

Patristic Texts On The Epistle to the Hebrews

Chapter 2

v. 13 *And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God has given me.*

“He drew with Him into the same grace all the nature that partakes of His body and is akin to Him. And these glad tidings He proclaims through the woman [Mary Magdalene], not to those disciples only, but also to all who up to the present day become disciples of the Word - the tidings, namely, that man is no longer outlawed, nor cast out of the kingdom of God, but is once more a son, once more in the station assigned to him by his God, inasmuch as along with the first-fruits of humanity the lump is also hallowed [see Romans 11:16]. “For behold,” He says, “I and the children whom God has given me” [Isaiah 8:18]. *St. Gregory of Nyssa - Against Eunomius, Book XII, no. 1*

v. 14 *Destroying the Power of Death*

“He destroys the tyranny of the evil one who dominated us by deceit. By casting at him as a weapon the flesh that was vanquished in Adam, he overcame him. Thus what was previously captured for death conquers the conqueror and destroys his life by a natural death. It became poison to him in order that he might vomit up all those whom he had swallowed when he held sway by having the power of death. But it became life to the human race by impelling the whole of nature to rise like dough to resurrection and life. *St. Maximus the Confessor - The Lord’s Prayer 348.*

“Next he sets down also the cause of the economy of salvation, “that through death,” he says, “he might destroy him who has the power of death, that is, the devil.” Here [Paul] points out the wonder that, by that through which the devil prevailed, [the devil] was himself overcome. By the very thing that was [the devil’s] strong weapon against the world - death - Christ struck him. In this Christ exhibits the greatness of the conqueror’s power. Do you see what great goodness death has wrought? - *St. John Chrysostom - Epistle to the Hebrews 4.6.*

v. 18 *Able to Help Those Who Are Tempted*

“This was said for full assurance of the hearers and on account of their weakness. That is, he would say, he went through the very experience of that which we have suffered. Now he is not ignorant of our sufferings, not only because as God he knows them, but also because as man he knows them through the trial with which he was tested. Since he suffered many things, he knows how to sympathize with suffering. It is certainly true that God is impassible, but the statement here is made of the incarnation, as though it were said, “The flesh of Christ itself suffered many fearful things.” He knows what tribulation is. He knows what temptation is, not less than we

who have suffered, for he himself also has suffered.” *St. John Chrysostom - Epistle to the Hebrews 5.2.*

Chapter 3

v. 6 *Faithful as a Son*

“Moses as a servant, but Christ as Son, and the former faithful in his house, and the latter over the house, as having Himself built it, and being its Lord and Framer, and as God sanctifying it. For Moses, a man by nature, became faithful, in believing God who spoke to Him by His Word; but the Word was not as one of things originate in a body, nor as creature in creature, but as God in flesh, and Framer of all and Builder of all n that which was built by Him.” *St. Athanasius - Second Discourse against the Arians, chap. Xiv, no. 10.*

v. 13 *As Long as It Is Today*

“He said: “today,” that they might never be without hope. “Exhort one another daily,” he says. That is, even if persons have sinned, as long as it is “today,” they have hope; let them not despair so long as they live. Above all things indeed he says, “Let there not be an evil, unbelieving heart.” But even if there should be, let no one despair but let that one recover; for as long as we are in this world, the “today” is in season.” *St. John Chrysostom - Epistle to the Hebrews 6.8.*

v. 14 *If we hold the beginning of our confidence unto the end*

“ ‘If we hold fast the principle of our subsistence (Gk. *hypostasis*) unto the end.’ What is the principle of our subsistence? The faith by which we stand, and have been brought into being and were made to exist, as one may say.” *St. John Chrysostom*