving and there is this difference between these two main features of spiritual life and exercise in the soul that prayer respects our case our needs our desires not exclusively ours but its expression of desire in some way or another we ask prayer is asking it is knocking it is seeking it has behind it need want longing to pray for something that we desire and that we need now praise and thanksgiving doesn't arise from need in us in that sense prayer and thanksgiving arises from a thanksgiving of God of his name and nature his goodness his mercy his blessedness and thanksgiving respects benefits that we receive from his gracious hands praise thanksgiving is in ascribing of honour to God because he is the God that he is and thanksgiving respects benefits and favors that we receive from his hands and therefore there is continual cause for praise and thanksgiving that we should offer this sacrifice to him because whatever we are

[25 : 21] God is blessed he is blessed over all God over all blessed forevermore nothing can alter that he is always worthy to be praised always because he is always the God that he is and though we know so little in this present time state of his name and nature but if we are taught of God by the Holy Spirit we do know this that he is a most blessed God no words can describe no impressions can really convey to us what a blessed being our God is the sun is not so full of light as God is full of glory not so full of warmth as God is full of love

God is love God is everything in his nature that is worthy of praise and adoration promise he's always there whatever changes we pass through in our spirit and we pass through many or in our lives and we pass through many yet with him there is no change praise he is a God of infinite glory love and blessed in it always and because he is the God that he is and that he is always the God that he is therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to him continually praise is ascribing to God praise is ascribing to God in a spirit of adoration what really belongs to him we can convey nothing to God is that's impossible he is infinite in every perfection of his name and nature we can convey nothing to him he can to us we never can to him but what we can do and what we are exhorted to do is to ascribe in a spirit of love to his name gratitude to him to ascribe to him all that which belongs to him and to do this we do much mean that the understanding the eyes of our understanding should be enlightened it's coming out to you very very much to me and often to pray for and it is that he would open the eyes of my understanding oh if I could that more clearly resern his glory as it is in Jesus

Christ his greatness his love his goodness his holiness all that constitutes that blessedness that is his oh if I could see this more oh if only the Holy Spirit would show it more clearly to me I know I could praise him more my friends we could never discern anything spiritually in such a way as that it acts upon our heart as it should only if the blessed Spirit of God reveals oh that blessed Spirit here we do need him here we need him to give us eyes and then to anoint the eyes he gives with the eyes held of his divine teaching

I believe he's given me spiritual eyes to see oh but they are so dim they are so dim oh how I do need I feel I need this as much as anyone listening to me tonight oh I need that heavenly eyes held oh that my eyes were anointed with that I could see it is so often with us brethren we have blessed things set before us in the scripture but we turn such dull eyes to them we see the words we know what they mean we know that certain words mean certain things but always so little see the glory of those things they mean we sold it for the glory of us we read those scriptures that speak of God's love we know what love is in some sense we know what that word means

God is love but oh how little of that love we see how little of that love we see and so there's the divine perfection that constitutes the glory of God we know what the words mean that express it but oh we have that dim build of what that meaning really is oh holy spirit open the eyes of our understanding and then here we need in order to offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually that the holy spirit would animate our hearts with spiritual livelihood now spiritual life is one thing as I've been saying it's the spring of everything that's spiritual in our heart but spiritual life in the exercise of it or as I have said the liveliness of it is not self operated it's not self operated there's a dependence in it there's a dependence in it upon the holy spirit it is only the holy spirit by his quickening power holy influence blessed teachings acts upon our hearts that spiritual life is lively it is as we read in regard to prayer we know not what to pray for as we ought but the spirit itself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered now just as we know not what to pray for as we ought so we know not how to pray as we ought that scripture we know not what to pray for as we ought must be understood we know very well there are certain things we ought to pray for we ought to pray for forgiveness for cleansing for guidance all the many things we know we ought to pray for but we don't know how to pray for them as we ought to pray for them as we ought to pray for them that is to say we have not that at our command in prayer in this matter not that pervency not that energy and the light we know not how to pray as we ought to pray unless the spirit helps us so it is with our praise my brethren it's easier for me to set before you tonight the reasons why we should offer the praises of our hearts to God continually than it is to do it we know not how to do it as we ought or we need the holy spirit to enliven our hearts and it is so often with us as a film is pressed it at the end of that remarkable composition 319th film after all those spiritual expressions in it and I have thought that every possible spiritual feeling from the highest to the lowest is expressed in the 119th film now how is it finished let my soul live and it shall praise me and let thy judgment that is there let thy

[34 : 57] dealings let thy dealings help me it came to that let my soul live and it shall praise him for unless our souls live that is unless we are lively we cannot really praise him ours is sad hold hold down as language on our list and our devotion dies but now my friends given these things spiritual life to begin with for the dead cannot praise him then given a spiritual understanding that we can discern what there is in god to praise and then given the holy spirit an amazing influence that enables us to praise him as we ought then there does arise from our poor hearts this acceptable sacrifice to god we praise him let me just for a moment or two time is passion rather just speak a little of the objective of this praise and I will just bring into the subject a word from the sound to help me something to fix upon praise him for his excellent grace now there is an excellent greatness in god that calls for our praise and if we could discern it what an excellent greatness it is if we could feel the influence of it on our hearts attracting us to him if we could feel the holy spirit energising our affection oh how we could praise him for his excellence greatness and that expression excellent greatness implies that there is a greatness in god that excels all other greatness whatsoever so that nothing else is great compared with that excellent greatness of god oh praise him praise him praise him for his excellent greatness let me mention a word or two about his excellent greatness one one might one might hear of course go into many things the excellent greatness of his power that created and sustains the world and controls it the excellent greatness of his wisdom in it all and especially in salvation that i haven't time just one or two points i feel i must mention praise him for the excellent greatness of his love and bring this word into his great love his great love wherewith he loves great love there is an excellent greatness in god's love a love that excels all other even the spiritual love that is in the hearts of his people is also little compared to that great love of his it is great in its degree

because of it as having high too high for us to reach to but so high high as heaven high as is it thy nature is high above all other that you may know the height and the depth of love that comes down from such an infinite height incomprehensible to us that comes right down to our lowest face so that though we are by nature's creatures so far below him and by him sunk into a depth far deeper but his love is so great it is so great in its depth it reaches right down to the very lowest it reaches right down to us if it has ever come to us and it has such a great depth in this that in that depth of love as it is forgiving love all the sins of all his people are swallowed up sins immense as is as he has swallowed up all love in this all that great depth of love unfathomable as we cannot reach its height so we can never fathom its depth oh praise him for such excellent greatness as is the greatness of his love his great love seems though I couldn't do better than keep trying to impress that on your mind tonight the greatness of

God's love and the apostle describes it as having a length which of course means that it extends from an eternity past when it has no beginning to an eternity future when it will have no end whoever can measure the greatness of God love must measure eternity and it is so wide so broad that it embraces oh such an innumerable number a number that John couldn't number a multitude beyond all wrestling and all of them embrace in the greatness of God's love oh praise for his love and if it set before us too by that same blessed spirit the manifestation of that love for God commended his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners

Christ died for him present young men and women all of you listen to me have you ever come to feel this with nothing that tells us to measure God's love and nothing that God's love can measure tells us oh praise him to love like that praise him to love like that so high so deep so long so broad so rich so free love that pardons keeps pardoning is pardoning still love that embraces love that receives prodigals back and gives them the very best the best rose and the best who and the best embraces oh praise him for such great love as that praise him for his excellent greatness think of the excellent greatness of his mercy for as high as his heaven is above the earth so great is his mercy toward them that fear him praise him for his goodness well understand by him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually how well from our hearts first of course and then from our lips as well and that is especially mentioned here the praise the sacrifice of praise to God continually that is the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name for thanksgiving

I'm afraid I'm asleep but there's just one point I want to mention now there can be no sacrifice without an altar that's always been a principle in the scripture no altar no sacrifice all sacrifice needs an altar but there's only one altar now for our spiritual sacrifices and that altar appears in this chapter we have an altar whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle serve the tabernacle our altar is the sacrifice and atonement of Jesus Christ he is the altar that sanctifies the gift when he offered himself without thought to God that sacrifice we have not to offer it is offered once for all he has offered one sacrifice for sin forever there is no sacrifice of sin in our praise nor our thanksgiving because there's no atonement in it now there needs there be any but to offer this sacrifice we must still offer it on and by this altar because nothing that we can offer to God ever it is agreeable to his word and his will no praise that we can offer ever fervent no thanksgivings that we can offer ever sincere can be acceptable to God unless we offer them by that altar everything that is acceptable to God from us as we are sinners must have in it the merit of a saviour sin removing and sinners owning sacrifice therefore as we have this altar this sacred altar let us offer unto

[46 : 49] God by it by the merit of it by Jesus Christ the high priest of it let us offer this sacrifice to God let us offer it this evening brothers and the Lord may help us oh may the Holy Spirit move in this assembly in our hearts quicken and animate these holy feelings of thankfulness and devotion in our breath that incense the incense of praise and thanksgiving that incense smoking from my breath in prayer and praise ascends thy name Amen noch and call and all after they wrap your eyes they have to amen and see ■■■ the through