

Hebrews Verse by Verse - Part 2- William Newell

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Hebrews 8

Heb 8:1 Now the chief point in the things being said is this: Such an One we have as High Priest, Who sat down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,

2 a Minister of the holy things, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man.

CHRIST, AS OUR HIGH PRIEST, is a Minister of the holy things of God's actual, glorious presence in Heaven! For in the words "which the Lord pitched, not man," we observe at once that the evident meaning is a contrast of the true tabernacle, the reality, in Heaven, with that which God commanded Moses to "Pitch" in the wilderness days of Israel. The Levitical tabernacle, (full of types and lessons, doubtless), disappears utterly in the book of Hebrews, together with all jealous thought for it, on the part of those willing to enter the heavenly worship, and, as regards earthly religion, to go forth unto Jesus "without the camp, bearing His reproach." Such have no "holy temple" on earth, nor sacred buildings of any sort, knowing that now "the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands" as said Stephen (Acts 7:48) and later Paul (Acts 17:24). Paul had heard Stephen say it.

But now, in the words of verse 3: For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is necessary that this High Priest also have somewhat to offer. Let us leave for a moment the question of the gifts and sacrifices He is to offer, and proceed to the great lesson of this Chapter. We have, then, the hypothetical statement (vss. 4-5) that:

Heb 8:4 If He were on earth, He would not be a priest at all, seeing there are (in the as yet undestroyed Jewish temple, when Hebrews was written) those who keep offering the gifts according to the Law;

5 who serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, even as Moses is warned of God when he is about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith He, that thou make all things according to the pattern that was shown thee in the mount.

The contention of some that Heb 8:4: If He were on earth, He would not be a priest at all, sets forth that Christ's priesthood began only after resurrection and the Lord's ascension, is strange indeed. For in this verse the apostle is speaking of Christ risen from the dead and now in glory, Who had sat down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a Minister of the sanctuary. It is of this One in that ministry that it is affirmed, If He were on earth, He would not be a priest at all. For there were at that moment those of the Aaronic order, in the temple which was then standing, carrying on the service which the Law, the copy and shadow of heavenly things, prescribed. To affirm that Hebrews 4 excludes the propitiation by blood made on the Cross from priestly functions is utterly to obscure this passage. Our Lord in His earthly ministry, though so often speaking and working in the temple itself, never assayed to its priesthood!

But Christ is God, God manifest in the flesh. "God in very deed" (2 Chron. 6:18) had come to dwell in the tabernacle and afterwards in the temple. It was "zeal for God's house," as such, that ate Him up. (Ps. 69:9, John 2:17). The morning and evening sacrifices, the Day of Atonement, the Passover Lamb, and all the sacrifices as ministered by dying, ever-changing Levitical priests, all this was a "shadow" of Christ's priestly work.

Next in sadness to the words, "they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew Him not, nor the voices of the prophets ... fulfilled them by condemning Him," is the fact that they went about their sacrifices, Passover and all, with the Great Priest of Whom all these sacrifices spoke, before their eyes--and they blind--as unto this day.

But now we come to better words:

6 But now hath He obtained a ministry the more excellent, by so much as He is also the Mediator of a better covenant, which hath been enacted upon better promises.

7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, then would no place have been sought for a second.

8 For finding fault with them, He saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, That I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah;

9 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers In the day that I took them by the hand to lead them forth out of the land of Egypt; For they continued not in My covenant, And I regarded them not, saith the Lord.

Heb 8:6: A ministry the more excellent--Now if we can only step out from the shadows (vs. 5) and behold the substance! Christ's

one offering would have been complete if there had been no shadows or types whatever. And we must be so delivered in spirit that our conception of our Lord's ministry shall not be governed by types and shadows: but the types by the reality. The measure of the difference between the old Levitical ministry and that of Christ is again the blessed phrase, A ministry the more excellent by so much--And what is the measure? By so much as He is also the Mediator of a better covenant, which hath been enacted upon better promises.

Here the words a better covenant are contrasted with the first, or legal covenant. Now, what covenant is this "better covenant"? And what are these "better promises"?

First, it is not the covenant of Hebrews 13:20, for that was not between creatures, but between "the God of peace" and "the Lord Jesus," and the condition was the obedience unto death of Christ to the Father; its ground, the shed blood of Christ; and its issue, "an eternal covenant." This is the great fundamental transaction between God and Christ: no creature is seen; but, ah! believers become--apart from works--beneficiaries! So that God can go on and make (in the Millennial future) a second (or "new") covenant with Israel, who "continued not" (vs. 9) in the Sinaitic or "first" covenant.

But note two things about this new covenant (vs. 8): a. It is based, as we have intimated, on the "eternal covenant" of Hebrews 13:20.

b. God does everything in this "new covenant." There is no "If ye--" as at Sinai; but it is all "I will:" I will make a new covenant (vs. 8).

"I will put My laws into their mind--" constant remembrance--not on external stone tables.

"I will write them also on their heart"--supreme affection.

"And I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people" (vs. 10). "All shall know Me ... (vs. 11). "I will be merciful to their iniquities, and their sin I will remember no more."

Now you see this is all Grace and flows freely from the "eternal covenant" in Christ's blood of Hebrews 13:20. But the great word as to the former covenant is: "He hath made the first old ... nigh unto vanishing away." It vanished indeed in A.D. 70, when the temple was sacked and burned, and Jerusalem destroyed by Titus. While place is foretold for "the house of Israel and the house of Judah" in this epistle to the Hebrews, yet lay this to heart: the old covenant is gone (vs. 9, 13); and the new not yet come. Paul is writing to Hebrew believers with whose fathers God had made a "covenant," and with which nation God will, by and by, at the Messiah's return to Israel, make a "new" covenant, saying, "And this is the covenant from Me unto them, when I shall take away their sins"--Romans 11:27. These Hebrew believers were called, then, to face the fact that the old covenant, with the Law principle of blessing, had been set aside. We behold national Israel today without a covenant, "regarded not" by Jehovah! And so we turn to Hebrews 13:20, and "in the blood of an eternal covenant" between the God of peace and the Lord Jesus, we find ourselves, with true Hebrew believers, all "partakers of a heavenly calling"--we all find ourselves blessed indeed! And it is the blood of that covenant which we celebrate when we gather at the Lord's table; so that all hope in man has passed away forever; and so has all hope in Divine Law to be fulfilled by man as the "condition of blessing."

To return to verse 6, our Lord hath obtained a ministry the more excellent BY SO MUCH AS (who can measure this Divine comparison?) He is also the MEDIATOR of a better covenant. Now that "better covenant" is not made with us, but like the "old" covenant of Sinai, pertains to national Israel; and the blessings of the better promises will be lavished upon them.

Heb 8:7: For if that first (covenant) had been faultless, then would no place have been sought for a second: Here it is most evident that the two covenants, the legal one at Sinai, and the "new covenant" which God will make "with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah" (vs. 8) are before us. Look down to verse 13 and you get the lesson:

"In that He saith, A new covenant, He hath made the first old. But that which is becoming old and waxeth aged, is nigh unto vanishing away."

It is quite striking that in verse 7 the word "faultless" refers to the covenant; while in verse 8 we read: For finding fault with them He saith, Behold the days come, saith the Lord, That I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.

Anything resting upon man's faithfulness goes down. Hear Jehovah's own word by Moses when He gave the Sinai covenant: "For when I shall have brought them into the land which I swore unto their fathers, flowing with milk and honey, and they shall have eaten and filled themselves, and waxed fat; then will they turn unto other gods, and serve them, and despise Me, and break My covenant" (Deut. 31:20).

Salvation is of GOD, my brother! and not in any sense of man. The Law, "written ... in tables of stone," the letter, killed (2 Cor. 3:3-9). It is Divinely contrasted with Salvation by Grace through the shed blood of Christ. Believers were so identified in Christ's death that "our old man was crucified with Him" (Rom. 6:6) so that we are "dead to the Law" and "discharged from the Law" (Rom. 7:4, 6). (If you have been taught "theology" before you were taught to study the Scripture itself (and therefore never learned to read and believe Scripture freely), read Rom. 6 and 7. Look at the phrases: "Not under Law but under Grace" (6:14). "Free from the Law" (7:3). "Dead to the Law through the body of Christ" (7:4). "Discharged from the Law" (7:6). "Not through the Law was the promise made to Abram or to his seed" (4:14). "The Law worketh wrath; but where there is no Law, neither is there transgression" (4:15). (we did not write Romans, brother!). "I through the Law died unto the Law, that I might live unto God. I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, Who loved me, and gave Himself up for me" (Gal. 2:19-20). To me the greatest proof of human self-righteousness and

unbelief in Grace is this contention for the Law by those of the Reformed Theology. A good question to ask them is, "Are you the righteousness of God in Christ?" (2 Cor. 5:21).)

It is of great importance for us to note concerning the "covenants" of whom they are spoken, and with whom they are connected. To apply verse 8, I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, to Christians today, is blank ignorance, or presumptuous folly. (Note the R.V. margin in vs. 8 and 10: I will accomplish (Gr.) a new covenant with the house of Israel; and, This is the covenant that I will covenant with the house of Israel. This corresponds to Rom. 11:27, "And this is My covenant (or, margin: the covenant from Me) unto them, when I shall take away their sins.") Indeed, the very next verse compels us to know with whom the new covenant will be made, for we read it will not be:

Heb 8:9 --According to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them forth out of the land of Egypt. (Of course, the next words, They continued not in My covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord, everyone has willingly consigned to calf-worshipping Israel!)

Neither the first covenant, at all, or ever, nor the new covenant, as yet to be made with Israel and Judah, relates to Christians. Believers today must avoid the bondage of the first; and the false hopes aroused by misapplication of the promises of the second. To be particular:

The old, or first, covenant, does not apply to Christians for:

1. It was made with national Israel, not with Christians, as see, (besides Hebrews 8:8 and 9 above) Exodus 19:3-6; Deuteronomy 4:31; 7:6-16; read and believe Psalm 147:19-20; Exodus 31:16; 34:27; Nehemiah 9:14.

2. At the first Church council in Jerusalem (Acts 15), this very question, as to whether the legal covenant with Israel applied to Gentile believers, was thoroughly entered upon, Peter asking:

"Why make ye trial of God, that ye should put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?"

And declaring:

"But we believe that we shall be saved through the GRACE of the Lord Jesus, in like manner as they" (Gentile believers—Acts 15:10, 11).

Then James utters the dispensational explanation of verse 14, that God first (i.e., before the restoration of Israel to their land) "visited the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name." Read also the verses following.

3. God's awful word through Paul concerning anyone preaching another gospel" was that he was accursed (Gal. 1:8). As Paul further explains, "Ye are severed from Christ, ye who would be justified by the Law; ye are fallen away from Grace" (Gal. 5:4). For Paul classes Judaism with Paganism in this present time when God has set aside the Jewish religion and is occupied with mercy apart from works of Law--that is, the first covenant--to both Jewish and Gentile sinners. "How turn ye back again to the weak and beggarly elements?" asks Paul of the Galatians (See Gal. 4:8-11). (The word elements, or (R.V.) rudiments, is Greek *stoicheia*, first principles. Paul uses the term in Col. 2:8, 20, as in Galatians, to describe the religion of the world, the religious principles in which people walked who "observe days." God had once prescribed them to Israel, but He having finished with them, and Christ being rejected, Christ went out from the temple saying it was left unto them, (the Jews), "desolate". At His crucifixion the veil of the temple was rent in twain and all religious performances completely ended. Man's business, inspired by the devil, is to build up what God has destroyed. There is no religious observance whatever left. Paul said to the Galatians, "Ye observe days, and months, and seasons, and years. I am afraid of you, lest by any means I have bestowed labor upon you in vain." The saints at Pentecost had no *stoicheia*: nor desired any, for they had God's own presence, and Christ was before their eyes. Religious observances are to hide the living, Risen Christ. --Remember that the Lord's Supper is a remembering Christ Himself, just as water baptism, after faith, is a personal confession of identification with Christ Himself, There are no *stoicheia*.)

God has repeatedly declared the day of the first covenant is done. So we see in Hebrews 7:18: "A disannulling of a foregoing commandment ... a bringing in thereupon of a better hope, through which we draw nigh unto God"--which they were never allowed to do under the first covenant. And as to Israel, we have just seen Hebrews 8:8, 9. And again, "In that He saith, A new covenant, He hath made the first old" (vs. 13). But the Jews know not this. They sit in four-fold pride: (a) that of nature; (b) that of a past real relationship with Jehovah; (c) that of having despised and rejected their own Messiah Who was sent in lowliness; (d) that of carrying on synagogue services with "cantors" and "rabbis", in complete spiritual blindness. Instructed Christians are the only real friends of the Jew. The modernist preacher, denying the virgin birth, the blood atonement, and the bodily resurrection, and inviting a Jewish rabbi to his platform, is the chief murderer of Jews--worse than Hitler, Himmler and Streicher themselves. For a Jewish rabbi invited to a "Christian pulpit" which is not Christian, but infidel, is thereby mollified, flattered, and deceived; and confirmed in his rejection of the only Saviour of either Jew or Gentile. (To claim that Lk. 23:48 teaches that the Jewish nation repented at the Cross is simply high folly. Christ indeed prayed on the Cross, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." This prayer will in due season be answered. But whatever the effect of the stupendous impression made by the three hours' darkness, the earthquake and the cry, the nation as such remained not only impenitent, but under bondage to the Sadducean priesthood (Acts 5:17). They imprisoned the apostles and stoned Stephen. The truth concerning the Jewish nation is told by the Holy Ghost in 1 Thess. 2:15-16: --the Jews, who

both killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove out us, and please not God, and are contrary to all men; forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved; to fill up their sins always: but the wrath (which will end in 'Jacob's trouble') is come upon them to the uttermost.")

Israel then is at present out of covenant with God entirely. In the first, the legal covenant, they continued not, and God regarded them not. There is therefore no standing for Israel before God under the Mosaic covenant. As to the Law, they have not "continued" in any real regard thereto; and as to the promises made to Abraham, they have fallen short completely of those promises. They regard themselves today as "chosen people," but God says, I regarded them not. Into the new covenant, the people of Israel have not yet entered, and indeed its blessings are based on the Person and work of the Messiah Whom they rejected and crucified.

So that Peter on the day of Pentecost cried to the "men of Israel," "Repent (of the fearful sin of Calvary) and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit ... and with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, Save yourselves from this crooked generation" (Acts 2:38,40).

Salvation for a Jew involves a complete breaking with his unbelieving nation! We find the obedient Jews who were "enlightened" (Heb. 10:32), "Endured a great conflict of sufferings; being made a gazing stock both by reproaches and afflictions; ... becoming partakers with them that were so used ... bonds ... spoiling of their possessions" (vss. 32-34).

This is not often found today, and is an awful proof 'of existing spiritual conditions, both among the Jews and Gentiles, called "professing Christians." As for Christendom today, it has become so Judaized, with its forms and ceremonies, "Sabbath" and "moral Law," worldly respectability and property, and its emasculated gospel, as to give slight offense to many Jews.

Israel then, while "an elect race ... a holy nation," have not obtained that eternal mercy which is future, and by virtue of which they will be an "all righteous" nation; just as any individual, being one of God's elect, is not actually pardoned, justified, and regenerated till "faith cometh" (Rom. 10:17). Israel's hopes are legal: "Being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God" (Rom. 10:3). Ignorant of mercy and of Grace; unconscious of sinnerhood; glorying in the Law which they do not, cannot keep; trusting in Moses, who will condemn them (John 5:45), they are actually today the worst off, the farthest from God, of any nation. "To the Jew first," has long ago been fulfilled, and "there is no difference" between Jew and Greek as to sinnerhood and need. Paul shut the door upon them nationally as regards the gospel, in Acts 13:46, and 28:28:

"And Paul and Barnabas spake out boldly, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first be spoken to you. Seeing ye thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles" (Acts 13:46).

"They departed after that Paul had spoken one word ... Be it known therefore unto you, that this salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles: they will also hear" (Acts 28:25, 28).

we speak these truths because we love the souls of Jews. Our present verse keeps making the simple statement concerning Israel, They continued not in My covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. They obtained then, no ground of recognition through their promised obedience. "The Law made nothing perfect." But how slow are men who have faith in their own spirituality (rather than in the indwelling Christ, which faith Paul had), to acknowledge as Paul did, "In me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." The legal covenant, in any form, brings only into bondage. Pope's lines, "Hope springs eternal in the human breast: Man never is, but always to be, blest," are true in general; the first line is absolutely true concerning legal hope--unless God in sovereign grace removes all hope from man's heart, so that man discovers himself guilty, lost, helpless and hopeless: then the gospel may be preached to him!

But you say, There is a new covenant, the spiritual blessing of which we partake of, and unto which national Israel in due season shall be brought. Why, you ask, does God still use this word, "covenant" concerning relationship to Him through what Christ did?

You have asked a good question. May God reveal its answer to us. Let us consider:

1. This new covenant, as regards its principals, is between the Father and the Son. We are not participants, as Israel was asked to become in the legal covenant. Let us turn to Hebrews 13:20-21. Inasmuch as here in Hebrews 8 we are dealing with both these covenants, it may be well to consider the great word in Hebrews 13 at this point:

"Now the God of Peace, Who brought again from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep in the blood of an eternal covenant, even our Lord Jesus, make you perfect in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to Whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen."

As we have said, in this "everlasting covenant" (for on the ground of it we have eternal redemption, an eternal inheritance, an eternal peace from the "God of Peace"), the party of the first part is God, the party of the second part, our Lord Jesus. As to God, the very name "the God of Peace," involves His so dealing that the saints are set before Him in quietness and confidence forever.

2. Let us consider further, that it was "in (Gr. en, because of, in view of) the blood of the eternal covenant" that "the God of peace brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep." Here the contracting parties are plainly seen to be God and Christ. The "sheep" will receive the blessing, but they are not actors. "The God of peace" promised that if the Great Shepherd, the Lord Jesus, would lay down His life for the sheep, He, God, would raise Him from the dead. Our Lord Jesus relied wholly Upon His word: which the God of peace indeed fulfilled.

3. Finally, consider that measureless rest of heart comes to the believer who sees something of what our Lord meant in the words, "It is finished," and, "I glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which Thou hast given Me to do." How

wonderful that God calls this work of Christ a covenant! What rest of heart in contrasting Christ's perfect finished work with the feeble efforts of fallen man under the legal covenant.

4. Hebrews 13:21 follows as a matter of course. When the heart comes to rest where God rests, in the shed blood of Christ, then is God enabled to "perfect us in every good work to do His will"; for "God worketh in us (not sets us to do a work!) that which is well-pleasing in His sight"; and it is all "through Jesus Christ." How gladly then, the saints ascribe to Him the glory forever and ever! How precious to them becomes that memorial supper (celebrated at least weekly by the early saints--Acts 20:7), where our Lord says, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, even that which is poured out for you."

This covenant, we repeat, was between "the God of peace" and "the Great Shepherd of the sheep, our Lord Jesus Christ," the terms of which are evident here: that if the Great Shepherd would (as the "Good Shepherd" of John 10) lay His life down for the sheep, God would bring Him again from the dead. So that even when forsaken on the Cross, Christ held fast the word "My", saying: "my God," claiming God's faithfulness. (See entire Ps. 22.) But in Psalm 16, quoted by Peter at Pentecost (Acts 2), and by Paul at Antioch of Pisidia (Acts 13:35ff), we find Him saying "Thou wilt not leave my soul in Sheol (whither He went during the three days and nights), neither wilt Thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption" (corruption, that is, of His body in Joseph's tomb). "Thou wilt show Me the path of life" (newness of life in resurrection); In thy presence (whither He would return) is fullness of joy; In thy right hand (where He would be seated), there are pleasures for evermore."

10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel After those days, saith the Lord; I will put My laws into their mind, And on their heart also will I write them: And I will be to them a God, And they shall be to Me a people:

11 And they shall not teach every man his fellow-citizen, And every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: For all shall know Me, From the least to the greatest of them.

12 For I will be merciful to their iniquities, And their sins will I remember no more.

13 In that He saith, A new covenant, He hath made the first old. But that which is becoming old and waxeth aged is nigh unto vanishing away.

Heb 8:10: Going back to the "new covenant" of Heb 8:8-13, we wish to press upon the reader's attention not only the people with whom this covenant is to be made, but also its particulars--just what God will do in the future: For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel After those days, saith the Lord.

Here we see three things: (1) It is a future covenant; (2) It is made with the house of Israel; (3) It will be after those days (that is, when the present dispensation has passed and other circumstances have come in)--the "good things that are to come" (Heb 9:11; 10:1).

Note also: (1) This is an unconditional covenant. (2) Its announced result is the removal of transgressions and iniquities from Israel (vs. 12). (3) It takes for granted that while individuals from a nation have obtained eternal mercy, yet the nation as such has not yet obtained mercy; for the new covenant does not appeal to Israel's will, but announces God's sovereign action. That is, blessing is not conditioned upon obedience, but on uncaused mercy, as in the case of the Gentiles (Ro 11:27). Resulting from this covenant, God announces, I will be merciful to their iniquities ... their sins will I remember no more. Therefore, this covenant is to be consummated after the "time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30:7; Dan. 12; 1 Thess. 2:15-16).

Jehovah will indeed "be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them" (Ezek. 36:37): but this prayer is the result of the pouring out from God of "the spirit of grace and of supplication" (Zech. 12), and is therefore all of grace, to be fulfilled "in its time."

Finally, the results of this new covenant are eternal. The nation will never again be put on trial, but will be eternally the object of God's mercy and grace.

Heb 8:11: And now, concerning the particular acts of God upon those with whom He makes the new covenant: His Laws are put into their mind, written on their heart. They shall be to God "a people:--"a nation"--of course in every land; "all shall know Him" ... their sins remembered no more (vs. 12). We are quoting from Jeremiah 31:31ff which agrees with Isaiah 60:21, where we are told that in that millennial day the Israelitish people "shall be all righteous." (See also the "very small Remnant" of Isa. 1:9; also, "He that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem" (4:2, 3); "the Remnant of Israel and they that are escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no more lean upon him that smote them, but shall lean upon Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel, in truth" (10:20); "A Remnant shall return, even the Remnant of Jacob, unto the Mighty God" (10:21).) All the arrangements of the New Covenant are to be carried out with them, God's elect, royal nation. (It is evidently for this reason that at the very close of the Millennium, when Satan is loosed from his prison, the unregenerate of the nations, the great majority, flock to his banner to go up against the camp of the heavenly saints over Jerusalem, the beloved city itself. Inexorable hatred toward Divine sovereign arrangements is found in the unregenerate human heart. The mind of the flesh is enmity against God, not able to be subject to Him. This is the reason that Satan so easily controls the human race. They hate a benefactor.)

Nor will the new covenant be made with what our Lord calls "this generation,"--that is, the present generation of unbelieving Jews; as He said to them in Matthew 21:43: "The Kingdom of God shall be taken away from you (it has been), and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." Indeed, it will be on an altogether different principle--that of sight, that the nation will be born in a day when "They shall look unto Him Whom they have pierced" (Zech. 12:10; 13:1). Remember Thomas: "Because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed" (John 20:29).

Meanwhile let us not forget the words of Romans 11:28-29: "As touching the Gospel they are enemies for your sake: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sake. For the gifts and the calling of God are not repented of." Behold, then, a people not in present covenant relation with God. Behold, one of that nation, seeing this terrible fact, enlightened as to the Person and work of the Lord Jesus, their rejected Messiah. Behold, next, the miracle of grace in such a one, by which he renounces the false claim that by nature he is one of the chosen people; and lo, he finds himself trusting "the blood of the covenant which was poured out for many for the remission of sins," and such a one finds himself truly one of Abraham's seed. For does it not read, "Know therefore that they that are of faith, the same are sons of Abraham"? And again, "If ye are Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise" (Gal. 3:7, 29). He who has renounced his fleshly hopes in Abraham has become a true child of Abraham, an heir of God, "where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bondman, freeman; but Christ is all, and in all" (Col. 3:11). As for Christians, as seen in Scripture, they are not "covenanters" at all: but the objects of Grace. They are of those "sheep" of which the Lord Jesus is "The Great Shepherd."

The Church has a heavenly calling; Israel, an earthly. The Church is Christ's Body; Israel, while in the future to be His nation on earth, is never called Christ's Body. Believers today are created in Christ--in a heavenly, Risen Christ (Eph 2:10), and are the righteousness of God in Christ (2 Cor. 5:21). While the Remnant of Israel which will enter the Millennium are to be an "all righteous" nation, they have not this marvelous relation which belongs by sovereign grace to believers during this time when God is taking out from the Gentiles (with elect Hebrews, as in Heb. 3:1) "a people for His name" (Acts 15:14).

Again, believers now, being "joined unto the Lord, one spirit" with Him, as one with Christ, and charged to have "love out of a pure heart and a good conscience and faith unfeigned" (1Tim. 1:5), still dwell (until Christ's coming) in bodies--"tabernacles" in which they groan, "being burdened." It is not said to believers now that God "takes away the stony heart out of the flesh." But, being indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and walking by Him, they have victory.

But it is said of Israel that God will "take away the stony heart out of their flesh." This can only be construed as that the disposition to sin will be removed from them, God will put within them "a heart of flesh," contrasted with the "stony heart" of unbelief, disobedience, idolatry, tendency to evil, which they before had and chose to have (Zech. 7:12). "Heart of flesh" has not the meaning of "flesh" (Gr. sarx), the moral sense of "flesh" in the Pauline epistles; but means a tender heart, responsive to all God's injunctions (Ezek. 11:19-20, and 36:25-27).

God's word concerning believers today is that they have been made "dead to the Law through the body of Christ (made sin for us) that we should be joined to Another, even to Him Who was raised from the dead." So that they are not under Law as a principle, but under Grace (Rom. 6:14; 7:4). On the other hand, it hath pleased God "to magnify His Law and make it honorable," not only in that our Lord Jesus walked perfectly as an Israelite under Law; but also that when in the future God makes His New Covenant after those days--the present days, He will put His laws into their mind, He says, so that they will no longer forget even the least detail; and on their heart also He will write them, so that all will truly say, "Oh how love I Thy Law! It is my meditation all the day" (Ps. 119:97).

Here at last will be a whole nation that are regenerate. Today, Israel are Lo Ammi, not God's acknowledged people; and are Lo-ruhamah, that is, "That hath not obtained mercy," (Hos. 1:6, 9, and margin). But remember Hos. 1:10 to 2:1, connecting this with Heb. 8:12, For I will be merciful to their iniquities. And their sins will I remember no more. Mercy in this sense has never yet been Israel's portion from God. As Moses said to them at the end of the forty years, "Ye have seen all that Jehovah did before your eyes in the land of Egypt ... but Jehovah hath not given you a heart to know, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day" (Deut. 29:2, 4). But read Isa. 6:10, and our Lord's final message on Israel, John 12:35-40. And again, Acts 28:25-28, closing, "Be it known therefore unto you, that this salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles: they will also hear."

We call attention to these things about Israel, because of the confused mind of today concerning Israel nationally. It will be as those utterly lost and undone, and as if they had never had a law, that "by the (example of) mercy shown to you" (Gentiles) they will also then obtain mercy. Individual Israelites to whom God has revealed Himself have indeed cried, "Who shall deliver me?" with Paul, or, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips," with Isaiah; but in the terrible days to come, the time of Jacob's trouble, the Great Tribulation, with the God-hating, Israel-hating nations beleaguering Jerusalem, to "cut them (Israel) off from being a nation," (Ps. 83:4), there will be poured upon them "the spirit of grace and supplication," and they "will look upon Him Whom THEY pierced," and thus, as from Saul of Tarsus in his three days of darkness, everything but the hope of mercy will be removed. That God should remember sins no more will be their only way out.

What a glorious day it will be when Israel is pardoned, all iniquity forever forgotten, become the joy of the earth, a nation of priests, of Jehovah, "the seed which Jehovah hath blessed" (Isa. 61:6-9). Then shall be fulfilled the great statements of the Millennial psalm (48:2, 11):

Beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth,
Is Mount Zion, on the sides of the north,
The city of the Great King.
Let Mount Zion be glad,
Let the daughters of Judah rejoice,
Because of Thy judgments.

The gospel is not a covenant, but the proclamation of news of the finished work of Christ. God has never made any covenant with Gentiles, nationally, or individually. What have Gentiles to do with covenants? We go back through church history and find Gentiles--uncircumcised--calling themselves "Covenanters." But God says in Romans 9:4-5, that certain things pertain to Paul's kinsmen according to the flesh: "Who are Israelites; whose is the adoption, and the glory, and the COVENANTS, and the giving of the law, and the service (religious forms and ordinances) of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh, Who is over all, God blessed for ever."

Now why should God make covenant arrangements and agreements with His creatures? Why should not all God's blessings be directly, unconditionally--yes, even unconsciously to him, bestowed on man? It will appear immediately upon reflection, that this would be to treat man practically as the vegetable kingdom, which receives rain and sunshine without consciousness of relationship to the Giver.

Heb 8:12: The last statement of verse 10: And I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people, is the fulfillment of the six great material blessings promised to Israel in Daniel 9:24. (As students of prophecy all know, the 69 (62 plus 7) of these heptads or periods of seven years of Dan. 9, beginning with Neh. 2:6, 8 (the command to rebuild Jerusalem) and ending with our Lord's death, have already passed. We are now in the long interval before the coming of the seventieth heptad. Mark: these seventy heptads (weeks) were decreed "upon thy (Daniel's) people and upon thy holy city" (Jerusalem). They have nothing to do with the Church, with the times of the Gentiles. Let no man deceive you here, saying that believers must pass into at least the first part of the seventieth week. For God tells us that He did not appoint us unto wrath, and in the same epistle tells us that the measured (or appointed) wrath is come on them (the Jews) to the uttermost. (Cf. 1 Thess. 1:10 and 5:9 with 1 Thess. 2:15-16.) Daniel's great prophecy goes even to the establishing of the Holy of Holies, the millennial temple of Ezekiel 40-48. The closing statement in Hebrews 8:12 does not go on to the millennial temple, but does make this remarkable promise: I will be merciful to their iniquities, and their sins will I remember no more. Please distinguish carefully this wonderful word here: I will remember them no more, from "remembering against." The conclusion drawn by the apostle from I will remember them no more, is given in Hebrews 10:18, and exactly befits the object of the epistle here: "Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin." We fear the consciousness of even intelligent believers generally is somewhat like this: "God will forgive me; I believe He has forgiven me, but He can never forget what I have done." Does not this lie in the basement, so to speak, of many a Christian heart? But this is not what God says. On the contrary, there is remission for sin, wholly on the ground of the one great Sacrifice that put sin away. This is New Testament truth; this is the gospel. In the word "atonement" (Heb. kaphar, to cover) of the Old Testament, there was a covering, temporarily, from God's sight by the shed blood of offerings, of that which still was there. In those sacrifices there was a "remembrance made of sins year by year" on the great Day of Atonement (Heb. 10:3), while verse 4 says, "It is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins." But as we have seen in Hebrews 13:20, an eternal covenant is found, and the contracting parties are "the God of peace" on the one hand, and "the Great Shepherd of the sheep" on the other. None but God is speaking here, in His sovereignty and in His grace.

There is a common expression today. "My sins are under the blood." This is not Christian truth. This is a mixture, and results in a state of mind scarcely able to understand God when He says, "Their sins will I remember no more." How could God remember sins which Christ has put completely and forever away by His sacrifice? In pardoning and justifying a sinner, God reckons to the sinner the whole, undiminished value of the work of Christ on the Cross, although justified ones may not fully realize what has been done.

Sad to say, for centuries, beginning with the so-called Christian Fathers themselves, in one way or another, the effect both upon God and upon the believing sinner, of the shedding of Christ's blood, has been perverted. For instance, a phrase has been current among some, which, (never dreamed of by them) defeats grace. I refer to the shallow, thoughtless rendering of "justified" by the words "just-as-if-I'd never sinned." This would merely seek to view the pardoned sinner as being restored to the position in which Adam was before he sinned. It comes infinitely short of the truth. Thus one has said of the word "at-one-ment," that it is a "babyish" interpretation of atonement. Now "just-as-if-I'd never sinned" not only looks at our escape from punishment as the chief object to be attained at the Cross, but minimizes that Divine forsaking and judgment, that sparing not of His own Son, as well as the unutterable glory of being placed in that Son and one with Him. It falls so far short of the work Christ did and of the place the believer is in, that I am ashamed to speak of it further.

Verse 13 is in two parts: the first is a statement about the old covenant: (literally) In the saying, new, He has made old the first. The second part is a general observation: that which grows old and aged is near unto disappearing. Conybeare remarks concerning the two parts of this sentence, "The first refers to time, the second to the weakness of old age." Rotherham's rendering is striking also: By saying: 'Of a new sort', He has made obsolete the first. But the thing that is becoming obsolete and aged, is near disappearing.

Heb 8:13 is a comment upon Heb 8:8-12, which set forth three great facts: (1) That Israel continued not in the first legal covenant (vs. 9b) from Kadesh-Barnea on, through the wilderness history and in Canaan. (2) That God regarded them not. Note this past tense. From the time Israel disregarded His covenant, Jehovah really disregarded them--that is, as to any genuine relationship to Himself under that first legal covenant. (His counsels of blessing were not affected, for these counsels preceded the legal covenant and were according to promise to Abraham). (3) That God will make in the future a new covenant with the house of Israel

(vs. 10): This is the covenant that I will make. Though the conditions were all met at the Cross, the covenant is not yet made with Israel.

Verse 13 follows naturally from the past tense of verse 9, I regarded them not, and from the words, I will make a new covenant, verse 8. These Hebrew believers of Paul's day, therefore, would naturally and rightly read verse 13 as if dating back not only to the days of Jeremiah, who uttered the preceding prophecy, but also and really to the time when God regarded not the old covenant.

No doubt Jehovah permitted Israel to go on under the old forms even until their temple was destroyed, and after that in the restored temple in the days of Ezekiel and Nehemiah; and after that in the "four hundred years of silence" between Malachi and Matthew. But we can ourselves easily see how God had made the first covenant old, and that it had waxed aged as the years passed on.

The history of national Israel with Jehovah may be roughly divided into five sections:

(1) The deliverance from Divine judgment by the Passover blood in Egypt, and the deliverance from Egypt and her bondage at the Red Sea by God's gracious intervention on their behalf, before the Law was given or any "covenant" had been made with the nation.

(2) The proposal at Sinai by Jehovah to make their obedience the condition and ground of their national relationship to Him, which their ignorant self-confidence immediately seized upon: "All that Jehovah hath spoken we will do." Upon this, Jehovah announced Himself and the great "ten words." Under this "ministration of death and condemnation" (2 Cor. 3) Israel now was.

(3) The breakdown of the priesthood in the days of Eli; with even the ark of God taken by the Philistines, and the rejection by Jehovah of that priestly branch.

(4) The renewal in Divine grace of relationship with Israel under David and his house (prophetic of future blessing under David's Son). God did not abandon the priesthood, neither did David usurp that office, although, like Moses, who offered sacrifices on behalf of Aaron and his sons, David acted at the altar he had erected, and God's accepting fire fell upon his offerings.

(5) The restoration "for a little moment a little reviving in our bondage" (Ezra 9:8). But again there is selfishness, sin, neglect of God, and the refusal to confess, saying: "Wherein have we robbed God?" (Note the "wherein's," the "wherefore's," and the "what's" of Malachi, their last prophet; Chs. 1:2, 7; 2:14, 17; 3:7, 8, 13--defiant denials instead of humiliation.)

Then the four hundred years of silence, in which the Gentile rules and only a few "that know their God" are "strong" (Da 11:32); the coming of the forerunner, and the advent of their Messiah in their midst,--only to be despised, rejected, crucified, His apostles and disciples denounced and persecuted. This is the unbelieving "generation" that we see today. This is the nation from which the Kingdom of God has been taken away to be given in the future to that nation formed that day when a "very small Remnant," they actually look on Him Whom they pierced.

The great desire of the writer in Hebrews 8.13 is to impress upon these Hebrew believers that away back in the days of Jeremiah the legal covenant had been pronounced old, and the prophesied bringing-in of a new covenant in due season made the other covenant "old" and nigh unto vanishing away even in the prophet's days. The figure is that of an old man who is waxing aged and is ready to pass from the scene, This would shake to the foundations of his soul any Hebrew that heard it. What! Be without a temple? (For the temple was yet standing in Jerusalem.) Have no morning and evening sacrifice? No earthly priests and high priests to carry on the worship of Jehovah? Abandon the hopes wrapped up in the Mosaic institutions held for fifteen hundred years? Yea, said the Apostle, These things are nigh unto vanishing away. (Hebrews was written shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, A.D. 70, and the dispersion of the Jews). Yea, said Paul, true believers have not here an abiding continuing city--what a shock beyond description to an Israelite who knew that Jehovah had set His name in His temple there in the Holy City!

So the believing Hebrew was asked to turn from all hope in the former legal covenant and set all his hopes in Heaven itself whither the Priest after the order of Melchizedek had gone.

Therefore every instructed Hebrew believer saw that the Old Covenant had already passed away, that the blood of the New Covenant had been shed, and that they enjoyed its benefits. They saw that God would in the future deal with "Israel and Judah" in blessing, bringing them together and making them as a nation partake of all the things joined to the New Covenant, which God would then extend to them nationally. To sum up Heb 8:9-13:

The Law was "holy, just, and good": but its blessing was conditioned on obedience.

But God had made unconditional promise to Abraham!

Israel, trusting in themselves, promised obedience.

But they practiced disobedience--"they continued not" in God's covenant.

God, consequently, did not "regard" them, but let them go into captivity--as at this day.

Neither the first nor the second covenant is God's covenant with Abraham: though both are based on that.

The first covenant's blessings were conditional: man must do his "part."

The blessings of the second covenant will be wholly God's: "And this is the covenant from Me unto them, when I shall take away their sins" (Rom. 11:27).

Hebrews 9

THIS CHAPTER IS a chapter of contrasts. We have in it the great contrasts between:

1. The two tabernacles: (a) one earthly, way to God veiled; (b) the other in Heaven itself--no veil there! the one "made by hands"; the other, "not of this creation."
2. The two priesthoods: (a) Levitical priests, and (b) CHRIST, our one Great High Priest.
3. Their offerings: (a) The Levitical priests' continued sacrifices, and Day of Atonement every year; and (b) Christ's one sacrifice of Himself at the Cross.
4. The results: (a) Of their sacrifices of animals, "goats and bulls"; could not atone for sin or relieve the conscience of the sinner. (b) Christ offered up Himself, through the Eternal Spirit, which "cleansed the conscience to serve the Living God": Christ's one offering obtaining "eternal redemption," and an "eternal inheritance."
5. (a) The earthly sacrifices, mere "copies of things in the heavens," sanctifying "unto the cleanness of the flesh." (b) Christ's sacrifice, which brought Him "not into a holy place made with hands, like in pattern to the true; but into Heaven itself, now to appear before the face of God for us" not once a year, but constantly!
6. (a) The sacrifices of the Levitical priests constantly repeated; (b) Christ's, once for all: "Now ONCE at the consummation of the ages hath He been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself."
7. (a) The universal appointment unto men "once to die, and after this, judgment" (vs. 27). (b) Christ, "having been once offered to bear the sins of many (which included death and judgment) shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for Him, unto salvation" (which includes our bodies).

1 NOW even the first covenant had ordinances of Divine service, and its sanctuary, a sanctuary of this world.

2 For there was a tabernacle prepared, the first, wherein were the candlestick, and the table, and the showbread; which is called the Holy Place.

3 And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holy of Holies;

4 having a golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was a golden pot holding the manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant;

5 and above it cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy-seat; of which things we cannot now speak severally.

In the opening words of Hebrews 9, Even the first covenant--we see to what degree that covenant, with the ordinances of which, the unbelieving Hebrew nation were occupied, had disappeared; or, rather, been fully discerned in its shadow character by the writer of Hebrews. Contrast Even the first covenant had ordinances, with the Jews' words: "We are disciples of Moses ... but as for this man (Jesus) we know not whence he is." To one, therefore, taught by the Spirit, it was clear that the first covenant was "becoming old and waxing aged, and nigh unto vanishing away" (Heb 8:13).

Now as to the Levitical ordinances of Divine service, we have the following description of the tabernacle and the furnishing thereof:

1. The tabernacle containing (a) the candlestick, and (b) the table, and the showbread, all these pertaining to what was called the Holy Place. And after the second veil, the tabernacle ... called the Holy of Holies, having (vs. 4) (a) a golden altar of incense; (b) the ark of the covenant overlaid ... with gold, ... holding the manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; (c) and above it (golden) cherubim of glory, overshadowing the mercy-seat (vs. 5).

*The statement in vs. 4 that the Holy of Holies had a golden altar of incense, together with the ark of the covenant, has been attacked by shallow infidel criticism as ignorance and inaccuracy on the part of the author. This is just another example of the inventive recklessness of unbelief. In 1 Kings 6:19-22 we read that Solomon, in preparing the temple, (the furniture of which was arranged exactly as was that of the tabernacle), "prepared an oracle in the midst of the house within, to set there the ark of the covenant of Jehovah"; and, "the whole altar that belonged to the oracle, he overlaid with gold." Here in the Holy Place, close to the second veil, therefore near the ark of the covenant, was this golden altar for incense. It, therefore, is regarded by the Spirit of God, in Heb. 9:4, as belonging to the Holy of Holies, although placed in the Holy Place, that incense might be offered Up daily. We read also in Ex. 30:1, 6, 10:

"Thou shalt make an altar to burn incense upon ... thou shalt put it before the veil that is by the ark of the testimony, where I will meet with thee ... And Aaron shall make atonement upon the horns of it once in the year; with the blood of the sin-offering of atonement once in the year shall he make atonement for it throughout your generations: it is most holy unto Jehovah."

And, "Thou shalt set the golden altar for incense before the ark of the testimony" (Ex. 40:5).

These passages clearly show that the golden altar for incense "belonged to the oracle," that is, to the ark, although placed where it was available at other times than on the Great Day of Atonement.

*Take heed to Scripture's attitude towards Scripture!

OT: "God said, Let there be light: and there was light." (Gen. 1:3).

NT: "God commanded the light to shine out of DARKNESS." (2Cor. 4:6).

OT: "Yet shall his days be a hundred and twenty years" (Ge 6:3).

NT: "The days ... before the Flood-- (Matt. 24:38).

OT: Elijah's prayer for rain (1 Kings 18:41-5).

NT: Elijah "prayed ... and the heaven gave rain" (Jas.

5:18).

OT: Elisha's cleansing Naaman, the Syrian leper (2 Kings

5:7).

NT: To "Naaman, the Syrian," was Elisha sent (Lk. 4:27).

OT: "My God hath sent His angel and hath shut the lions' mouths" (Dan. 6:22).

NT: "By faith ... stopped the mouths of lions" (Heb. 11:33).

OT: "And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights" (Jon. 1:17).

NT: "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale;" (Matt. 12:40).

OT: "His (Lot's) wife ... became a pillar of salt" (Ge 19:26).

NT: "Remember Lot's wife" (Lk. 17:32).

OT: "Moses made a serpent of brass, and set it upon the standard" (Nu 21:9).

NT: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness;" (John 3:14).

See also Rev. 2:14, 20, where our Lord mentions two OT characters.

When God's Word says, "The sun stood still" at Joshua's word to Jehovah: or, "The iron did swim", at the prayer or will of "the man of God," (Elisha); and here (Heb. 9:4), Aaron's rod that budded--(OT: "The rod of Aaron ... was budded, and put forth buds, and produced blossoms, and bare ripe almonds" (Num. 17:8), simple faith delights in the showing of the majesty of God.

Christ, walking on the water, commanding the tempest to be still; feeding thousands from a few loaves and fishes; saying "Cast the net on the right side of the boat and ye shall find," or telling Peter how to find the coin in the mouth of a fish--little things, all but "to be explained by natural processes," say the infidel-modernists, with the smile of superiority and tolerance: (which smiling is on this earth only: "Woe unto you that laugh now, for ye shall weep; whose weeping shall be forever!")

Know ye not that this book called the Bible is the Word of the Living God Who has spoken it and Who lives therein? How can He, being the Mighty One, keep His might forever concealed? How can He, being the King, never display His royal robe? Miracles are manifestations of Majesty.

"The haughtiness which excludes God, because it is incompetent to discover Him, and then talks of His work, and meddles with His weapons, according to the measure of its own Strength, can prove nothing but its own contemptible folly. Ignorance is generally confident because it is ignorant; and such is the mind of man in dealing with the things of God." These words from J.N. Darby's Synopsis of the Books of the Bible, (Vol.

1, preface, p. xi) are very truth.

Heb 9:1: At the beginning, we find two firsts. For verse 1 sets forth the first tabernacle as a whole, which had ordinances of Divine service, and its sanctuary, ... of this world. This evidently refers to the wilderness tabernacle as a whole, called in verse 8, "the first tabernacle."

Heb 9:2: Then immediately this tabernacle is divided up. For in verse 2 we read, There was a tabernacle prepared, the first--and in verse 3, And after the second veil (the second division) the tabernacle which is called the Holy of Holies. Here, then, two divisions, or parts, of the whole tabernacle are before us: the one called the first ... the Holy Place (into which the priests went continually (vs. 6); and after the second veil, (vs. 3) the second, called the Holy of Holies into which went "the high priest alone, once in the year, not without blood" (vs. 7). We may remark that together they are called "the Holies."

Now concerning the some ten articles in the two parts forming this sanctuary of this world, we have this surprising yet comforting statement at the end of verse 5: of which things we cannot now speak in detail. I say, this is a surprising statement, when we see the awe-inspiring particularity of directions for both the making and the use of these various articles by Israel of old.

*The R.V. correctly renders of which things--that is, of all the things of this tabernacle, indeed, of the whole tabernacle itself. The word is plural in the Greek.

I may say here, that in Hebrews, the tabernacle worship, and not the temple services as instituted by David, are always in view. The tabernacle worship typically sets forth the work of Christ in redemption, whereas the temple service pictures the millennial kingdom worship, when Christ "shall sit a Priest upon His throne" (Zech. 6:13).

We see at once that something new has taken the place of all these old-time things, types though they doubtless were, of which the author of Hebrews cannot now speak in detail. (It is not the time nor the place to do so, else we would become absorbed in the details and miss the lesson of the great contrast.)

*Is it not true that in some meetings God's people have pondered over the measurements, furniture, colors, and materials of the tabernacle, and been occupied with its shadowy worship, while the Son of God, of whom all these things are a mere shadowy

picture, was by His Spirit present, and ready to reveal Himself? I would prefer an old-fashioned "holiness meeting," where people dealt directly with God, and became devoted to Christ and filled with the Holy Spirit; though they would not have been able to answer many of the questions that these students of a model of the tabernacle might have asked them!

It is the worship, and not the furniture, of which God is speaking here. (Paul carried no model of the tabernacle about with him!)

Kelly well says: "The aim of the Holy Spirit, in referring to the first covenant with its ordinances, and especially its sanctuary, becomes now apparent. It was not to speak in detail of the contents of the tabernacle exterior or interior, however symbolically instructive, but (to speak) of its distinctive contrast as a whole with Christianity.--W. Kelly, p. 161.

But it is the disposition of "religionists" to go deeper and deeper into the bondage of the forms and ceremonies of their "religion." The Gospel, believed, delivers the heart, and enables the mind to view types and shadows with profit, but not be enslaved by them.

Now we are prepared for what we find in Heb 9:6, 7:

6 Now these things having been thus prepared, the priests go in continually into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the services;

7 but into the second the high priest alone, once in the year, not without blood, which he offereth for himself, and for the errors of the people. (Literally, "ignorances," or sins committed in ignorance: Lev. 5:17-19.)

The high priest alone--These statements concerning the high priest have power over a legal heart. Be watchful here! For we are going to read the contrast of all this: for, first, the high priest of Israel himself dared not go in "at all times" (Lev. 16:2); second, he went in only once in the year; third, he went not through his own blood, but not without blood -- (that of appointed animals); fourth, he had to repeat the sacrifice each year: it was never finished, witnessing that sin was not put away forever; fifth, he had to pass through a veil that shut out all the people; sixth, the high priest himself was subject to death, and his office passed to another; seventh, the sacrifices of the high priest made "a remembrance of sins" (Heb. 10:3), but could not remove them. No Levitical high priest even remotely thought of his own blood being offered up! Therefore his sacrifices could not set forth the great coming fact of redemption by Christ.

1. The high priest of Israel on the Day of Atonement entered the presence of God, the Holy of Holies on earth.

Contrast, Christ after His death, "entered into Heaven itself," (called the Holies), "before the face of God" (vs. 24).

2. The high priest had no personal right to be there: he was a sinner. Contrast, Christ had a personal right to return to "the glory" which He had With the Father "before the world was" (Jn 17:5).

3. The high priest had to have the blood of a bullock poured out for him before he dared enter the Holy of Holies.

Contrast, Christ through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish (at the Cross) Unto God.

4. The high priest carried the blood of the slain goat ("blood not his own"--vs. Heb 7:25), for the sins of the people.

Contrast, Christ, through His own blood (shed for the sinners) entered in.

5. The high priest did this "year by year" (Heb 10:1). Contrast, Christ ... entered in once for all into the holies, having obtained eternal redemption.

6. The Levitical high priests "by death were hindered from continuing" (Heb 7:23). contrast, Christ "abideth a Priest forever" (Heb 7:24), having "a priesthood that doth not pass to another" (Heb 7:24, R. V. Margin).

7. The Levitical high priest was "after the order of Aaron." (Heb 7:11). contrast, Christ was after another order, "the order of Melchizedek" (Heb 7:11), One greater and "better" than Abraham (Heb 7:6-7).

We must see that Christ's work in Heaven governs all previous Levitical "shadows"; not the Levitical "shadows," Christ's work in Heaven! The very thought of the high priest entering, and the people left outside, is to be put away in Hebrews! Do we not read at the beginning (2:11), "He that sanctifieth (Christ) and they that are sanctified are all OF ONE"? The very opposite was true in the Old Testament arrangements. For there we read (as in Hebrews 9:7) the high priest alone entered within the veil. Further, only a special class, "the priests," went into the first part of the tabernacle, while the people stood without.

Keep these contrasts in mind. Study the lesson of the "shadows," or types, but do not be brought into bondage under their influence--Romanists are, and most Protestants. To find one reading the types of Leviticus with a spirit set free by the blood of our Great High Priest, once-for-all shed, is rare. And now mark most carefully:

Heb 9:8: The Holy Spirit this signifying--not that you are to get a model of the tabernacle and spend hours and days upon it, however helpful a simple review of the tabernacle might be, but, The Holy Spirit this signifying, that the way into the Holy Place hath not yet been made manifest, while the first tabernacle is yet standing. The great message of Hebrews 9 and 10 is of a closed way, and then of an open way. God here emphasizes that the first tabernacle constantly said to the nation of Israel, God is here, but you cannot come to Him. That is what the veils meant, and especially, of course, the second veil. That word "not," NOT yet ... made manifest, should be emphasized constantly. Otherwise, the human heart being what it is, those Levitical forms and ceremonies which made up Judaism, will secure an almost unshakable power over the conscience and heart. if you do not go to the Cross and get deliverance from all "religion," and find yourself in the presence of God, with all claims met, these Levitical things will have a subtle hold upon you, like the Cross on top of a Romish cathedral--while the "Word of the Cross" (1 Cor. 1:18), the "Power of God" which sets people free, is wholly unknown to that monstrous pagan system. In the Levitical things, you are to see the contrast to what you now enjoy, not the very example of it.

This way into the Holiest in Heaven, our access thither, yea, unto the continual access and worship described in Hebrews as full growth, is the great distinction of the work of Christ. Under the old legal Levitical offerings and gifts the veil was never done away with. There was no access, there was no coming nigh to God. The way into the holy place now has been opened, as we are to see, and a mighty invitation and exhortation—the great, central exhortation of Hebrews (10: 19), sounds out, to enter into it with boldness. (See 10:19 ff.)

Heb 9:9: Which (the first tabernacle with its worship) is a figure (Gr.: parable, parable) for the time present; according to which (parable or temple worship) are (constantly being) offered both gifts and sacrifices which cannot, as touching the conscience, perfect the (one serving, or) worshiper.

As touching the conscience--now what is "conscience?" It is commonly said to be that by which we distinguish good and evil. Yet, like Paul, a man may live mistaken "in all good conscience:" "I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth"--really opposing God. Conscience, therefore, is not a complete guide to conduct, but is subject to instruction. So we have the presence with us of the inspired Word of God, which sets forth our path. Revelation of Scripture's meaning, by the Holy Spirit to the human spirit will therefore govern conscience.

The human spirit is controlled by what is believed, and the seat of believing, the throne room of the being, is the heart. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." In this throne room we live and make our decisions, for, "Out of the heart are the issues of life."

*Man, as we have before said, is a spirit, living in a bodily tabernacle, and possessing a soul. So God says, "My son, give me thine heart"--not, thy conscience. And, "Keep thy heart with all diligence for out of it are the issues of life." Concerning David's desire to build God a temple, Jehovah said to him, "Thou didst well that it was in thy heart." To Ananias, Peter said, "Why hath Satan filled thy heart? ... How is it that thou hast conceived this thing in thy heart?" And to Simon Magus, "Thy heart is not right before God ... Pray the Lord if perhaps the thought of thy heart shall be forgiven thee."

Paul wrote of the gospel, "The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart: ... if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." Read also Ex. 35:29 concerning those whose hearts "made them willing." Finally, Christ would "dwell in our hearts by faith." (Eph. 3:17).

When the heart seeks refuge from conscience, it may so harden itself against light and truth as to "sear" or "brand" the conscience "as with a hot iron" (1 Tim. 4:2). In this case a course of sin may be followed without feeling (Eph. 4:19).

Or, the heart may so rest in the shed blood of Christ (by Whom sin was once for all and forever put away) as to be wholly relieved from all accusation by conscience, and so cease from all religious self-efforts--"dead works" (Heb. 9:14). This is what is meant by "a cleansed conscience" (vs. 14), or, "hearts sprinkled from an evil (or accusing) conscience" (10:22). For the conscience of a true believer may be weak and therefore easily "defiled"--that is, rendered accusatory.

*We are to "hold faith and a good conscience," (1Ti 1:19), which is further associated in vs. 5 with "love out of a pure heart, and faith unfeigned." Paul exercised himself to have "a conscience void of offence." (Acts 24:16). The conscience is seen in 1 Cor. 10:29 discerning or judging actions in other persons as good or evil: "Conscience, I say, not thine own, but the other's; for why is my liberty judged by another conscience?"

The fact that the conscience "of a believer" looks morally Godward is seen in 1 Pet. 2:15: "For so is the will of God, that by well-doing ye should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men." The conscience of all men is seen in Rom. 2:15 as "bearing witness," testifying within: "In that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness therewith, and their thoughts one with another accusing or else excusing them."

Paul says, "My conscience bearing witness with me in the Holy Spirit," not that every moral choice of a believer is to have the conscious inner witness of the Holy Spirit, but that the indwelling Spirit guiding us into all truth may be relied upon to warn against an evil path, and check by inward darkness or trouble in experience, any false step; for "the mystery of the faith" is held "in a pure conscience" (1Ti 3:9).

Our Saviour has rendered our conscience perfect, so that we can go into the sanctuary without an idea of fear, without one question as to sin arising in our minds. A "perfect" conscience is not an innocent conscience, which, happy in its unconsciousness, does not know evil and does not know God revealed in holiness. A perfect conscience knows God; it is cleansed, and, having the knowledge of good and evil according to the light of God Himself, it knows that it is purified from all evil according to His purity. Adam in innocence, not knowing good or evil, needed not and had not conscience. But when Adam sinned, God said, "Behold, the man is become as one of Us, to know good and evil." (Gen. 3:22.) This, then, can be the basic definition of conscience.

To continue: Vincent's rendering of the latter part of Heb 9:9, 10, is striking: according to which are offered gifts and sacrifices which cannot perfect the worshipper as touching the conscience, (10) being mere ordinances of the flesh on the ground of (resting upon) meats, etc. Or, we may render verse 10 again, Being ONLY (with meats and drinks and divers washings -- See Appendix B.) ordinances of flesh (i.e., to be performed by bodily, not necessarily spiritual exercises which until a season of rectifying (when Christ should come) are IMPOSED. ("The gifts and offerings of that time were only provisional, to tide the people over to a better time."-- Vincent, p. 480.)

Only carnal ordinances--Let those occupied with forms and ceremonies pay heed, whether Jewish, Romanists, or pagans. God

brands "ordinances" of men carnal, of the flesh. Here perish before Him all "observings" of days, seasons, months, years; all "unbloody" sacrifices of the Mass; all demon-taught forbiddings of meats (1 Tim. 4:1-3); all rushings to dying bedsides with "holy water"; and a thousand other inventions of ignorant presumption! If God has set aside as "carnal", ordinances which He Himself had imposed, how much more doth He now abhor the thrice carnal lying forms and "observances" that men have brought in to hide the perfect finished work of His Blessed Son? ("The services of that tabernacle were only meats and drinks and divers washings. Not one sin did they actually take away; no nearer to God did they bring the offerers. They were but shadows, pointing onward to the substance."--William Lincoln.)

Imposed until a time of rectification: ("Setting things right, Gr. diorthoseos: "A complete rectification."--Bagster's Analytical Greek Lexicon.) We may ask, What was to be rectified? And answer:

1. The old worship and its meats and drinks and divers washings called carnal ordinances, the indefinite continuation of which would shut out spiritual realities.

2. The entire Levitical system, called "a copy and shadow of the heavenly things" (8:5). A time must come when the reality of which they were a shadow would be revealed, which was done, of course, by Christ, in His Person and work.

3. The veil shutting the worshipers out from God. This was rectified when the veil was rent by our Lord's death, so that we now come, by "a new and living way, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh" (Heb 10:20) and by His blood, and having Him as our Great High Priest in Heaven, directly to God. The time of rectification has come!

Let every Gentile believer be therefore encouraged--not to remain in ignorance of the things of the first tabernacle, but joyfully to reflect that all those things are in contrast to what we now enjoy, a contrast as to the very thing which the book of Hebrews especially enjoins, that is, drawing near to God.

For however closely the student of the old tabernacle may consider it, however distinctively and accurately he has its form and furniture in his view, he comes always to the UNRENT VEIL. There he is shut out, as was the Hebrew nation, from entering into the very presence of God; whereas now, drawing near is commanded: "Let us draw near"; "Come with boldness," since the veil was rent at the Cross when Christ was "put to death in the flesh." (Compare Heb. 10:20 and 1 Pet. 3:18.) This mighty contrast must be constantly borne in mind by the reader of the Levitical ordinances. We repeat Hebrews 7:12, 18, 19, for we dare not forget these verses:

"For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the Law ... For there is a disannulling of a foregoing commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness (for the Law made nothing perfect) and a bringing in thereupon of a better hope, through which we draw nigh unto God."

This "better hope", as we know, is Christ: His work on the Cross in putting away our sin, and His priesthood in Heaven, in leading our worship and interceding for us. We dare not confuse the two (Law and Grace). That which God put asunder let not man join together. The fact that our Lord's heavenly priesthood, while after the Melchizedek order, is typified in Aaronic and Levitical things, that is, the things of the tabernacle worship, being compared, or mostly contrasted therewith, does not warrant for one moment our forgetting that the "heavenly calling" (of which these Hebrew believers are said in Hebrews 3:1 to be partakers) was given to Paul to set forth in detail in his epistles, from Romans to Philemon. We remind the reader again that Hebrews does not set forth Church truth, (See Appendix C.) never reaching what we might call the corporate calling of believers as the Body of Christ; nor does it describe our individual position as enlivened with Christ, raised up with Him, and made to sit with Him in the heavenlies (Eph. 2:5-6). Indeed, it does not go back to the great fundamental thing, our identification in death and resurrection with Christ.

There is a danger therefore in the study of this great book of Hebrews (which takes us back to the whole sweep of Old Testament history, type, and prophecy), that we become occupied with our journey "through this world," and are ready to set up the "tabernacle in the wilderness" again, as it were, and spend our time in religious forms, and man-invented ceremonial worship; whereas the apostle tells us that even the tabernacle forms afore prescribed by God have now passed away.

Let the preacher and teacher of the Word of God be occupied with the doctrines belonging to the Assembly of God today, and the exhortations connected therewith, as seen in the epistles of Paul. Let him make them constantly live before those to whom he speaks. Thus will be evident perpetually the facts and duties of our walk in the Spirit as dead and risen with Christ; and thus only shall we hold in proper proportion this mighty truth of the heavenly priesthood of Christ, referred to in Romans 8:34, and set forth fully in Hebrews, as contrasted with the former earthly worship.

Heb 9:11 But Christ having come a High Priest of the good things to come, through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation,

12 nor yet through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, entered in once for all into the Holy Place, having obtained eternal redemption.

13 for if the blood of goat, and bulls, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling them that have been defiled, sanctify unto the cleanness of the flesh;

14 how much more shall the blood of Christ, Who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish unto God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the Living God?

In Hebrews 9, attention should be fixed on five subjects:

1. The tabernacle in the wilderness, with its furniture, and its ordinances of Divine service, (Heb 9:1,7).

2. The emphasis thus by the Holy Spirit upon the fact that "the way into the Holy Place was NOT made manifest while the first tabernacle was yet standing" (Heb 9: 8).

3. The fact that this tabernacle economy provides a parable "for the time present," (i.e., for the present dispensation).

4. The fact that the time of rectifying was at the Cross, where there was "a disannulling of a foregoing commandment"—the Law (which "made nothing perfect"), and the disappearance therefore, from God's sight and consideration, of all the typical ordinances of the old tabernacle, because Christ fulfilled all by His one offering at the Cross, and by means thereof brought in "a better hope, by which we draw nigh unto God." Thus the temporary things (the Law, tabernacle, and priesthood), gave way to eternal things: (a) eternal redemption, Heb 9:12; (b) eternal inheritance, verse 15; (c) eternal salvation, Hebrews 5:9. Note also the precious name, "eternal Spirit," (vs. 14); and "eternal covenant" (between the Father and the Son: Heb 13:20).

5. The good things to come, that is, when our Lord shall return, which is "the promise," the spirit of which runs all through Hebrews:

"For yet a very little while, He that cometh shall come, and shall not tarry" (Heb 10:37).

Heb 9:11: But Christ having come--Christ Himself appears, having nothing to do with carnal ordinances or Levitical forms; but, a High Priest of good things to come: "to come" contrasted with all old things. First let us observe that it is as High Priest that our Lord is spoken of here, not primarily as Redeemer from the penalty of sin, but as in Heb 9:14, where we see His blood cleansing the conscience "from dead works to serve the Living God." He is viewed as having obtained eternal redemption, not as in the process of obtaining it. Human priests are always occupied with the business (as they say) of obtaining Divine favor. Our High Priest has obtained that infinite boon forever!

Further, the good things to come of which He is High Priest are those good things brought by His having obtained eternal redemption at the Cross: pardon, justification, reconciliation, association with Him as His brethren; "access with confidence," "drawing near" to God in Heaven through Him; and, of course, all future blessings connected with "the promise" of His coming again (Heb 10:36-7). Of course the good things connected with Christ's priesthood are on now, and must be, ever since He obtained eternal redemption.

Next note the words: Through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands (as was the tabernacle in the wilderness). There are two tabernacles in this chapter: the one, "of this world," (Gr., skene), verse 1. But the other, the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands ... not of this creation, in Heaven itself!

In the tabernacle in the wilderness, God was indeed present, in infinite condescension, between the cherubim, upon the mercy seat, behind the veil. But the greater and more perfect one is Heaven itself. (Compare Revelation 11:19, 15:5, and see Appendix D.) Moses was told to make all things "after the pattern of the things in the heavens," and here are the things in the heavens! If we make this "temple of God that is in Heaven" a mere idea, that is, make it into a phrase describing in general God's presence, we do violence to our reason, for God speaks even more definitely concerning "the temple of God that is in Heaven" in Revelation 11:19, and 15:5, 8. Now we know (unless we are ignorant modernists, idly denying God's Word), that angels are realities. And these angels "come out of the temple." There is, therefore, in Heaven now, what God calls His "temple," as we read also in Revelation 14:17, 16:1. It is an evidence of the inconsistency of unbelieving hearts that people can believe that the earthly tabernacle, when reared up and dedicated, saw the glory described in Exodus 40:34-35; and that when the earthly temple was dedicated, "the glory of Jehovah filled Jehovah's house," as described in 2 Chronicles 5:13-14; 7:2; and these same people doubt the reality of the heavenly temple. (It is indeed true that we, the Assembly of God, "worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus"; that "by one Spirit we have our access unto the Father," because we have been directly created by God "the firstfruits of His creatures," of the New Creation; and "are the righteousness of God in Him," and belong to that place which our Lord is preparing which when revealed as the New Jerusalem ("which is our mother"--Gal. 4:26), will be found to have no temple. "I saw no temple therein; they shall see His face; and His name shall be on their foreheads" (Rev. 21:22; 22:4). Then shall be realized in every outward sense what is true today of every believer.)

To conceive of a tabernacle--temple on high, "made without hands," is Scriptural. Otherwise, we should have a type typifying a type--as those must do who say that the patterns of the things in the heavens were real, but that the heavenly things themselves were not real!

Also, the words, not of this creation, while not asserting that the temple-tabernacle in Heaven was created, intimate that it was so: when, we know not, But from what we see therein (Rev. 11:19), we at once associate it with the Ark of the Covenant on earth, which was patterned after that in Heaven and had to do with it. The Ark, as the Ark of the Covenant, was the symbol of the absolute faithfulness of God, and marvelously set forth Christ, in both His Person and His work.

The Levitical system was a series of "shadows" of heavenly things, giving the earthly nation of Hebrews a hint of possible future earthly fellowship with God, but not setting forth to that nation as such even a suggestion of entering Heaven, or of the glorious sanctuary prepared by the Risen Christ. For the Hebrew nation had and has an earthly calling. Their future blessing, even in the Millennium, is earthly and is to be connected indeed with the glorious temple at Jerusalem.

However, the Hebrews to whom this epistle was addressed, were partakers of the heavenly calling. Crucified, risen, and glorified,

He had sent forth the Holy Spirit, baptizing believers into Him, into actual sharing of His heavenly life and place.

No more shadows! Did the Levitical Day of Atonement demand the sprinkling of blood on and before the mercy seat? Yes, every year.

The blood of Christ was shed once for all; all Levitical shadows disappeared to the eyes of faith--disappeared as fulfilled, and therefore done.

While into Heaven itself the Risen Christ had gone, and all believers with Him, they were now wholly heavenly: not Jewish, Israelitish, or even Hebrew; not Gentile, but a new creation, new creatures in Christ.

And their worship, that of these new creatures, was wholly heavenly. The blood of Christ was their right; the Holy Spirit of God was their power. They had "eternal redemption," we shall see; and an "eternal inheritance." The greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands ... not of this creation, is, therefore, the tabernacle with which the Risen Christ is connected.

Heb 9:12: Nor yet through the blood of goats and calves—the means by which Israel's high priest came before Jehovah, even into His presence, on the Great Day of Atonement. But such blood was a typical, temporary shadow, of what was to be done. Such offerings could not maintain man, nor even his representative, the high priest, in Jehovah's presence; nor, indeed, give him liberty to open his mouth from behind the veil in Jehovah's presence, the Holy of Holies. All he could do was to swing a censer of incense which spoke of that "sweet savor" which Christ's sacrifice was one day to be before God; and then sprinkle the blood, the laid-down life of the sacrifice, upon the mercy seat, then seven times before the mercy seat, and then withdraw. (Mark well, however (Lev. 16), that the high priest was also to cleanse, to "make atonement for the holy place" (vs. 16), "because of the uncleannesses of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions, even all their sins," AND "go out unto the altar ... and make atonement for it ... and cleanse it, and hallow it from all the uncleannesses of the children of Israel" (vss. 18, 19). The holiness of God's being and the effect of the blood in Heaven, was the primary consideration in the Great Day of Atonement, as afterwards on the Cross.)

But through His own blood, entered in once for all into the Holies--Here we learn several astonishing things.

First, these words, through (dia) His own blood, reveal that Christ entered Heaven with a memorial of His own sacrifice. "Named of God (a High Priest) forever after the order of Melchizedek," He comes back to Heaven in that character! Not merely as Son of God, Creator of all things; not as Heir, nor as the sinless Man, returning (as in Hebrews 7:26), "holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens." (He could indeed say to the Jews, "Which of you convicteth Me of sin?") But it was not on that ground or in that capacity that He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. He entered in by virtue of His blood. He might have entered Heaven at any moment during His perfect life here. But He would have gone alone as He came alone. But He has not entered Heaven in that way. Always pleasing unto the Father, through the eternal Spirit He offered Himself without blemish (at the Cross) unto God (vs. 14). We glory in Him as the sinless One, but as such our sins were laid upon Him, with the guilt thereof. So they became His, on the Cross. Indeed, He was "made to be sin on our behalf." He was forsaken of God. He cried:

"For innumerable evils have compassed Me about; Mine iniquities have overtaken Me, so that I am not able to look up; They are more than the hairs of My head; And My heart hath failed Me" (Ps. 40:12).

We had committed those sins, of which He said again, "Mine iniquities are gone over My head: As a heavy burden they are too heavy for Me" (Ps. 38:4). He said, "That which I took not away" (man's standing with God) "I have to restore" (Ps. 69:4).

He recognized our iniquities now as His. Hear Psalm 22: "Forsaken ... groaning ... My heart is like wax; it is melted within Me ... My strength is dried up ... My tongue cleaveth to My jaws ... brought into the dust of death."

Such words were His in the day that your load of guilt and mine lay upon Him! Then after He had said, "It is finished," there came the piercing spear, and the outflowing blood and water.

He was buried. But according to His frequent words to His disciples concerning His death, that the third day He would be raised up, He was "raised from the dead by the glory of the Father." Forty days He spent with His beloved disciples, "showing Himself alive after His passion by many proofs." Then He ascended on high, saluted by God as a High Priest "after the order of Melchizedek," as we have seen.

He was the Creator--"All things have been created through Him and unto Him." But not as the Creator did He enter Heaven, "now to appear before the face of God for us." He kept the Law perfectly, as Israel had not; but He did not go back to Heaven as one who had kept that Law. He was the Son of God, but He did not return to Heaven merely as the Son.

Nor is it as though He came to the earth and did something for us and then went back to Heaven, leaving us to get there if we could; but, contrariwise, having entered through His own blood He has us there already potentially; and to simple faith, actually.

*Inasmuch as this wonderful phrase, through His own blood, is such a vital one, upon the proper understanding of which so much depends, we think it well to subjoin a brief extract from each of several comments thereupon, to set before the reader's mind the judgment of these godly saints whose aim has been to make plain God's truth as it has appeared to them:

Ridout well says; "Christ might have entered Heaven at any moment during His perfect life here, but He would have gone alone, as He came alone; there would not have been a single one to share His glory with Him. But He has not entered Heaven in that way. He has entered by, or, in virtue of His blood--not by His perfect character, not by His keeping the Law of God, not by His personal worthiness, even; but He has entered by His own blood, after having accomplished redemption: and because of that work He is there before God." Pp. 164-5.

And J. N. Darby: "Not, He got in by that means, even as to us, but He went in in that way."--XIII, p. 193.

And in his Synopsis: "He has gone into the heavenly sanctuary by virtue of an eternal redemption, of blood, that has everlasting validity. The work is completely done, and can never change in value ... The blood shed once for all is ever efficacious.

"Here then are the three aspects of the result of the work of Christ: immediate access to God; a purged conscience; an eternal redemption."--Pp. 288-9.

"The worshiper, under the former tabernacle, did not come into the presence of God; he stayed outside the unrent veil. He sinned--a sacrifice was offered: he sinned again--a sacrifice was offered. Now the veil is rent. We are always in the presence of God without a veil. Happen what may, He always sees us--sees us in His presence--according to the efficacy of Christ's perfect sacrifice. We are there now, by virtue of a perfect sacrifice ... He has opened an access for us, even now, to God in the light, having cleansed our Consciences once for all--for He dwells on high continuously--that we may enter in, and that we may serve God here below.

"God has established and revealed the Mediator, Who has accomplished the work in an eternal way The Mediator has paid the ransom. Sin has no more right over us."--PP. 293-5.

Behold, then, the Son of God, the Man also, without blemish, returning whence He came: and entering God's presence through His own blood. He must enter thus or leave the redeemed behind forever. But His character now forever was that of a Redeemer. For did He not enter in ... having obtained eternal redemption? He must be forever before God as One Who "bare our sins in His own body on the Tree," Ours was the sin and guilt; His was the finished sacrifice of the Cross. That work was done. But He returns gladly in the character God gave Him: "Thou art a Priest forever." He would forever be connected with those whom He had redeemed.

*It behooves us to know in what attitude to God our Lord returned on high--in what old and new respects He came there: for we enter with Him! He re-entered indeed as Deity, that "glory He had with the Father before the world was." Into that place He alone could enter. To speak reverently, He could give to no creature to be Deity! God is God; creatures, creatures--forever!

But Christ re-entered Heaven as Man, also. And do not be led into that source of error--seeking to distinguish between "natures": He was ONE PERSON. Let John 3:13 suffice: "The son of man Who is in Heaven." Do not reason here, for reason fails; but believe. Our Lord spoke so to Nicodemus--"the Son of Man Who is in Heaven"--for He is ONE PERSON: and, "God was manifest in the flesh," and thus speaks, to the great comfort of faith, the element in which the just live!

Christ went into God's presence for us with only one claim on our behalf: His shed blood! That blood was the witness that in the person of our Substitute, Divine wrath and judgment had been endured. That blood witnessed that we who believe dared not in ourselves approach God, that we abandoned all hopes in ourselves, and were "made nigh in the blood of Christ." There is nothing that should bring men to despair of self-righteousness like the story of the Cross, for all we can do is to sit there in the darkness and let Another be judged in our place!

As Priest, that is, as representing us, not God: God's claims against us having all been satisfied at the Cross, forever--as Priest He is committed to our interests. (For, we repeat, a prophet came out from God, representing God to the people; while a priest went in to God, representing the people to Him. Hebrews, presenting access and worship, does not take up the question of an individual Christian's sin. We find this dealt with in 1 John 2:1-2, where "any man" means of course, any believer. If believers sin, fellowship is interrupted, but the attitude of the Advocate changes not!)

Indeed, having borne our sin with the guilt thereof, Christ entered in above as our Substitute and Representative, not alone, but taking us with Him, in the right and power of His infinite sacrifice. Thus He is before God, and thus, as to fact and standing, are all those in Him. Is Christ there? Then we are there in Him, blessed be God.

When the redeemed are in the glory above, there will be this consciousness: Christ, the Son of God, became what I was. I committed the sin; He bore the sin. He even became sin on my behalf, and here I am, the righteousness of God in Him! I am not only righteous now before God, but I am the righteousness of God! (2 Cor. 5:21). Therefore, to bring me here, Christ exchanged places with me. My Lord, Himself, became so completely my sin, that when He returned to the glory there, He entered in through His own blood. Therefore, when I look at my righteousness, my heart turns with unspeakable love back to where He put away my sin, and when I look at the Cross and its finished work I look at this, that I am now forever more "the righteousness of God in Him." Unspeakable Grace surrounds me, whichever way I turn. I am overwhelmed with the Grace of God that brought this salvation.

*If our blessed Lord had reversed His work; if He had renounced us, for whom His blood was shed; He would have had to put off manhood, the form of man, and return as the Second Person of the Deity only. But this was impossible--although it had been possible: for even in Gethsemane He said He could make request of the Father and He would even then send Him more than twelve legions of angels.

But He went on to the Cross, and the Cross became a fact. That day was "the consummation of the ages" (9:26) we read. It could not now be reversed, that He had "put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself"! Forever before God, Christ is in the character of having been the Sin-Bearer. That is why "There is life for a look at the Crucified One"--a look of faith!

So if He, our Sin-Bearer, entered the Holies above through His own blood, we whose sins He bore find a glad welcome there also. A sense of eternal unchanging welcome at the throne of grace possesses our hearts. Oh, if we could always abide in this, that God is evermore delighting in Christ, that dear Son Who, after finishing the work of redemption the Father had given Him to do,

entered the Holies above through His own blood, and now "appears before the face of God for us." What a rest of heart would be ours!

Here then, let our conception of the priesthood of Christ find its eternal foundation. He entered into Heaven itself, through His own blood, as having borne our sins, having been once offered to bear the sins of many. (The hideous paganism of Roman Catholicism glares here with the eyes of the serpent it is! The man-appointed, therefore pagan, priest, undertakes to offer in the Mass, over and over, what he calls "the sacrifice," and promises the poor dupes that he will obtain them Divine pardon and favor by his lying performances. Rescue all the Romanists you possibly can, showing them the great words of Heb. 9:12, 14, 24, 28: Christ "once offered to bear the sins of many." And, the one Mediator: "There is one God, one Mediator also between God and men, Himself man, Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5).)

If Christ, Who did no sin, yet bore mine, entered into the Holies "before the face of God" through His own blood, shed at Calvary, how shall I, being invited through that blood also to enter with boldness--how can I shrink back?

It is not (far, far be the thought!) that we sinners learn that our sins have been borne, that the work is finished, and we can forget that, and pass on to something beyond and deeper. THERE IS NOTHING DEEPER, for all eternity! The gift of God was infinite: His only begotten Son. The devotion of Christ was infinite: "The cup My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" The devotion of God to His Son (always unmeasured) is now communicated to creatures, yea, sinful creatures. It is beheld by the holy beings of Heaven with endless marvel!

But some say they are on a higher level than those newly pardoned through Christ's blood, because they are now new creatures and are seated in heavenly places. But in Whom were they created? The only answer is, In the Risen Christ: the Christ of the wounds; the Christ Who entered Heaven through His own blood. It is a fearful undertaking to try, as some (like Bullinger)* do, to describe a condition beyond and above being redeemed by the shed blood of Christ, Who Himself sits at God's right hand, through His own blood! (* "I am dealing with a book--with principles and with minds that may be affected by it. I believe it is a dishonour to yourself; but as regards your book, you are but a name attached to the moral condition of mind contained in it, and there represented to the public. I am not dealing with you about it, but with it before God and my reader."--J. N. Darby. Vol. 6, p. 3.)

It will be found in eternity that the endless love of an infinite God was expressed at Calvary; also the quenchless affection of our Great High Priest, even Jesus. Get beyond that, you never will!

To have been redeemed will be the highest place in glory, because God is most revealed by the sacrifice of His Son, and the Son most revealed by His offering of Himself! And mark this, it is not as having left the shedding of that blood behind as a past event, merely, that He enters into the glory above, but it is strictly in the character of One Who has shed His blood, which character He will retain for all eternity.

Should He, my friend, He the Holy One, enter God's presence through His own blood, and you dare dream of entering in apart from that blood? Would you as a sinner (and you know you are that) pass right by the blessed Son of God, Who entered God's presence through His own blood, and present yourself to that Holy God as one who had "done his best"; who had "tried to keep the Law"; one who "had been a 'church member', and recognized on earth as 'good'"? I say, would you dare, you who have never as a guilty sinner fled to Him for refuge, thus enter God's holy presence?

There could be no more absolute and eternal insult to the God Who gave His Son, and Whose Son entered His presence through His own blood, than for you to undertake to come to God apart from the blood of Christ.

Hear the description of the saints in Hebrews: Those "that draw near unto God through Him" (Christ).

Those that "enter into the holy place by the blood of Jesus,... by a freshly-slain and living way, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh."

Those who, "having a Great Priest over the house of God, ...draw near with a true heart in fullness of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience."

Those who "have grace, whereby we may offer service well-pleasing to God with reverence and awe."

Those who "offer up a sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of lips which make confession to His name."

Those who "endured a great conflict of sufferings," for their faith's sake; being "in subjection" (as sons) under their Father's chastening hand.

Those who "bear the reproach" of Jesus, Who "suffered with, out the gate"; "laying aside every weight" and besetting sin; running with patience the race that is set before us."

Those who refuse to "cast away their boldness" toward God, despite all obstacles and temptations; looking for THE PROMISE: "He that cometh shall come"--"shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for Him, unto salvation."

If you and I find ourselves among this company, blessed are we! But take heed: the Divine elevator is about to start for Heaven, but there is a great sign above its door, "FOR SINNERS ONLY." Paul is in it, who of sinners is the chief. Peter is there, who swore he did not know Christ. Jerry McAuley, "the river rat," is there; and John Newton, "once a libertine and infidel, a servant of slaves in Africa," as reads his epitaph written by himself and a great multitude of others.

(Tertia, who is writing this dictation, says that readers will object, saying, "These men are already in Heaven." It is not my thought when they go there, but how they go there. This I am illustrating by the elevator.)

"FOR SINNERS ONLY": Here comes a Jew, saying, "I belong to the Chosen People." Paul's answer is ready, "He is not a Jew who is one outwardly." Nobody gets on the elevator for Heaven because of racial descent.

But now comes a Presbyterian, and the keeper of the door (a faithful pastor or teacher of the word of God), says "Do you see the sign above the door, 'For Sinners Only'? Will you step in as a sinner only?" The reply of this estimable person is, "I am a Presbyterian!"

"Keep back, then, with the Jew."

Then comes the great roll of "church people": Episcopalians, Methodists, Baptists, Congregationalists, Lutherans, Christians. The question of the faithful man who keeps the door always is, "Do you enter only as a sinner?" How evasive are the replies! Once in a while, one, like the publican, says, "Indeed, yes! Nothing but a sinner, thanking God for the news that Jesus died for me!"

"Step right in!"

Dear friends, pardon this crude illustration. It is for your soul's sake, and we hope it is spoken in tender love. No one will get to Heaven as a Presbyterian, as a Baptist, as a Congregationalist, as a Lutheran, as a Plymouth Brother, for they all are sinners only! But we ask you solemnly to consider: is your hope that of a sinner only? No righteousness of yours, whether personal, or attained (in your imagination) through "church work," or denominational "membership," has anything whatever to do with your entering the heavenlies above. Christ Himself entered there through His own blood. Have you given His shed blood that absolute Place God has given it? We do not now pray, "God be merciful to me a sinner" for since Christ spoke those words, God has been merciful, and has transferred the sin of the world to the Substitute, even Christ, Who Put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. Is that your only hope?

O "Professing Christians," "church members," down here on earth--whether "active" in "church work" or not, hearken! Whereon are your hopes of Heaven built? What right have you, who committed the sins Christ bore, what possible right have you to Heaven? None whatever! If He entered through His own blood, how do you expect to enter? God has shut out all "good works." I beg you, trust not in "confirmation," or "baptism," or in any ordinance whatever; or in your "church duties," or generous giving, or "regular attendance," or zeal in "Christian activities," whether at home or abroad, and however approved by men. Nay more, trust not in your fancied "spirituality," your "prayer-life," your separation from the world, your being persecuted, even.

For Christ Himself entered in through His own blood. And what do you mean, you poor sinner? Do you dream that God will look at your "works"? Why then did not Christ return to Heaven in view of His works? He was sinless, and His life, perfect. You are a poor sinner, nothing else: "All have sinned"! hear it; and, "There is no difference": God, Who cannot lie, says that! You, a sinner, thinking to enter Heaven by works, while Christ the Holy One entered through His own blood--though he had never sinned, entered with blood--not works! Oh, the damning delusions under which many so-called "Christians" walk! Never having known their guilty, lost, state; never told by their preachers that guilty men can be made nigh to a holy God only by shed blood; that "apart from shedding of blood there is no remission": that Christ has entered Heaven and God's presence through His own blood; that He is there representing only sinners, who, as guilty sinners, have seen their guilt put away by the shedding of Christ's blood--that alone!

Oh, the vast multitude of so-called "Christians" relying on their own profession, and not upon the blood of Christ!

And what about your "moralists," your "evolutionists," your worldlings," your careless crowds (for whom, all, the undertaker is patiently waiting: for, "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this cometh judgment")--what about these? "Modern education," and "modern life," leave the Bible out; these millions, God will leave without! For Christ entered Heaven through His own blood, and these know nothing, willingly know nothing, of the way to God, of pardon through Christ's blood.

Nay, do not begin to say that you "believe in a God too merciful to shut out forever these creatures--who were ignorant of His salvation." Ignorance! You say you believe in such and such a God--a god made in your own sin-darkened imagination; a God that does not exist! You will find this to be true at "the revelation of the Lord Jesus from Heaven."

All sinners who enter God's presence enter by the shed blood of Jesus.

Tell me, sinner, Do you desire to spend eternity in Heaven, like the elect angels whom God's power kept from all transgression? Or do you desire, yea, long, to be eternally on exhibition as one toward whom the unaccountable love of God was extended in pardon, wholly on the ground of the shed blood of his Creator-Redeemer?

Christ in Heaven can only say to any human being, that He is forever in the character of One Who has borne sin. On earth He said, "NO man cometh unto the Father but by Me." Now in Heaven, having entered through His own blood, He is infinitely ready to receive any sinners who rely on the blood He shed on the Cross as having put away their guilt. Read in the first two chapters of the Hebrews, of Who He is. Then read in the ninth of Hebrews of how He put away human sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And now and forever He is the Lamb that hath been slain. He can receive only sinners! If you can, as nothing but a sinner, rely on Him, He is your Great High Priest in Heaven. You need not fear: He bore your sin for you.

For us who have sinned, have been guilty, to be able to have rest of conscience, is a miracle, an operation of God within the soul. But Christ is seated in Heaven (and will be eternally so) as having put our guilt away. Meditate upon that. For no half-measures are possible: our sin has either been put away, or it has not. And God says it has!

Remember always to distinguish between that eternal redemption which Christ purchased upon the Cross, and His entering into the Holies through His own blood. People say, I thought Christ's work was finished at the Cross. It was, as bearing wrath and judgment for our sin, as you read in Hebrews 9:26: "Now once at the consummation of the ages hath He been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." Therefore it is not in any sense an atoning work that Christ as Priest is carrying on in Heaven.

But notice once more, and finally, lay to heart with all your being, that Christ is eternally in the Holies on the basis of having been the Sin-offering. He entered Heaven not, as He came, as One that had no sin; but as One that had borne sin, and put sin away by the pouring out of His blood on the Cross. That was the character in which He entered, and continually abides, a High Priest forever!

The Cross was primarily atoning; our Lord's place in Heaven is primarily positional.

Thus are we in Christ brought to God. God extends to the believing sinner all the benefits of Christ's death, resurrection, ascension to Heaven, and place at God's right hand! The believer is in exactly the same infinite love and favor as His Redeemer!

Then the last words of this great twelfth verse, eternal redemption--how they rest the heart! An Israelite who had sinned brought a sin offering, and placed his hand upon its head, confessing his sins. The victim was then slain, its blood presented before God, its body burned without the camp. The priest could then say to him, Jehovah's word is, You are forgiven.

Nevertheless, on the yearly Day of Atonement, the whole sin question is up again for all Israel. No Israelite could leave that great concourse rejoicing in heart, saying, My sins have been put away forever from Jehovah's sight. I have eternal redemption. He knew the Great Day of Atonement would come again in another year. Nay, Moses, their leader, lamented,

"Thou hast set our iniquities before Thee, Our secret sins in the light of Thy countenance (Ps. 90:8).

That was the design and proper effect of the Law, which was a ministration of condemnation and death, a stern conductor of the soul to Christ and His salvation. "The Law is become our tutor to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith is come, we are no longer under a tutor" (Gal. 3:24-25).

To the Jews under Law, therefore, there was no consciousness of the putting away of sin, for sin was not put away until it was done once for all by Christ at the Cross.

Eternal redemption (Redemption; See Ex. 21:30; Lev. 25:24, 51; Num. 3:46, Ps. 49:8, etc.) in Hebrews 9:12 signifies everlasting freedom from the penalty of sin, Christ having borne it at the Cross; and includes also complete and eternal deliverance from the power of sin; not only from spiritual death. It also includes the redemption of the body, for which believers are waiting; and finally, praise God, complete deliverance from the power of the devil, who had the power of death over the race (2:14) from the time that Adam fell. Such glorious words as those of our verse should be kept in the heart and repeated over and over: Having obtained eternal redemption. The opening word, "For," of verse 13, has in view this complete and eternal separation from the very presence of sin which is the hope of the instructed believer.

Heb 9:13: For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling them that have been defiled, sanctify unto the cleanness of the flesh: In the earthly tabernacle, in which, behind the veil, God dwelt, there was indeed prescribed the blood of designated animals, of goats and bulls.

*In the ordinance of the red heifer (Num. 19:2), the high priest took the ashes of an heifer "without spot, wherein was no blemish," the blood of which had been sprinkled toward the front of the tent of meeting seven times, and then the entire body burnt, along with cedar wood (representing power), and hyssop (faith), and scarlet (royalty). Then the high priest washed his clothes, and bathed his flesh in water, and afterward came into the camp and was unclean "until the evening." The man that burnt the heifer had to do and be likewise.

Then we read, "A man that is clean, (that is, ceremonially, outwardly) shall gather up the ashes of the heifer, and lay them up without the camp in a clean place; and it shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel for a water for impurity: it is a sin-offering" (Num. 19:9). This "water for impurity" was to be sprinkled on anyone who touched a dead body (Vss. 11, 12). Read Num. 19 carefully: it is a commentary on our present verse, Heb. 9:13, sanctifying unto the cleanness of the flesh.

We remember that the sin-offering was to be burned entirely without the camp. The water of sprinkling which was poured upon the ashes of the red heifer was prescribed as a simple, constantly available means of that ceremonial cleanness of the flesh demanded by Jehovah, Who dwelt among the Hebrews. Doubtless to many of them God opened the truth that the blood of this creature had been shed under His direction, that the body had been burnt in a clean, holy place which belonged entirely to God, and that the application of the ashes meant self-judgment and reliance upon the death of the substitute. But we know that all these types pointed to Christ. The cleanness of the flesh was all that any of them ever accomplished, however much they exercised the conscience, and however fully the Israelite might cast himself upon the mercy of God, as, for example, David did (Ps. 51). There never was the consciousness that sin had been removed, had been put away out of God's sight forever. And why? Because, we repeat, sin had NOT been removed until Christ put it away by His one sacrifice.

Heb 9:14: How much more shall the blood of Christ, Who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish unto God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? We enter here upon one of the great verses of Scripture. How much more or, How much rather? As much more as Christ the Creator is greater than the creatures He created. Again we have an infinite chasm between two contrasted persons or things, as in Hebrews 1:4, 3:3; 7:22; 8:6. Shall the blood of Christ--perhaps in Chapter 9 and 10, which form one passage, blood is more frequently mentioned (15 times) than in any other equal portion of Scripture. The blood of Christ, Who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish unto God--We knew that each Person of the blessed Trinity was equally eternal, but it is sustaining to the heart to have the fact noted here that it was through the eternal Spirit that Christ offered Himself without blemish unto God. It is beyond measure blessed that we find here all three Persons of the Godhead occupied in our salvation! First, it is God to Whom the atoning sacrifice for our sin is to be made; second, it is Christ Who offers Himself to this end; third, it is through the eternal Spirit that He offered Himself without blemish.

Always the Levitical offerings were to be without blemish, as in the case cited in verse 13, from Numbers 19:2. But that was mere freedom from outward blemishes; whereas we know that Christ walked all of His life, from Bethlehem to Calvary, without moral or

spiritual blemish before the all-seeing eye of God the Father. It is to be marked that again and again our Lord disclaimed; "The working by His own power: "I live because of the Father"; "the Son can do nothing of Himself but what He seeth the Father doing"; "The Father abiding in Me doeth His works." The Holy Spirit descended upon Him at the Jordan; He was driven by the Spirit into the wilderness at the time of temptation. When He began to preach in Galilee, He announced, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He anointed Me to preach good tidings." And again, "I by the Spirit of God cast out demons." But here in Hebrews 9:14 we find that it was through the eternal Spirit that He walked and wrought, and thus by that Spirit at Gethsemane and on Calvary, offered Himself without blemish unto God, as the Great Sin-Offering for us.

It is most natural that those directly serving the Living God must have their conscience cleansed from condemnation and defilement.--

*The conscience is never said to be cleansed from sin. Believers are, and so are believers' hearts. See Acts 15:8-9, where Peter, referring to the filling of believing Cornelius and his household with the Holy Spirit, said, "God, Who knoweth the heart, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Spirit, even as He did to us; and He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith."

The word "cleansing" here is in the aorist (definite past tense). After that experience, Cornelius had what Scripture calls "a clean heart," the heart of a little child toward God, even as the Lord said, "Except ye become as little children."

If it be objected that "The heart is deceitful above all things, exceedingly corrupt," and, "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool"-certainly! And in the natural state, "evil thoughts," "evil things" (Mk. 7:21-22), "proceed out of the heart of men." But Christ came, and on the Cross all these evil things were dealt with. And when He entered into the Holies above, in virtue of, by power of His own blood, all these sins were as if they had never been. The blood of Christ met not only all that man had done but all that man was, so that we read: "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin."

Sin does not reside in the conscience, but the consciousness of sin, does. Therefore the conscience, knowing good and evil, accuses the heart (the throne room of the being, "out of which are the issues of life"), until the heart is cleansed by faith.

The body, of course, remains unredeemed until Christ comes, and even though Christ be in us, "is dead because of sin." It is the tabernacle in which we groan, "longing to be clothed upon with our habitation which is from Heaven," our new bodies.

But we are not our bodies, nor our souls; we possess both. We are spirits: "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit," the new creature called into being by God's creative act in the Risen Christ, the last Adam (2 Cor. 5:17).--

But lo, and behold, the blood of Christ is here regarded as cleansing the conscience, not from consciousness of sin and guilt, but from something entirely different: from dead works. What a strange expression! Generally we connect works with life, but here, the opposite--dead works, appears. What can this mean?

We read in 2 Corinthians 3:7, 9 that the Law written "in tables of stone" was "a ministration of death ... of condemnation"; and in Galatians 3:10, "As many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the Law, to do them." The conscience drives the heart of one who knows his sin, to get relief. Dead works, therefore, become the vain effort to relieve a troubled conscience by legal obedience.

With the Hebrews, of course, it was efforts through the works prescribed by the Law. With the sincere Gentile, like Cornelius, the action of the conscience was the same. Not only Hebrew believers, but Gentile believers also, burden themselves with dead works. They become occupied with "duties," with "church work," even with "Christian service." They are not serving the Living God.

*We repeat, conscience involves the knowledge of good and evil. Before man sinned, he was in innocency. But when he had sinned, Jehovah God spoke a solemn word: "Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil." Here is the basis, the beginning, of human conscience, literally joint-knowledge. God knew good and evil, and chose holiness and good, absolutely and forever. However, knowing all things, He discerned both the character of and all the operations of, evil. Nothing was hid from Him. Evil was by Him known but rejected, and its power never felt.

Not so with fallen creatures, whom man had now joined. To the sinning creature, evil became a master, and good, a memory. There was the knowledge of good and evil, but no power in himself to extricate him from either the guilt or defilement. If God redeem him not, he goes into eternity unredeemed. But Christ having come, in the mercy of God, and at Calvary having borne sin for the whole world, the cleansing of the conscience became possible. For conscience deals directly with God, and, Gospel enlightened, is set free.

Note the following Scriptures: "Conscience toward God," (lit., of God--1 Pet. 2:19); "a good conscience," (1 Tim. 1:5; Heb. 13:18); "a pure conscience," (1 Tim. 3:9; 2 Tim. 1:3); a "conscience ... defiled," (Tit. 1:15); a "conscience weak ...defiled," (1 Cor. 8:7, 12); a "conscience void of offence," (Acts 24:16); conscience "branded", or seared--disregarded; no longer able to function (1 Tim. 4:2); "No more consciousness (conscience, same Greek word) of sins," because conscience cleansed by the blood of Christ (Heb. 10:2).

But Moses endured "as seeing Him Who is invisible." David danced before the ark of God because he knew the God of the ark. Paul cried, "God is my witness, Whom I serve in my spirit": Jude exhorts us to build up ourselves on our most holy faith, "praying in the Holy Spirit." John on Patmos, after he saw the glorified Christ, feared not, though taken up to Heaven, and seeing the throne of the Triune God, the wonderful living creatures, the elders, the innumerable host of angels. Why? He served the Living God.

Four times in Hebrews is this great name, the Living God, written: twice concerning the saved, twice concerning the lost. Here in Hebrews 9:14 believers, their conscience cleansed from dead works, delivered from self-effort and all fear, serve with gladness One

Whom they know, the Living One, God. So that we find them in Hebrews 12:22 arriving at the "city of the Living God, the heavenly Jerusalem," for an eternity of untold delight with Him Whose service "is perfect freedom."

To serve the Living God: Elijah's voice on Carmel to the gathered nation of Israel, was, "If Jehovah be God, follow Him." You say, What has that to do with the words, the Living God? It has this: Christendom today, (like Israel when Elijah spoke), is not serving a Living God. If it were, it would allow all its service to be judged by the consciousness of God's presence, of His infinite, intimate knowledge of us, of our hearts and motives. This would be worshiping "in spirit and in truth" (and God accepts no other worship); not by mere "church membership," by forms warned against in God's Word; by ceremonies, days, months, years; even in idolatrous, blasphemous caricatures of true worship and service in the Spirit. It would be judging everything by the question, What does God, Who is living, think of this? You have heard earnest preachers say, "You cannot fool God." Yet how many professing Christians (and this may mean you), expect to do so.

*The words a Living God, (28 times in Scripture), are not a title of God, but a definition of His being. A Living God takes no interest in "church attendance" as such. How would you like people to drive up to your residence, seat themselves in your house, and by and by depart--without ever speaking to you, or recognizing your presence? And how would you like it if before departing one of them should arise and say, "We will now take up a collection for the running expenses of this establishment"—all without speaking to you or recognizing you as head and master of the establishment?

Note that A LIVING GOD is one of the great key words of this great epistle. The modernist talks about a "God of love," "the universal fatherhood of God," etc. But alas, the modernist has never met a living God! God is living, before He is loving. All His motions toward guilty sinners, whether pardon, justification, or (here in Heb. 9:14) service, are based on the shed blood of Christ. Yet the false prophets of Christendom proclaim neither guilt of lost sinners, nor transference of their sin and guilt to the head of a Substitute. Avoid them, flee them, unless you court your doom! Read Jeremiah 23 about the false shepherds and prophets.

"Concerning the prophets. My heart within me is broken, all my bones shake; I am like a drunken man ... whom wine hath overcome, because of Jehovah, and because of His holy words. For the land is full of adulterers; for because of swearing the land mourneth; the pastures of the wilderness are dried up. And their course is evil, and their might is not right; for both prophet and priest are profane; yea, in My house have I found their wickedness, saith Jehovah. Wherefore their way shall be unto them as slippery places in the darkness: they shall be driven on, and fall therein; for I will bring evil upon them, even the year of their visitation, saith Jehovah.

"And I have seen folly in the prophets of Samaria; they prophesied by Baal, and caused My people Israel to err. In the prophets of Jerusalem also I have seen a horrible thing: they commit adultery, and walk in lies; and they strengthen the hands of evil-doers, so that none doth return from his wickedness: they are all of them become unto Me as Sodom, and the inhabitants thereof as Gomorrah. Therefore thus saith Jehovah of hosts concerning the prophets: Behold, I will feed them with wormwood, and make them drink the water of gall; for from the prophets of Jerusalem is ungodliness gone forth into all the land" (Jer. 23:9-15). (See also vss. 16 to end of chapter, and Ezek. 13:10ff.)

There is peace through faith in the shed blood of Christ, and there is no other peace. And lying Modernists will learn it.

Has the blood of Christ so cleansed your conscience from dead works--all "religious" forms whatever, that you are consciously in the presence of God? Or, if walking in darkness, having no light, are you yet able to stay upon His Word, and occupy yourself with a "sacrifice of Praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of lips which make confession to His name," even though you are in the midst of trial? So did Christ: "Hold not Thy peace, O God of My praise:" so the 109th Psalm, in which He continues, "They have compassed Me about with words of hatred, and fought against Me without a cause." So Jeremiah: "Heal me, O Jehovah, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved; for Thou art my praise."

To serve the Living God includes, besides a cleansed, freed conscience, a heart believing God's love, and acceptance of Christ's easy yoke in the knowledge of being in Him (having died with Him to sin and to the Law, having been enlived with Him, and raised up with Him, and made to sit with Him in the heavenlies--the "heavenly calling" of which these Hebrew believers were partakers, though the details of it are not given in Hebrews). Last, in patiently "doing the will of God," in view of the promise, "Yet a very little while, He that cometh shall come, and shall not tarry" (10:36-7), and the sure realization of the "good things to come," at His coming.

15 And for this cause He is the Mediator of a new covenant, that a death having taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, they that have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

16 For where a covenant is, there must of necessity be the death of him that made it.

17 For a covenant is of force where there hath been death: for it doth never avail while he that made it liveth.

18 Wherefore even the first covenant hath not been dedicated without blood.

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

20 This is the blood of the covenant which God commanded to you-ward.

21 Moreover the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry he sprinkled in like manner with the blood.

22 And according to the Law, I may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and apart from shedding of blood there is no

remission.

Heb 9:15: And for this cause He is the Mediator of a new covenant--In these words (and the same words in Hebrews 12:24), there is no infraction of the statement of Galatians 3:20: "Now a mediator is not a mediator of one; but God is One." Both Stephen (Acts 7:53) and Paul (Gal. 3:19) declare that the Law at Sinai was "ordained through angels." The meaning of this statement we do not find amplified in Scripture; the fact alone is revealed. In the next verse, Galatians 3:20, Paul adds to the words "ordained through angels," the additional phrase, "by the hand of a mediator" (of course, Moses): and he explains, as just quoted, "Now a mediator is not (a mediator) of one; but God is One"; that is, the contrast is drawn between God's promises made unconditionally and directly by God to Abraham "and to his Seed ... Christ," Galatians 3:16, (which promise needed no mediator!) and the Law afterwards "added" till the Seed should come, of Whom the promise had been made.

For this cause He (Christ) is the Mediator of a new covenant. That is, Christ has taken the place of Moses, a mediator of the first covenant. We have all heard the fatuous expression, "Christ, when on earth, re-affirmed the Ten Commandments." No one who has brought God's truth to human souls will deny that the last fortress of unbelief to be overthrown in man's heart is his persuasion that God is requiring righteousness of him. But the mediatorship of a new covenant spoken of in our verse (Heb 9:15) passes over all man's works and duties and ability to the words, a death having taken place. Christ's mediatorship dates after His death, not to his life and preaching.

For example, our Lord in Matthew 5-7, the so-called "Sermon on the Mount," was bound to back up God's legal covenant to Moses, giving also His own commands as the great Prophet Whom God had raised up to Israel (foretold by Moses, Deut. 18:15, 18), and announcing the kingdom. Then in Matthew 8-15 the unbelief and rejection of the Jews is brought out; and in Mt 16:18 the Lord prophesies that He will build (what was not yet built) the Assembly, His Body, the Church; and the disciples are commanded to publish no further the Gospel that Christ is the Messiah of Israel. He must go and die, and be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth (Matt. 12:40).

The Gospel Paul preached to Jews and Gentiles begins with Christ's death, not with His virgin birth, or His spotless life: "I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures" (1Cor. 15:1, 3). Therefore Hebrews 9:15 sets Him forth as the Mediator of a new covenant, in view of the fact of a death having taken place, (on account of which only) they that have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. (John MacNeil used to say, when questioned about election, "Preach the Gospel to all sinners, and if you get somebody into Heaven that God didn't elect, He'll forgive you, for He loves sinners!") Note that they that have been called have this relationship to the new covenant, that its conditions have been fulfilled, and that on the basis of this death of Christ, the new covenant is in operation, Christ being its Mediator. Moses in his day was "mediator" to bring the Law with its commands, its demands, its threatenings, and its blessing conditioned on obedience, into the camp. But do not dare to make Christ a second Moses because the word Mediator of a new covenant is used concerning Him.

"Our Lord Jesus was made a curse for us, became the great Sin-Offering, and now has become the Mediator of a better covenant, in which all the promise is on God's part, and man receives every blessing as pure grace."--Ironsides, Studies in the Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 97.

For this new covenant is that of Hebrews 13:20, in which the parties are the two Persons of the Godhead. Our blessed Lord did not come as Moses, bringing conditions for man to fulfill. But He said, "The words that I say unto you, I speak not from Myself: but the Father abiding in Me doeth His works" (John 14:10); "I and the Father are One" (John 10:30). God was manifested in the flesh. Therefore, when our Lord is called the Mediator of a new covenant, it is of the new covenant in His blood (Lk. 22:20, 1 Cor. 11:25). So that, Christ being God, Galatians 3:20 is fulfilled. And when we come to the name "mediator" in 1 Timothy 2:5: "For there is one God, one Mediator also between God and men, Himself Man, Christ Jesus," we find the word "Mediator" having the meaning of Galatians 3:20--the other side of that verse: "A mediator is not a mediator of one." Christ is seen here between God and men: blessed fact! But let not this truth disturb in our minds the blessed words, Mediator of a new covenant, in which the parties are God and Jesus Christ, and we the beneficiaries. We are receivers, not contracting parties, not actors. God and Christ are the contracting parties in that eternal covenant (13:20) by which we receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

Luther used to say, "Christ is no Moses! Take heed lest thou set Christ upon the rainbow, with a stern countenance, as of a judge." No! God has made no legal covenant with men, that if they will do and be so and so, He will "save them at last." What a blessed place have we, the beneficiaries of an eternal covenant the conditions of which have already been fulfilled! "It is finished," Christ said; and the God of peace raised Him from the dead in view of that covenant. (13:20).

*The words, a death having taken place, involve:

First, The putting away of all sins (Hebrews 9:26, 1 Pet. 2:24).

Second, The identification of Christ with sin, with our old man as connected with Adam, so that it was written (Rom. 6:6): "Our old man was crucified with Him"; "We died with Christ" (Ro 6:8).

Third, Our relationship to sin broken, for (Rom. 6:10, 11):

"The death that He died, He died unto sin once; but the life that He liveth, He liveth unto God. Even so reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus." In view of the death of Christ (in Whom we now are) unto sin, our relationship

to sin becomes that of the Risen Christ to sin.

Fourth, Death to Law (which gave sin its power--1 Cor. 15:56; as was manifest in the commandments, of the Mosaic Law), meaning the legal principle upon which God demanded righteousness of the creature; and the believer's complete discharge therefrom. Mark the correct translation of Rom. 7:6: "But now we have been discharged from the Law, HAVING DIED to that wherein we were held"; instead of the A.V. translation, which mistakenly makes the Law die, whereas the believer dies unto the Law and the legal principle.

One more point as to Hebrews 9:15: Reading this verse carefully, we see that if those that were called, God's elect, were to receive the promise of the eternal inheritance, there must be the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant. Strictly speaking, this limits the application of this verse to those who were under the Law: for Gentiles were never in covenant with God. To every sincere Hebrew believer, this "redemption" or removal from before God of their former transgressions under Law, came as a welcome thing. The Law with its "ten thousand things" (Hos. 8:12), is no longer between the Hebrew believer and the eternal inheritance. Indeed, the Law had nothing to do with this inheritance, "For the Law made nothing perfect" (Heb. 7:18); bringing neither life nor righteousness nor peace, not to speak of hope.

Peter thus describes the eternal inheritance:

"An inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for you, who by the power of God are guarded through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Pet. 1:4-5).

Paul calls this "the recompense of the inheritance" (Col. 3:24), and declares (Rom. 8:17) that believers are "heirs of God (marvelous words!) and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be (or since) we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified with Him"--more marvelous words! The inheritance of these Hebrew believers had formerly been earthly, the land of Israel, with millennial blessings to come. But the eternal inheritance goes infinitely beyond that!

*It has often been remarked in this passage how God delights to dwell upon the word "eternal"--

1. Eternal salvation" (Hebrews 5:9): Christ the Cause, obedience the condition.
2. "Eternal redemption" (9:12): By the blood of Christ, Who "THROUGH THE ETERNAL SPIRIT offered Himself ... unto God" (vs.14).
3. Eternal inheritance (9:15): Compare, "the inheritance among all them that are sanctified.--Acts 20:32; "an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in Me" (Jesus), Acts 26:18; "The Father made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light," Col. 1:12; "an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, that fadeth not away. reserved in heaven" for us--1 Pet. 1:4, as we have quoted above.

Heb 9:16: For where (there is a) covenant, there must of necessity be brought the death of the one covenanting, vs. 17. (OT, death proceeding from one covenanting--genitive of definition.--Winer, Ed. vi, p198.) For a covenant has force over dead (persons or things), since it in no way has power when he is living who covenanted. The opening word, "For," of verse 16 must be governed, we see at once, by the "death" spoken of in verse 15: A death having taken place. Any reader of this page who is familiar with the King James, or Authorized Version of the New Testament, has also noticed that we are translating the Greek word diatheke, covenant, and not "testament" as does the Authorized Version. This we shall now explain and consider.

Two facts must be borne in mind in our examination of this word diatheke, covenant.

1. The word "covenant" is confined, as are all other quotations and references in the book of Hebrews, to the definition and use already made of them by God in the Word of God. Therefore arguments concerning the use of diatheke in Greek or Roman literature have no bearing whatever.

2. The word "covenant," or diatheke in Hebrews 9:15-17 is evidently spoken of those covenants that have to do with relationships, communication, and dealings with the holy God, which of course are confirmed by shed blood: and therefore is the use of blood emphasized.

We are persuaded, therefore, that the change in translation of the Greek word diatheke from "covenant" (vss. 15, 20) to "testament" (vss. 16, 17), in the Authorized Version, is both incorrect and confusing. For the expression the first (covenant) of verse 18 simply continues the argument (the first covenant) of verse 15. We would commend to the student the unanswerable comment by Westcott (Hebrews, p. 298 ff.) We quote from this in the footnote below:

* "The Biblical evidence then, so far as it is clear, is wholly in favor of the sense of 'covenant,' with the necessary limitation of the sense of the word in connection with a Divine covenant ... The mention of the 'Inheritance' in vs. 15 does not appear to furnish any adequate explanation of a transition from the idea of 'Covenant' to that of 'Testament.' It is true that Christ has obtained an inheritance (1:4); and it is also true that He entered on the possession of it through death. But it cannot be said that He 'bequeathed' it to His people ... By union with Him they enjoy together with Him what is His. But He does not give them anything apart from Himself, It is also important in this respect to notice that the thought of the bequeathal of an inheritance by Christ to His people is not supported by any other passage of Scripture (not by Lk. 22:20) ... The conceptions of Christ as the 'Mediator of a Covenant,' and as a 'Testator,' the 'framer of a will,' are essentially distinct. A covenant is the disposition of things determined by God for man and brought about through Christ; a Testament would be the expression of Christ's own will as to what should be after His death. The thoughts are wholly different; and the idea of death is unable in itself to combine them.--Westcott in loc.

Nor am I at all persuaded that Heb 9:16-17 constitute a parenthesis, as some say. For,

1. The argument of Heb 9:15-20 is continuous: the word *diatheke* being translated "covenant" in vs. 15, is called "the first" (covenant understood), in verse 18; and verse 18 begins with the word "Wherefore," or "Whence," and the word *diatheke* is translated "covenant" consequently in verse 20.

Note that "For" in both Heb 9:16-17, like "Wherefore" in Verse 18 and "For" in verse 19, closely connect the argument of the whole paragraph about a covenant. These verses cannot be set asunder.

2. It is inconceivable that only the Epistle to the Hebrews should depart from the Old Testament use and meaning of the word "covenant" (used 17 times in Hebrews and 17 times in the rest of the New Testament), to a new and entirely different meaning of the word--a Graeco-Roman use, not a Biblical!

3. Moreover, it is a "Mediator of a new covenant" the passage has been speaking of, and a "testament" (vs. 17) or "will" does not need a "mediator." A covenant in Scripture has a mediator, as Moses, the mediator of "the first" (vs. 18); and Christ, the Mediator of a new covenant.* A man who makes a will does not perform execute its provisions!

The great Bible illustration of the word "covenant" is given in Exodus 24.

"(Moses) sent young men of the children of Israel, who offered burnt-offerings and sacrificed peace-offerings of oxen unto Jehovah. And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basins; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that Jehovah hath spoken will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold, the blood of the covenant, which Jehovah hath made with you concerning all these words" (Ex. 24:5-8).

* "With the utmost decision must we continue to protest against the introduction of 'testament' as the meaning of *diatheke* in Heb 9:16, 17. It is needless, and it does violence to the continuity of our Author's argument. It is needless, as a patient consideration of Gen. 15:7,21, and Jer. 34:18-19, might have shown, where both parties to the Covenant are represented as dead to all change of mind; and it does violence to the argument of the present passage as the sudden jerk back to the covenant idea, which in that case is felt in vs. 18, all sufficiently shows: Whence not even the first apart from blood hath been consecrated. The first--what? 'Testament'? Nay! the first (that at Sinai) was not a testament but a covenant. Besides, as well said by the 'Speaker's Commentary' on Hebrews 7:22, 'A testament no more requires a surety than it does a mediator' and on Hebrews 9:15, 'The use of the term 'Mediator' shows that we have here to do with the Hebrew idea of a covenant, not with a Roman idea of a 'testament.' A mediator is the proper guardian of a covenant (see Gal. 3:15-20), but has no place in regard to a testament. Neither, again, does the death of a testator possess any of the sacrificial character which is referred to in vss. 15-22."--Rotherham, pp138-9.

"There is not a trace of the meaning testament in the Greek O.T."--Vincent.

See also the able and searching rejection of the word "testament" in Kendrick's edition of Olshausen, pp512-17.

This, mark, is the example of the inauguration of a Biblical covenant, and it is a Biblical covenant only which is before Us throughout Hebrews 9, 10.

*A covenant is between two or more parties.

A covenant states the conditions of relationship or action.

The Old Covenant made Divine blessing dependent upon human obedience. The New Covenant proceeds wholly from God, and is based entirely upon Christ's work.

Note. "the blood of the covenant ... Heb. 9:20; and "The Lord Jesus ... said, This cup is the new covenant in My blood" (1Cor. 11:23-25).

Note that it was the blood, not of the Israelites, who were entering into the covenant; nor of Moses, a Mediator of that covenant, but of appointed animals, that was shed: death proceeding from the covenanting one. The one great point is that a covenant with Jehovah could not be dedicated or inaugurated apart from bloodshedding.

Verse 17: For a covenant is of force where there hath been death: (or, Over dead persons or things): since it in no way has power when he who covenanted is living: Why death, bloodshedding, in pledge or "ratification" of God's "covenant"? First, God could have dealings with fallen man only on the ground of death. "Thou shalt surely die," God had said to Adam--if he should sin. And when he did sin, and God sent him and Eve from Eden, He "made for Adam and for his wife coats of skins" (obtained after death) "and clothed them." Also when Abel learned (as Cain never did) the way of approach to God, it was by blood--the blood of a firstling lamb.

Again, when God desired to confer upon Abram's seed the land of promise, He directed Abram to place on the right hand and on the left the divided carcasses of appointed victims, symbols of the death of Christ by means of which alone He can bestow promised blessing upon His own:

"And it came to pass, that when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a flaming torch that passed between these pieces. In that day Jehovah made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed I have given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates" (Gen. 15:17-18).

Here Abram, with whom Jehovah was covenanting, did not die, but appointed sacrifices died in his stead. It was a covenant of promise, an announced purpose of God to bless him, and--through his Seed, Christ--all nations. The fact, however, that it was a mutual agreement between God and Abram, each fulfilling prescribed conditions, is brought out in Nehemiah 9:7-8:

"Thou art Jehovah the God, Who didst choose Abram, and broughtest him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees, and gavest him the

name of Abraham, and foundest his heart faithful before Thee, and madest a covenant with him to give the land of the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Amorite, and the Perizzite, and the Jebusite, and the Girgashite, to give it unto his seed, and hast performed Thy words; for Thou art righteous."

Second, This ratification by blood-shedding certainly indicates the solemnity, "even unto death," of undertakings between God and men. Even men thus ratify their statements and promises: "I hope to die, if I don't do it!"

Third, To go further, there is the sanction of death in these Old Testament covenants, especially in that of Exodus 24. Why should not the Law, which was a "ministration of death," have the sanction of death? As our next verse reads:

Heb 9:18: Wherefore even the first covenant hath not been dedicated without blood. We repeat, the word "Wherefore" opening this verse connects it directly with what is said in Heb 9:16, 17. Verse 18 ff. is an illustration of the ratification of a covenant, not the announcement of a will or testament.

It must be constantly remembered that in Heb 9:11-28 there are two tabernacles and two covenants before us. In verse 11 Christ is seen "having come a High Priest of the good things to come, through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation"; and in verse 12, entering into the holy place--Heaven itself, "through His own blood." The infinite efficacy of this blood is contrasted with that of animals, in verses 13 and 14. Then (vs. 15) because of this efficacy He is the Mediator of a new covenant, a death having taken place, for There must of necessity be the death of the one covenanting (Vs. 16). Then in verse 18 the comparison is carried on: Wherefore even the first (covenant) hath not been dedicated without blood ... The tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry (vs. 21) (Moses) sprinkled in like manner with the blood ... all things ... cleansed with blood and apart from shedding of blood ... no remission (dismissal) of sins (22).

Verse 23: We find the comparison still carried on: The copies of the things in the heavens ... cleansed with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. The whole thought so far has been that of a ratification by death of a Divine covenant.

We must go back now for a longer look at the remarkable scene of Heb 9:18-22, reported from Exodus 24, to which we have already referred. Let us remember that it is to a people that have been redeemed from Egypt that this solemn covenant was given; and that this covenant of Exodus 24, under which Israel passed after the Law had been proclaimed from Sinai, leaves blessing dependent upon man's faithfulness, man's responsibility. There are several elements in the striking scene:

1. Aaron and his two eldest sons and seventy of the elders (representatives of Israel) are called up and worship afar off.
2. Moses, a type of Christ the Mediator, alone comes near.
3. The people are forbidden to come up (for God is preparing for a priesthood to intervene between Him and them).
4. Moses reports to the people Jehovah's words, the ordinances of Ex 22, 23.
5. The second time, the people solemnly promise, "All the words which Jehovah hath spoken will we do" (vs. 3). They repeat this promise (vs. 7) after burnt-offerings and peace-offerings are offered by "young men of the children of Israel" (vss. 4-5).
6. Moses sprinkles half the blood upon the altar.
7. Then he takes the book of the covenant, that is, the law with the ordinances of Exodus 22 and 23, and reads it in the audience of the people: upon which they promise to do "all that Jehovah hath spoken, and be obedient."
8. Moses then takes the other half of the blood and sprinkles all the people, after having sprinkled the book itself (Heb. 9:19) saying, This is the blood of the covenant which God commanded to you-ward (20).
9. Note that no man was ever saved by keeping this Law. This sprinkled blood of course pointed to Christ's shed blood; yet here emphasizes that sanction of death which the legal covenant had.

Verse 22: And according to the Law, I may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and apart from shedding of blood there is no remission. To grasp the deep import of this most important verse, we must turn to that instructive, and, alas, neglected, book, Leviticus:

1. "The life of the flesh is in the blood": (Lev. 17:11,14).
2. God commanded Israel that blood, whether of sacrifices (Ex. 29:12; Lev. 4:7, 18, 25), or of that which was taken in hunting (Deut. 12:16, 24; 15:23), was to be "poured out upon the earth."
3. Blood was not to be eaten, forbidden even to Noah: this is one of the conditions of the everlasting covenant: "But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat" (Gen. 9:4). This prohibition was repeated under the Law to Israel (Lev. 7:26; 17:10-13). It was one of the four directions sent to the Gentile churches from the council at Jerusalem: "...That we write unto them, that they abstain ... from what is strangled, and from blood" (Acts 15:19-20). (It is to this day a mark of inherent savagery and infidel brutality to consume "blood puddings.")
4. The essence of any of the offerings was the pouring out of its blood: whether of the burnt offering (Lev. 1), the peace offering (Lev. 3), the sin offering (Lev. 5), or the trespass offering (Lev. 6); or the morning and evening sacrifice of the lamb, or the slaying of the goat for Jehovah's lot on the Great Day of Atonement. The essence of all was the pouring out of the blood, this being the laying down of the life: for the blood was the life.

Doubtless in the burnt offering there was the sweet savor in the burning of the whole body upon the altar, representing Christ

giving Himself up for us, "an offering and a sacrifice to God for an odor of a sweet smell" (Eph. 5:2). There was also the fellowship of the priests with Jehovah in those parts of the various sacrifices assigned to them to eat. But, we repeat, in every offering where death took place, it was the pouring out of the blood, the laying down of the life, that was the essential thing.

5. It is of the utmost importance, then, to remember that the shedding the blood, the pouring it out upon the ground, meant laying down what God calls "the life of the flesh": "As to the life of all flesh, the blood thereof is all one with the life thereof ... the life of all flesh is the blood thereof" (Lev. 17:14, and see vs. 11, quoted above.) The great point in our minds here should not yet be why the shedding of the blood of the offering was demanded, but the fact that it was so. The shed blood was an open witness that the life with which it was connected, which life indeed it was had been laid down. See Jehovah's word concerning the Passover blood sprinkled upon the doors in Egypt: "When I see the blood I will pass over you." All Egypt, including the Israelites, was under Divine judgment, but the outpoured blood of the Passover lamb protected the houses of Israel from the judgment that fell upon those not having the sprinkled blood. And remember that Paul wrote, "For our passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ" (1 Cor. 5:7). His poured-out blood, which was "the life of the flesh" which He laid down, protects us from Divine judgment, as Israel was protected in Egypt.

6. If we inquire now, Why shedding of blood? Why must life be laid down? Scripture answers, it is demanded by the being of God: "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil" (Hab. 1:13); "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God, the Almighty" (Rev. 4:8); and by the government of God; "Righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne" (Ps. 97:2). Every sin defies the majesty of the infinite God. Therefore, however measureless His love to man may be, man's sin must be taken away ere he can stand for an instant before God.

But taken away--how? In Hebrews here we read, Apart from shedding of blood there is no remission. This statement arouses the venom of a serpent-taught, human, shallow "theology" to cry, "We do not believe in a God like that, Who must have His anger appeased by the blood of a victim!" What sheer, blind folly such utterances show! What ignorance of Scripture! What fancied security of the speakers in their lives of sin and guilt!

Have they never considered that the shed blood witnessed to a life laid down, ended? Not only has the God of this universe risen in judgment, but in the shed, outpoured blood of Christ, the great Sin Offering, man disappeared! his human standing was ended. When the Jewish high priest took the blood of the slain goat into the Holy of Holies on the Great Day of Atonement, with the whole congregation of Israel assembled without, he spake no word, uttered no confession, made no plea. Going to the mercy seat, the top of the ark of the covenant, he sprinkled the blood upon it, and before it, seven times, then went out. That blood witnessed that the goat which was "Jehovah's lot" had died; its life was poured out, ended. When the high priest went forth from the tabernacle and, laying his hands upon the head of the other goat (for the people), confessed all their sins and iniquities, it was as a result of the laying down of the life of the first goat, for the two together constituted one type of Christ's death, Christ's shedding His blood for sin, and the result. This second goat was sent away into the wilderness, not to be found.

Remember, Christ did not resume the flesh and blood life that He had before dying. That life was laid down, ended. We are so accustomed to associate resurrection with sin bearing, that Christ's resurrection becomes in our mind a resuming of the life that He laid down. We forget that the blood poured out ended the life in the flesh. The blood of the Cross takes away all man's possible standing before God forever and ever. It brought it to an end. The Cross brought man to an end.

We know that God did raise up Christ, but as The Firstborn from among the dead, in newness of life of which mankind knows nothing until saving faith comes. And saving faith, Divinely given, includes despair in consciousness of unremovable sin and guilt, with a resting upon the shed blood of Christ as removing personal sin and guilt (as human means could not) and a claiming of the Risen Christ by faith.

23 It was necessary therefore that the copies of the things in the heavens should be cleansed with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

24 For Christ entered not into a holy place made with hands, like in pattern to the true; but into Heaven itself, now to appear before the face of God for us:

25 nor yet that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest entereth Into the holy place year by year with blood not His own;

26 else must He often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once at the end (or, consummation) of the ages hath He been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

27 And inasmuch as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this cometh judgment;

28 so Christ also, having been once offered to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for Him, unto salvation.

Verse 23: It was necessary therefore that the copies of things in the heavens should be cleansed with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these: Both in Hebrews and in The Revelation we find that there is a temple at present in Heaven. This word "temple" means sanctuary, or place of worship of God as He shall prescribe. In The Revelation, such words as these occur:

"There was opened the temple of God that is in Heaven; and there was seen in His temple the ark of His covenant" (Rev. 11:19)

"And after these things I saw, and the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in Heaven was opened: and there came out from the temple the seven angels, that had the seven plagues, arrayed with precious stone, pure and bright, and girt about their breasts

with golden girdles ... And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from His power; and none was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels should be finished ... And I heard a great voice out of the temple, saying to the seven angels, Go ye, and pour out the seven bowls of the wrath of God into the earth" (Rev. 15:5-6, 8; 16:1).

We find then that there is a temple in Heaven. Moses was told to make the tabernacle "according to the pattern shown him in the mount"; and in Hebrews 9:23 we find that those tabernacle and temple forms were copies of the things in the heavens; and in the following verse that Christ entered not into (lit.) Holies made with hands, like in pattern to the true; but into Heaven itself, now to appear before the face of God for us. ("Heaven itself, the heaven of heavens, the place of the glorious residence of the presence or majesty of God, is that whereinto He entered."--Owen, vol. 6, p278.)

Now you may ask, why must the copies of the things in the heavens be cleansed? Scripture answers, "Behold, He putteth no trust in His holy ones; Yea, the heavens are not clean in His sight. ... The stars are not pure in His sight" (Job. 15:15; 25:5). Also, it was in Heaven that Satan, the "day-star, son of the morning" sinned, said his fivefold "I will" in his heart, and was cast out as profane" (Isa. 14:12-15; Ezek. 28:14-16). Again, the record of man's sin existed in Heaven. But when the great Sin-Bearer entered into Heaven itself, "through His own blood, once for all ... having obtained eternal redemption," as we have seen, sin had been put away from God's sight through the value and power of that infinite sacrifice of Himself, the laying down of His own life. Then were the heavens "cleansed," potentially and eternally cleansed; and then indeed were the sins of all believers, all who would risk themselves upon the sin-bearing, the bloodshedding of this infinite Sin Bearer,--then were their sins actually put away from God's sight forever.

Verse 24: For Christ entered not into holies made with hands (the Levitical tabernacle), like in pattern to the true; but into Heaven itself, now to appear before the face of God for us: But many object, We died with Christ and have been created in the Risen Christ, enlived together with Him, and raised up with Him, and made to sit in the heavenlies in Him; if we are the very Body of Christ, why should we need that Christ now appear before the face of God for us? This is a natural question, but it shows utter ignorance of the place of priesthood. We must learn what that is. For there are matters revealed pertaining to the priesthood of Christ, that are not touched even by the fact of our union with Him as His Body.

*If there be any question who is meant by this word "us", we would say, it must be the "us" of Rom. 8:34; "maketh intercession for us"--Jewish and Gentile believers alike; and the "us" of Heb. 10:19-20, 22: "the way which He dedicated for us ... Let us draw near."

Furthermore, the "us" in Rom. 8:31, "If God is for us, who is against us?" connects with the same word in Heb. 6:19-20: "--within the veil; whither as a Forerunner Jesus entered for us, having become a High Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek."

Alas for those who are told in gospel meetings simply to believe in Christ and His finished work, and are not told of His present priestly work of keeping and caring for His own. If they are indeed Christ's own whom the Father has given Him, they will indeed be brought safely through. But let all true preachers and teachers of the Word be careful to speak of this work of intercession in which our blessed Lord is continually occupied on behalf of His saints! God has chosen that believers be "sojourners and pilgrims" here. If Israel needed a priesthood in connection with their earthly worship, how much more do we need one! For Israel was journeying from one earthly country to another not far distant. But we are journeying to the heavenly city that has no connection whatever with this world. Moreover, our Lord has been rejected and crucified by this world, and has passed, by resurrection, into a new state of being, in a realm called "the heavenlies" (Eph. 1:3 etc.), and while we as belonging in the heavenlies with Christ, are travelling thither, all is by faith: as see the great faith Hebrews 11:14-16, "We walk by faith, not by appearance." Besides, we face deadly foes--Satan and his hosts; and have a warfare appointed unto us.

So we need a priest, and thank God! we have a priest--"a Great Priest over the house of God," that is, all believers. May God give us open eyes, and the humility to recognize our great need--our daily need, our hourly need, of His blessed, glorious, and intercessory work.

*Heb. 9 presents Christ as a High Priest--for whom?

1. Not to the Jewish nation, for He is of another order than Aaron and the Levitical system.
2. Not of unbelievers, Jews or Gentiles. Note His high priestly prayer of John 17: "I pray not for the world, but for those whom Thou hast given Me; for they are Thine." What unbelievers must do is appropriate Christ, believe in Him, and receive the right thus to become sons of God.

They then become (John 1:12) "children of God," and the objects of His priestly prayer. It is for believers passing through the world to their eternal home in glory, that Christ is "a Great Priest over the house of God." He "maketh intercession for us" with infinite watchfulness and marvelous sympathy.

One more thing: "Christ suffered for sins once ... that He might bring us to God" (1 Pet. 3:18). We are told to come boldly unto the throne of grace. Now our Lord is not upon His own throne yet, as He will be when He returns and the Lord God gives unto Him the throne of His Father, David, in Jerusalem. He is on His Father's throne, and it is unto God, by Christ that we are to come, rather than to Christ. Some one has said, "Most Christians connect Christ with love, and God with judgment." But this is to forget that "God so loved the world that He gave." This attitude of heart imagines Christ doing atoning work in Heaven, propitiating an angry God. No wonder such a state of heart does not understand Hebrews!

Christ died for us, did He not? Was not that a priestly work? Did not God have all salvation depend on His sacrifice? Even so, now, in Heaven He "appears before the face of God for us."

*You may say, "Christ finished His work for me, on the Cross." Scripture answers, "He ever liveth to make intercession for us."

You may say, "I read in Ephesians 2 that we have been 'made alive together with Christ and raised up with Him and made to sit with Him in the heavenly places.'"

Scripture also says, "He ever liveth to make intercession for us," and He appears "before the face of God for us."

You say, "I am complete in Him" (Christ).

Scripture says, "He (Christ) ever liveth to make intercession for us."

You may say, "Christ offered up one sacrifice for sins forever and sat down at the right hand of God."

Scripture still says, "He ever liveth to make intercession for us."

You may say, "Christ acted as our Great High Priest when He offered up Himself on the cross, putting away our sin from God's sight forever."

True, He certainly did. Yet Scripture says, God saluted Him, as risen from the dead, "Thou art a Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek"

You may say, as did Peter, "Lord ... I will lay down my life for Thee ... And in like manner also said they all" (Mk. 14-31; John 13:37).

But Scripture says, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan asked to have you (plural), that he might sift you as wheat: but I made supplication for thee (singular) that thy faith fail not; and do thou, when once thou hast turned again, establish thy brethren" (Lk. 22:31-32).

These disciples were honest and earnest; they had faith in their Lord, but they did not know their own hearts nor the journey they had to make through this world, nor their need of a priest.

Oh, if young believers were but instructed in these things--their own weakness; the untrustworthiness of their own hearts, even in the best frames and feelings; the deadly enmity of Satan, and his planned wiles against all Christ's own; together with the fact that the world through which he journeys is "lying in the evil one"!

Then too we need a priest because we are going on into eternity. How wonderful it is to know that we are in One Who is both God and Man. As God, He sits upon the throne, "the throne of God and of the Lamb" (Rev. 22:1). The Lamb, Christ, is God the Son; yet, having become man, He can say, "My Father and your Father, and My God and your God." This does not argue distance, however. We are already addressed as those "in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1).

But God is infinite in all His attributes; and we shall be learning, and adoring, forever! A great part of the Levitical priest's work was to instruct the people in the word and ways of Jehovah, their God. So will it be with Christ. The question of sin will not come up, for that was forever settled; but the remembrance of the love that put sin away will be eternal.

How wonderful, then, is the eternal scene! Christ not ashamed to call the redeemed ones "brethren"; Christ declaring the name of God the Father unto His brethren--ever with fresh knowledge; finally, Christ in the midst of the great Assembly of His saints, singing, along with them, the praise of God! To contemplate an eternity with such an outlook is to have a heart filled with holy and heavenly expectations, even on the way to Heaven.

Heb 9:25, 26: Nor yet that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place year by year with blood not his own; (26) else must He often have suffered since the foundation of the world: These verses emphasize still further the contrast between the things of the Levitical economy, with its oft-repeated sacrifices, and Christ's offering Himself once, to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. Here again permit the Word of God to relieve your inmost heart and conscience of the thought that Jesus Christ is now making sacrifice for you in Heaven. He is not now offering Himself in sacrifice for our sins, for this was done ONCE at the consummation of the ages, at the Cross, as we read in verse 26.

Beginning with the words (1) the foundation of the world, we have next to look (2) at the "ages" or aions of the world's existence; then (3) at the remarkable phrase the consummation of the ages--at which time Christ was manifested; and finally (4) at the meaning of the words to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

1. The foundation of the world--We look back to Hebrews 1:10 when God addresses Christ thus: "Thou, Lord, in the beginning didst lay the foundation of the earth." How far back in years Genesis 1:1 and John 1:3 take us, God has not revealed. But when it came to creation by the Father's will and the Son's word, "It was very good."

2. Ages (Heb., olams, Gr. aions), succeeded. Again, God does not say how many. The term "ages" denotes lapses of time during each of which was being accomplished some phase of the Divine purpose. There came the invasion of sin into the world--nay, into the universe. Although we cannot here go thoroughly into the passages concerning sin's history, we repeat that sin is anomia, lawlessness (1 Jon 3:4): that it is the rising into independency of the will of the creature. We may also repeat Romans 5:12, "Through one man sin entered into the world"; and recall our Lord's words concerning the tempter of Eve, "He was a murderer from the beginning" (John 8:44); and 1 John 3:8, "The devil sinneth from the beginning."

3. We come next to the astonishing phrase, the consummation of the ages. To explain these words, demands a Divine plan. We read in Galatians 1 of "this present evil age, out of which Christ will deliver His saints. Our Lord spoke also when on earth of "this age", and "that which is to come." To set forth the meaning of the consummation of the ages, then, let us first look at the end of the verse:

4. (Christ) hath been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself: Recall to mind the wounds in the hands and feet and

side of the Son of God's love Who is at His right hand. In Romans it is, "justified in His blood": in Ephesians, "made nigh in the blood of Christ"; in Hebrews, Christ entered into the holies "through His own blood," and our entering "into the holy place by the blood of Jesus."

Thus He put away sin, and this putting away sin was at the consummation of the ages. All previous ages led up to this; all succeeding ages are governed by this! It seems necessary, therefore, to believe that each aion had to do with this stupendous thing, Christ's being manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

As to the devil, for example, whatever the history of the past, the consummation is seen at the Cross (Hebrews 2:14): "That through death He might bring to naught him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." Again, as to Adam, upon his sinning, "Jehovah God made for Adam and for his wife coats of skins," as a result of a death first inflicted on substitutes by God, "and clothed them." So that, outside of Eden, they began a fallen race, each individual of whose millions is dependent upon that manifestation of Christ at the consummation of the ages to put away his sin,--dependent if ever to be saved!

Again, on Sinai, Jehovah spoke awful earth-shaking words to Israel. For what purpose? That the Law might "become our tutor" (Gr., *paidagogos*) to bring unto Christ those who had been kept in ward under the Law (Gal. 3:24), that is, Israel; that they "might be justified by faith." But faith in what? In His blood Who was manifested to put away sin. Whether therefore we look at man's fearful need, or at the display of the infinite mercy and love of God; or whether we look at the ages past or at the ages to come, that manifestation of Christ to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself will be the theme forever.

Verses 27-28: And inasmuch as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this cometh judgment; so Christ also, having been once offered to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time, APART FROM SIN, to them that wait for Him, unto salvation: There could not be a greater contrast than this. We see on every hand unsaved men and women to whom two things are appointed; (1) death, (2) judgment. So Christ on the Cross met the double-appointment: not only physical death, but death under Divine judgment, for He cried that He had been forsaken of God.

But when we see a believer, one of those who are waiting for Him, we see one for whom death and judgment are gone! If physical death comes, the Lord calls it "falling asleep," or "departing to be with Christ." And John 5:24 will be literally fulfilled at our Lord's second coming: the believer "entereth not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life." If the Lord should come today, believers would be "caught up to meet Him in the air," to "see Him as He is," to enter into His glory. Neither, death nor judgment is "appointed" unto believers.

But in Hebrews 9:28 we have in the words: Christ ... offered to bear the sins of many, what Peter wrote of: "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree" (1 Pet. 2:24). Or Paul, "Christ died for our sins" (1 Cor. 15:3). It is the actual bearing of sins by the Substitute that is looked at here. Notice also the word "many": ("Solely His own (people) and not mankind indiscriminately."--Kelly "'Many' is opposed here not to all but to few"--Schlichting, from Alford): as Paul writes in 1 Tim. 2:5-6, "Christ Jesus, Who gave Himself a ransom for all"; and as our Lord said in Matthew 26:28, "This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto remission of sins."

Shall appear a second time, apart from sin (Gr., *choris hamartias*, "sin apart," as in Hebrews 4:15) unto salvation: Compare Romans 13:11: "Now is our salvation nearer to us than when we first believed." (Not that we do not now possess salvation: we do: as see Lk. 1:77, Eph. 1:13, Phil. 1:29 and many other verses. Nor is it that our salvation is not being carried on: it is: 1 Cor. 1:18, margin; Phil. 3:20-21. But our salvation will be consummated at the coming of the Lord Jesus and the redemption of our bodies.)

Sin apart--The sin question will not be brought up at Christ's second coming, any more than it is now being brought up by Christ, our Great High Priest, at God's right hand. He bare sin "once for all"!

To them that wait for Him--(A.V., "look for Him"): The verb in the Greek is a very intensive one: meaning to wait eagerly or ardently.

*This word "wait" *apekdechomai* is found in Rom. 8:19, 23, 25, which verses set forth the spirit of the meaning, which is, "desired anticipation": "The earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God ... We with patience wait for it." And in 1 Cor. 1:7: "Ye ... waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ." (See also Phil. 3:20, Gal. 5:5. Thayer's definition of this word is, "assiduously and patiently to wait" for Him. Compare English, to "wait out." Liddell and Scott give, "expect anxiously.")

Let me here, emphasize the fact that all whom our Lord has redeemed, all "they that are Christ's" are raised or raptured at His appearing. It is not a question here of those having "dispensational" instruction concerning our Lord's coming, concerning the distinction between the Rapture and the Revelation, known now by thousands of believers. Some "groaning" ones (Rom. 8:23) have not much knowledge of prophecy, Yet they have the "firstfruits of the Spirit," and they are waiting for the glorious day of their adoption, even the redemption of their bodies; and of course, being born again, their faith and hope are all in Christ. These all wait for him in the sense of Hebrews 9:28.

There are, sad to say, many thousands of true believers who have not yet fully entered into the great fact that their own sins are forever gone in Christ's death. Yet they once learned their lost, guilty condition; and threw themselves, like the publican of Luke 18, upon the mercy of God; and their hope is in Christ, though that hope be not yet blossomed out into confident assurance. So they are Christ's, and in the sweep of Divine grace, they are included. There are those also who, through personal failure, or from listening to weak, ignorant preaching, are spiritually poor and wretched: yet their hope is in Christ. Thousands of backslidden ones, too, belong to Christ. Think of him of 1 Corinthians 5:1, and 1 Corinthians 11:21!

In 1 Corinthians 1:7, just quoted in the footnote, to those "waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ", there follows the Promise, "Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be unreprouable in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." But though they would be finally unreprouable," Paul at once sets out to reprove them! Yet these members of Christ's Body, of the "church of God," (1:2), called "babes in Christ" (3:1), are said to be "waiting for Christ," for His coming again.

We do not say these things to excuse ignorance, spiritual poverty, backsliding, or sin of any kind, but the contrary. Nothing but grace could write the Corinthian epistles! Grace is for those who need it, as did they, and as do we, both in our walk, and in our judgment of others. Remember, you who deem that only a peculiar, "consecrated", "overcoming", "devoted" few are meant in Hebrews 9:28, that Paul did not threaten these carnal babes in Christ in Corinth with exclusion from the Rapture. He said,

"We all shall not sleep, but WE shall ALL be changed ... The dead shall be raised incorruptible, and WE shall be changed ...Thanks be to God, Who GIVETH US the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast" (1Cor. 15:52-58).

Blessed are they that are saying with Paul, "I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing"; who have found that the law of life makes free from the law of sin and death. These, if true, are tender, and ready to weep over others, as was Paul.

Christ shall appear a second time ... to them that wait for Him--that is, then, to all His own.

*The "partial rapture" people refer to the "overcomers" of Rev. 2 and 3 as the only ones to be raptured. But God sets forth who are the overcomers, when the New Creation comes: Rev. 21:6, 7: "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit these things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son." It is plain that all that are born of God "overcome," for the following verse says, "But for the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, their part shall be in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death." Only two classes: those who have God and are His children; and, on the other hand, the eightfold list of the eternally lost!

In a sense, Hebrews 9:24-28 sums up the whole book of Hebrews. For we have here first, the Person of Christ, entered into the Holy Place above. Then, His priesthood, "now to appear before the face of God for us." Then, the finality of His one offering: Once at the consummation of the ages hath He been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And lastly, His second coming, apart from sin. These are the great themes of the exhortation TO THE HEBREWS.

Erewhile I reasoned of Thy truth,
I searched with toil and care;
From morn to night I tilled my field,
And yet my field was bare.
There lie my books--for all I sought
My heart possesses now.
The words are sweet that tell Thy love,
The love itself art Thou.
One line I read--and then no more--
I close the book to see
No more the symbol and the sign,
But Christ revealed to me.
And thus my worship is, delight--
My work, to see His Face,
With folded hands and silent lips
Within His Holy place.
I sit an infant at His feet
Where moments teach me more
Than all the toil, and all the books
Of all the ages hoar.
I sought the truth, and found but doubt--
I wandered far abroad;
I hail the truth already found
Within the heart of God.
--Ter Steegen

1 FOR THE LAW having a shadow of the good things to come, not the very image of the things, can never with the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer continually, make perfect (in standing) them that draw nigh.

2 Else would they not have ceased to be offered? because the worshipers, having been once cleansed, would have no more consciousness of sins.

3 But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance made of sins year by year.

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

MANY DEAR SAINTS who delight in the Word of God insist on the study of the Old Testament types as setting forth fully and accurately the things of Grace we are now enjoying, and the good things to come when the Lord returns. Indeed, we have known some beloved teachers so governed by Old Testament typology as to permit no entrance of New Testament truth except as explained and defined by Old Testament types.

But the first verse of Hebrews 10 flatly denies to the types the very thing that these people would give them: the Law (and its entire economy) had a shadow of the good things to come, but not the very image. The Greek word for "image" is eikon. An image, or eikon, like a good statue or photograph, reveals features and facts accurately. This a shadow cannot do. A tree casts its shadow on the ground: you see its general shape; but you cannot tell the kind of tree, or discern foliage, blossom, fruit. Now The Law had only shadows. One who tries to turn these shadows into images finds himself presently under their spell. Reversing things, he judges facts by shadows.

Before we leave verse 1, let us remark that "image" (eikon) sets forth the substance, as in Matthew 22 (also Mk. 12, and Lk. 20) our Lord asks concerning the denarius, a Roman coin, "Whose image (eikon) and superscription" (Caesar's name) "hath it?" This image was no shadow of Caesar, no mere hint that such a being existed, but the man's very features portrayed on the metal.

But God says in Hosea 8:12, "I wrote for him the ten thousand things of My Law; but they are counted as a strange thing." The "things" here are the ordinances, precepts, judgments, sacrifices, ceremonies; but "My Law" lies in God's mind as one Law. Again, what about John 1:17: "For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ"? Can you maintain that the "ceremonial law" is referred to here, while God still holds over the believer what you call the "moral law," with its blessing conditioned on your obedience instead of on Christ's work?

Finally, what will you say, with your man-made distinction between what you call "ceremonial law" and what you really trust in, "the moral law," to the distinction God makes in 2 Corinthians 3 between law-keeping and that blessed operation of the Spirit here described?

"Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit" (Vss. 17-18). Will you retain your "moral law" claim here? Very well, compare that to the contrast in that Chapter, verse 3. A Christian, as an epistle of Christ, is said to be "written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God," and further, "not in tables of stone, but in tables that are hearts of flesh." Now let your tables of stone go! There are your ten words, including the fourth commandment about the Sabbath, given to Israel as a token of God's relation to them (Ex. 31:13, 17; Neh. 9:13-14). Let it go, for Christ (2 Cor. 3:6) "made us (the apostles) sufficient as ministers of a new covenant; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life"! Mark, finally, that the Law, the Law given on stones, the ten words, is called in verse 7 (same chapter) "the ministration of death," and described as a passing thing: and in verse 9 as "the ministration of condemnation." You are a sinner, and the Law can for all eternity do nothing for you but condemn you. The Law did not even have the very image of the (heavenly) things. There had to be a rectification (Heb. 9:10, last word), a "vanishing away" of "that which is becoming old and waxeth aged."

But you cry, What shall take the place of the Law? We have believed that God forever controls His creatures by Law!

What do you do with "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish before Him in love" (Eph. 1:4)? Do you still believe that the bending of your will to Divine enactments is a stronger method?

Take the great truth next set forth: The Law can never with the same sacrifices ... make perfect (in standing) them that draw nigh. Else (verse 2) would they not have ceased to be offered? because the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would have had no more conscience of sins: If the Israelitish worshiper had known that his sins were all put away forever--which the instructed Christian knows his sins are, by the one offering of Christ--he would have had no more conscience of sins. (The A.V. reads, "conscience of sins".) Doubtless all the Levitical sacrifices pointed to Christ's sacrifice: but they effected nothing in the way of putting away sin. Cleansing is an application, connected with and following Divine forgiveness in Heaven. Cleansing is the removal of sins from the person justified! See Acts 22:16: "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on His name." (We shall return to this matter of cleansing in a moment.)

Again, Hebrews 10:3 says, But in those (Levitical) sacrifices there is a remembrance made of sins year by year. Let us at once put far from our thought that the Levitical sacrifices ever removed sins. God, in pardoning any sinner, in the Old Testament, looked forward to the work of His dear Son on the Cross. Conceive, therefore, of the true meaning and effect of those Levitical sacrifices: a remembrance (not a removal) of sins year by year.

To return to the word cleansed. This is not pardon, but the result of pardon. Scripture teaches that sins are things; that they are attached to the person, yea, to the very body of the sinner. Certain unpardoned sinners are thus described in Ezekiel 32:27: "They are gone down to Sheol ... and their iniquities are upon their bones." As we read in Psalm 109:18 of a wicked enemy of David (a

prophecy of Judas Iscariot--vs. 8 and Acts 1:20),

"He clothed himself also with cursing as with his garment, And it came into his inward parts like water, And like oil into his bones."

The pardoned man is described in Hebrews 10:2 as cleansed. Sins are removed from his person--literally! Christ bore our sins in His body on the tree. He was "delivered up for our trespasses, and raised for our justification." (Rom. 4:25). "So Christ also was once offered to bear the sins of many."

This being so, and God reckoning the atoning work of Christ to a believing sinner, his sins are removed forever from him, from his person. Thus is he, according to God's word in Hebrews 10:2, "cleansed". Looking back at Calvary, he sees the removal of his sins by the shed blood of Christ, and is filled with peace and joy. But the very continuance of the Levitical offerings was proof of their ineffectiveness and "shadow" character.

The conscience of a devout Jew resembled the conscience of a devout Roman Catholic today. The Catholic must go to his "priest," to the "confessional," telling this man-made priest his sins; and the promise is, that the "priest" will get him forgiveness. The "priest" resorts to the figment of the "unbloody sacrifice" of "the Mass," for he knows not the finished work of Christ, by Whose blood sin was put away once for all, on the Cross. What the Romish "priest" finds and the Jew of old found, is a remembrance of sins. (Of course this is an illustration, and we shall not at heart compare the Divinely appointed Levitical system of sacrifices with the blasphemous performances of Rome's self-appointed priests. For to the pope's puppets, with whom He has nothing to do, God makes no promise of forgiveness of sins at all, which He did make to the Hebrew bringing the appointed offering under the Levitical system. (Lev. 4:20, 26, 28; 5:10, 13, 16, 18; 6:7).)

Did a Hebrew sin? Had he committed a trespass? Let him bring the trespass offering according to Leviticus 4 to 6. But why, since on the Great Day of Atonement once a year (Lev. 16) the high priest carried the blood of the slain goat within the veil, then confessed all the transgressions and sins of the children of Israel upon the head of the live goat, and sent it away, bearing upon him "all their iniquities unto a solitary land"--why, when the high priest had done all this, should not a sinning Israelite later simply say, I will confess this trespass unto Jehovah, and rely upon the blood of the slain goat of the Day of Atonement?

He could not do that for two reasons: first, because the blood of the slain goat of Leviticus 16 did not put away all his sins forever as Christ's one Sacrifice has availed to do for us; (Note the seven cases of forgiveness: (1) "The whole congregation": Hebrews 4:13, 20. (2) "A ruler": Hebrews 4:22, 26. (3) "Anyone of the common people": Hebrews 4:27, 31-33. (4) "Any one": Hebrews 5:1, 10, 13. (5) "if anyone commit a trespass and sin unwittingly": Hebrews 5:15-16. (6) "If any one sin and do" what "Jehovah commanded not to be done": Hebrews 5:17-18. (7) "If any one ... deal falsely with his neighbor": Hebrews 6:1, 7.); second, because each worshiper was commanded to bring a trespass offering each time he sinned; and he also knew that the high priest must again offer the blood of a goat before Jehovah, and again confess the sins of the children of Israel over another living goat, and send it away, at the next yearly Atonement, and the next--the same forms year after year. For in these sacrifices there is a remembrance (not a removal), made of sins year by year. As we read:

Heb 10:4 : For it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins. Therefore the Israelitish worshiper, be he ever so sincere, would only know that by his trespass offering he was forgiven up to date, but must be ready to offer another trespass offering upon another failure. (Alas, many earnest professing Christians are practically upon Levitical ground as concerning Christ's sacrifice. They say, "I am saved if I hold out. And each time there is a failure, there must be a new application of the blood." God says, "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous: and He is the propitiation (on the ground of His once-for-all putting away sins) for our sins." A believer's sin does not come in before God as judge, at all. It was all dealt with on Calvary!

We repeat, the removal of sins, not the reminding the worshiper of them ("remembrance"), was the way in which the conscience was "cleansed." Sins must be "taken away." If that were done, conscience would no longer accuse, there would be "no more consciousness (or conscience) of sins." "Cleansed," therefore, refers not at all to something done to the person of the worshiper, but to his sins, having been once for all removed or taken away.

Note the recurrence in Scripture of this thought, to take away sins:

"He hath given it (the sin-offering) to you to take away (R.V., margin) the iniquity of the congregation, to make atonement for them before Jehovah" (Lev. 10:17).

"On this day (the Great Day of Atonement) shall atonement be made for you, to cleanse you: from all your sins shall ye be clean before Jehovah" (Lev. 16:30).

"And why dost Thou not pardon my transgression, and take away mine iniquity?" (Job 7:21).

"Therefore by this shall the iniquity of Jacob be forgiven (margin, expiated), and this is all the fruit of taking away his sins (Isa. 27:9).

"Take with you words and return unto Jehovah: say unto Him, Take away all iniquity" (Hos. 14:2).

(Jeremiah speaking of those that "contended with" him): "Forgive not their iniquity, neither blot out their sin from Thy sight" (Jer. 18:19, 23).

"Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: and he touched my mouth with it, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips, and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin forgiven" (margin, expiated.) Isa. 6:6-7).

"And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against Me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned and transgressed against Me" (Jer. 33:8).

"In those days, and in that time, saith Jehovah, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I leave as a remnant" (Jer. 50:20). Note pardon connected with the removal of iniquity.

"I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for Mine own sake: and I will not remember thy sins" (Isa. 43:25).

"I will save (the children of Israel) from all their backslidings (margin) wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them" (Ezek. 37:23).

"And I will cleanse (hold as innocent, margin) their blood, that I have not cleansed: for Jehovah dwelleth in Zion" (Joel 3:21).

"According to the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin" (Ps. 51:1-2).

"As far as the east is from the west, So far hath He removed our transgressions from us" (Ps. 103:12).

"Jesus seeing their faith said to the sick of the palsy, Son, be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven" (Matt. 9:2).

"John ... seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

"Ye know that He was manifested to take away sins" (1 John 3:5).

Ananias said unto Saul, "Why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins" (Acts 22:16).

"And this is My covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins" (Rom. 11:27).

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

But because the once for all putting away of sin forever from God's sight (see Hebrews 9:26) is so seldom and so feebly grasped by Christian believers, these Levitical oft-repeated sacrifices are taken as setting forth Christian experience. Thus, even our Lord's priesthood is, in the heart of hearts of most believers, somehow connected with atonement. If it were told to the average real Christian, "Jesus in Heaven will never put away another sin for you," it would strike him with real terror: for he has not rested in that once for all putting away sin at the Cross concerning which Christ said, "It is finished."

*This leads us to say, Most Christians do not have peace. If my house is mortgaged, and I am in daily expectation of foreclosure, what can give me rest? One thing: for some one to pay off the mortgage, and let me behold it cancelled: then I can rest. In Heaven now, at God's right hand, He is not atoning for sin! That would make Him simply the equal of one of the Levitical priests who kept standing, offering up sacrifices for sin daily. This, Christ is not now doing. Why? This He did as Priest, once for all and forever, on the Cross.

Every Christian uncertain whether all his sins have been put away forever, needs to look to God's words about the Cross and the death of Christ, not to His priestly work on high. The mortgage on your soul has been paid off: "One sacrifice for sins forever"! Oh, read Hebrews 10:12 over and over, repeat it daily, hourly, if need be; and say, It was for me!

That it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin is at once apparent: compare in your mind the precious blood of Him Who did put away sins, with the blood of these animals! You may ask then, Why did God prescribe sin and trespass offerings of their blood? Well, first, to bring sin to the remembrance, to consideration, by the trespasser; (2) to make him see that the Divine sentence upon his sin was death; (3) to make him see that God had a way and plan of mercy, for the trespasser was to be forgiven--till he should trespass again; (4) to bring some apprehension of substitutionary atonement to the offender's mind. Read most carefully Leviticus 4:1-12--better still, Hebrews 4-6. From the Cross we look back and understand as the Israelites of old could not; and yet they could see even then that sin was to be forgiven on the ground of substitutionary sacrifice, that is, through blood shedding, or through blood.

Nevertheless, no offerer under the Levitical system ever went away with a conscience "cleansed" forever. (See Appendix E.)

5 Wherefore when He cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, But a body didst Thou prepare for Me;

6 In whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hadst no pleasure:

7 Then said I, Lo, I am come (In the roll of the book it is written of Me) To do Thy will, O God.

8 Saying above, Sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein (the which are offered according to the Law),

9 then hath He said, Lo, I am come to do Thy will. He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second.

10 By which will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Heb 10:5, 6: There is a perfect illustration of a saint's apprehension of the truth that God had no pleasure in the death of the sacrificial animals; and that these had no efficacy in putting away sin, in David's prayer in Psalm 51. Adultery; murder to hide it; refusal to judge himself; impenitence and guile till Bathsheba's child was born and had become dear to David--all this had come in when the prophet Nathan charged home his sin upon him (2 Sam. 12); yet told him that God had put away his sin, and he should not die. Read this 51st psalm: you say, Was not David under the Law? Outwardly, yes. That is, the Law was the external method of a gracious God in dealing with the Jewish nation. You say, Were not sin-offerings and trespass-offerings prescribed? Yes, as you read

in Leviticus 4:22 ff:

"When a ruler sinneth, and doeth unwittingly any one of all the things which Jehovah His God hath commanded not to be done, and is guilty; if his sin, wherein he hath sinned, be made known to him, he shall bring for his oblation a goat, a male without blemish. And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the goat, and kill it ... it is a sin-offering."

But David did not do this; instead he went directly to God: "Have mercy upon me, O God," he asked, "according to Thy loving-kindness,:"

(Not according to the principles of the Law, but according to the realities of His own Being).

"According to the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions." (Ps. 51:1).

Then he said, "For Thou delightest not in sacrifice; else would I give it: Thou hast no pleasure in burnt-offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: A broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise." (Ps. 51:16-17).

This we find revealed in Psalm 40:6-8, quoted in Hebrews 10:5-7:

5 Wherefore when He cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, But a body didst Thou prepare for Me;*

*There is something exquisitely beautiful in this quotation in Hebrew: "Sacrifice and offering Thou hast no delight in; Ears hast Thou pierced for Me;" (R.V., margin.) This is the fulfillment by our blessed Lord of Ex. 21:6, the very first "ordinance" after the Law was given; where the "Hebrew bondman" so delights in his master that he says, "I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free"--when he might go out free at the seventh year.

"Then his master shall bring him unto God (or, the judges) and shall bring him to the door, or unto the door-post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him forever" (Ex. 21:5-6).

This is the very spirit of what our Lord chose to do, and wonderful to relate, in passing Out Ps. 40 into the Greek language, reaching all the earth (the Septuagint was translated about 270-285 B.C.--Angus), the Spirit of God, Who watched over His Word (Jer. 1:12), saw to it that the type as here set before us in its fulfillment, so that Christ's prophetic word, "Ears hast Thou digged for Me," becomes in the book of Hebrews, translated into Greek (quoting the Septuagint), "A body didst Thou prepare for Me." (Nearly all godly and scholarly commentators on Hebrews state that Paul invariably, in quoting O.T., used the Septuagint. See Angus, Alford, Stuart, etc.)

6 In whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hadst no pleasure:

7 Then said I, Lo, I am come (in the roll of the book it is written of Me) To do Thy will, O God.

What a discovery David made! This was not David's "breaking the Law." It was his going to the very spirit of God's will, casting himself as guilty on a God of mercy. David knew grace perhaps better than any Old Testament saint. You remember how the Lord Jesus referred the legalistic Jews to his (David's) eating the show, bread which our Lord said was "not lawful for him to eat, neither for them that were with him, but only for the priests" (Matt. 12:1-4).

This brings us face to face with an overwhelming fact: that the Law was not that in the fulfillment of which God trusted; nor in the sacrifices of which as such (but only as types of Christ) He delighted. (How frightful is the wickedness of those who speak of Jehovah as "delighting in the slaughterhouse," and thus reject the sacrifice of Christ for their sins! These will shortly answer direct to Him Who said, He "delighteth not in sacrifice" (Ps. 51:16); and Heb. 10:5, Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not. Blood sacrifices were necessary, we repeat. But how hateful for men, creatures to whom God gives life and breath and all things, walking through a world of beauty created by a loving God Who cares daily for all His creatures,--how hideous that bits of selfish, guilty, condemned dust, should call true Christianity "a slaughterhouse religion"!)

It will not be under Law that His saints will be before Him in the New Jerusalem, in eternity! But "They shall see His face; and His name shall be on their foreheads." We were "chosen in Him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blemish before Him IN LOVE"--not under Law!

* But there seems no hope of turning Christendom back from the "other gospel" (Gal. 1:8) which has brought in the Law as a "rule of life," daring to rob it of its power to curse, but professing that its enactments are God's final method of governing His people: "giving them power through the Spirit to keep it." But all this is a falsehood. God says that even those who were under the Law were made dead to it by the body of Christ-made-sin (on the Cross) that they might be "joined to Another, even to Him Who was raised from the dead"--with what effect? "that we might bring forth fruit unto God ... So that we serve in newness of the Spirit." in happy freedom, "and not in oldness of the letter" (Rom. 7:4-6). "A new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit: for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life" (2 Cor. 3:6).

Let us be instructed: If David, who was outwardly under Law, discerned that animal sacrifice did not delight God; if he threw himself upon the mercy of God, what shall be said about us, if we do not obey the "Let us draw near" of Hebrews 4:16, 7:19, 10:22 since Christ the Son of God has come and put away sin by His infinite sacrifice, and God commands us to draw near, relying upon His shed blood, because the veil is rent, and Christ our Great High Priest is there? Dare you say, I am not worthy? Was Christ offered for worthy people? A thousand shames upon such nigh-blasphemous unbelief!

Heb 10:7: Then said I, Lo, I am come (In the roll of the book it is written of Me) To do Thy will, O God.

Here is summed up our Lord's blessed work.

First, Then said I, Lo, I am come--Here is the Creator entering the world, as Gabriel said to Mary, "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall keep overshadowing thee."

God the Father prepared our Lord a body by the Holy Spirit's power. Nonetheless Deity, He is there in the manger, having entered the creation He created. And His eye is ever toward the Father Who sent Him. These words, Lo, I am come, are addressed after His birth to His Father.

Second, In the roll of the book it is written of Me--Ah, that Scripture! How infinitely dear to our blessed Lord! Unto this blessed "roll of the book" God wakened Him "morning by morning ... to hear" (Isa. 50:4-6). Even at last, on the Cross, "Jesus knowing that all things are now finished, that the Scripture might be accomplished, saith, I thirst" (John 19:28).

Third, To do Thy will, O God: Take the four Gospels, upon your first opportunity, and find and mark our Lord's constantly repeated testimony that He "came to do the will of Him that sent Him." Over and over He told His disciples that He was going up to Jerusalem to be crucified and the third day be raised from the dead. Triumphantly, just before His ascension He said, "These are My words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the Law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms, concerning Me" (Lk. 24:44).

Had He not said as He was going up to Jerusalem, "I have meat to eat that ye know not ... My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to accomplish His work"? (John 4:32, 34).

Heb 10:8-9: Now comes the Divine application of this precious passage: Saying above, Sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou wouldst not, neither hadst pleasure therein (the which are offered according to the Law), then hath He said, Lo, I am come to do Thy will. Here are the four classes of offerings enumerated, with the amazing statement that God did not desire them or have pleasure in them: though from Moses to Christ they were offered according to the Law. However much God might delight in the loving subjection of the offerer, yet no offering whatever was in itself His delight, except as pointing to Calvary.

For example, you need a load of wood: you go to your wood man, and he takes you to a large oak tree in the far corner of the lot. Pointing to the long shadow it casts, he offers to sell you this shadow. Will you take it? Now, if God says that in the Law there was a shadow, not even the very image of the things--and, of course, not the things themselves, why will you hold to the shadow? Yet Reformation theology does so, alas!

How wonderfully clear in this epistle is God's repeated declaration that the old Levitical things, yea, the whole Law, had been supplanted:

In Hebrews 7:18-19 it is, "There is a disannulling of a foregoing commandment (for the Law made nothing perfect)."

In Hebrews 8:6 it is, "He is also the Mediator of a better covenant, which hath been enacted upon better promises." In verse 13: "In that He saith, A new covenant, He hath made the first old. But that which is becoming old and waxeth aged is nigh unto vanishing away."

In Hebrews 9:9-10, "gifts and sacrifices" offered according to the first tabernacle, "cannot, as touching the conscience, make the worshiper perfect, being ... carnal ordinances, imposed until a time of rectification."

Heb 10:9, continued: He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second: Note here that "the first," the sacrifices "offered according to the Law," must be "taken away," before "the second," Christ's infinite sacrifice, can be "established," for God Himself gave the Law and the Levitical code, with its sacrifices. Now if Christ is to come with His one infinite sacrifice for sin--if that be God's will, then the other, the multiplied sacrifices, must disappear. "The first" must here mean all the Law economy, as we read in Hebrews 7:18-19, "A disannulling of a foregoing commandment (the Law) ... and a bringing in thereupon of a better hope." For Christ, and Christ alone, must perform God's will. His work is, therefore, the "second" thing of the verse we are studying, Hebrews 10:9.

Therefore, to sum up this most important verse, two matters stand out: first, as over against the oft-repeated sacrifices of verse 8, Christ had come to do God's will--in this place, as to sacrifice. Second, that the first (Levitical system of sacrifices) was taken away, that He may establish the second.

Note then that it is not the devotion to God's will, abstractly considered, blessed as that is, that is here in view; but that express will of God by which Christ was offered up on the Cross. Consequently, we come to Heb 10:10, which (along with Heb 10:14), must be studied by us with the greatest attention:

Heb 10:10: By which will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all: The moment we come to the word "sanctified," the holy life of the believer comes to mind. But this meaning is not possible here. For, the statement is, We have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all--not through the operation of the Holy Spirit, nor through consecration or devotion, but as the result of Christ's work for us.

* Concerning the word for "sanctify" (hagiadzein), Thayer well says: "Since the stamp of sacredness passes over from the holiness of God to whatever has any connection with God, hagiadzein denotes to separate from things profane, and dedicate to God."

The word is even twice used in 1 Cor. 7:14 concerning the unbelieving husband "Sanctified" by the wife--and the unbelieving wife "sanctified" in the husband. That is, God regards the home of such ones as--as we would Say--"Christian,"—entirely different from a wholly unbelieving home. This was not, of course, because of any operation of the Spirit in either the unbelieving husband or unbelieving wife.

"Sanctified," then, in Hebrews means set apart to God wholly, not referring to our "surrender" or "consecration" or action of the Holy Spirit within us, 1 Thess. 5:23, 2 Thess 2:13; and 1 Pet. 1:2, where believers are seen as "elect ...according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ."

We see in these words of 1 Pet. 1:2, that the blood of sprinkling and the sanctifying of the Spirit are distinct, connected with different persons of the Trinity. We are born of the Spirit; baptized by the Spirit into the Body of Christ; indwelt by the Spirit; filled with the Spirit, and are to walk by the Spirit, Who by His indwelling power "cleanses our hearts by faith." But sanctification in Hebrews is looked at as the effect of Christ's death, on account of which God counts anyone believing the gospel and confessing Christ's name as cut off from the world, separated to Him.

This (as compare Thayer, above) was what was meant of old when God said, "Whatsoever toucheth the altar shall be holy." The character of the object was not changed, but its relation to God was changed.

(Alas people thus professing and confessing may afterward turn their back, indeed, as do those in Heb. 10:29, rejecting the Christian position, and refusing to regard longer as of infinite worth, the blood of Christ, "the blood of the covenant wherewith they were "sanctified" as the one thing that separates to God).

Christ will need to make no further offering! We are completely, eternally, gloriously separated to God. This peculiar result of Christ's one offering should be emphasized to every believer at the very beginning, as Paul says to the Corinthians, "Ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body" (1 Cor. 6:19-20). The recognition of this separating to God not only brings rest and untold blessing to the believer, but is the only attitude of soul consistent with the facts. For Christ said, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." Through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all, we were, the "sanctified," or separated to God: for, the shedding of His blood took away all our sin and guilt; and, being identified with Him, Who was made to be sin on our behalf, we died with Him; and since He died unto sin and now lives to God, we also are commanded to do so, since He is our Adam, and what happened to Him belongs to us: "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 6:2, 6, 10, 11). For we were cut off from the human race in Adam, at the Cross; and created in Christ Risen, the Second Man, the Last Adam. This is true of all believers and of all those who are in Christ.

We shall see that in Heb 10:14, which is plainly to be connected with verse 10, it is emphasized further that by one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified--separated unto God. This can have no reference to our "growth in grace," which belongs, as we have seen, to the operation of the blessed Spirit. Perfected forever must therefore refer to the absoluteness of the effect of Christ's work on the Cross: both in respect of the putting away of our guilt and defilement through His blood; and the removal of sins from our persons forever, in His death, which separated us unto God. That work, has "perfected" us forever, inasmuch as we are one with Christ before God, as we have seen. There is no difference in this respect between one saint and another: there cannot be, since all are in Christ.

11 And every priest indeed standeth day by day ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, the which can never take away sins:

12 but He, when He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God;

13 henceforth expecting till His enemies be made the footstool of His feet.

14 For by one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.

In this passage we have seven elements: (1) The standing priests. (2) The day-by-day repeated sacrifices, utterly unable to take away sins. (3) Christ's offering one sacrifice for sins forever. (4) His sitting down on the right hand of God. (5) His "expecting" His coming triumph over His foes in His millennial kingdom. (6) The inspired witness of the Holy Spirit to Christ's blessed work, No more offering for sin (Heb 10:18). (7) His one offering perfected the saints forever!

The central words in all this passage are one sacrifice, expecting, perfected, sat down. We draw especial attention to the words sat down. A seated priest argues a completed work.

* Contrast the blasphemous performances of the Romish "priests": you never heard one of them preaching on the finished work of Christ, the One Sacrifice, and our Lord's session at God's right hand in view of it. But there is always some so-called "priestly" activity on the part of these Judaeo-pagan pope-appointed "priests." They are always standing gabbing in Latin, an unknown tongue; or fiddling about their Satanic invention of the "unbloody sacrifice of the Mass."

Scripture (Rev. 1:5) gives glory unto our blessed Lord thus: "Unto Him that loved us, and loosed us from our sins by His blood; and He made us to be a kingdom, to be Priests unto His God and Father; to Him be the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

Yea, all believers are priests, and this only is Scriptural.

The Pope-appointed "priests" make "signs" of the Cross, but never preach the work of Christ finished there!

Heb 10:12: But He when He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God--It is offering up once

for all that is of eternal consequence. It is important to translate this central verse as do both the King James and the Revised Version, that is, the Greek words meaning "for ever" (eis to dienekes), are to be taken with the preceding verb, "offered," rather than with the following verb, "sat down."

But on the other hand, if we allow the phrase translated "for ever" to modify offered one sacrifice, and read offered one sacrifice for ever, all is clear. (We have in this tenth Hebrews three of the four occurrences in N.T. of this remarkable phrase, eis to dienekes: Heb 10:1, 12, 14. The fourth in Hebrews 7:3.) Christ sat down on the right hand of God. Why? Read godly Andrew Murray's note (and others), quoted below; and mark its spiritual understanding:

By One offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified (vs. 14). The once of Christ's work is the secret of its being forever: the more clear the acceptance of that Divine once-for-all, the more sure the experience of that Divine forever, the continually abiding working of the power of the endless life.

"Once and forever: see how the two go together in the work of Christ in its two principal manifestations. In His death, His sacrifice, His bloodshedding, it is once for all. The propitiation for sin, the bearing and the putting away of it, was so complete that of His suffering again, or offering Himself again, there can never be any thought. God now remembers the sin no more forever."--Murray.

"The sacrifice was efficacious forever, through all time, being appropriated by each believer (vs. 14). The connection of eis to dienekes with the following ekathisen (forever sat down), is contrary to the usage of the Epistle; it obscures the idea of the perpetual efficacy of Christ's one sacrifice; it weakens the contrast with esteken; and it imports a foreign idea into the image of the assumption (ekathisen) of royal dignity by Christ.--Westcott.

"'Forever'; construe with 'offered'. The reason appears in vs. 14. It is according to the age of the epistle to place this phrase after that which it qualifies. Thus one sacrifice forever is contrasted with the same sacrifices often. This agrees also with what follows. He offered one sacrifice forever, and then sat down awaiting its eternal result."--Vincent

In Heb 10:13, we find Him henceforth expecting till His enemies be made the footstool of His feet. But this, according to all prophecy, was to follow His one sacrificial work--as it will indeed--and, we today believe, follow swiftly.

Heb 10:14: For by one offering He hath perfected (in standing) forever them that are sanctified (made to be saints): When the heart realizes that sin has all been put away forever, the conscience becomes "perfected," in the language of Hebrews 10:1, 14, and then, and not until then, does the thought of an ever-continuing High Priest become a delight. (See again comment on vs. 14 under vs. 10).

*A "perfect" conscience in Hebrews does not mean that of a perfected, or fullgrown, believer. A babe in Christ might learn that his sins had been put forever away: he might believe the Word of God in 1 Pet. 2:24: "Who His own self bare our sins in His body upon the Tree"; he would have many things to learn, and indeed he might be at that time in ignorance doing that with which God was not pleased. But that is not the question. The minute he should see that Christ bore his sins and by His blood put them away before God, his conscience would be at rest.

**Heb 10:15 And the Holy Spirit also beareth witness to us; for after He hath said,
16 This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord: I will but My laws on their heart, And upon their mind also will I write them; then saith He,
17 And their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.
18 Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.**

In Heb 10:15-17 above we find again the verses from Jeremiah quoted in Hebrews 8:10-12. They are quoted also as the direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit to Hebrew believers: The Holy Spirit also beareth witness to us. (This word "witness," by the way, is the most direct reference to the work of the Holy Spirit in the believer in all Hebrews).

Heb 10:16: This is the covenant that I will make with them--See Hebrews 8 for comment on the covenants.

Verse 17, The application that is made of Jeremiah's prophecy in this connection is, to insist that since God said: And their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more, therefore, (vs. 18) Where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin. How utterly wonderful are these words! The infinitely holy God, Who knows all about all human sins and iniquities, Who alone saith of man, "I know their thoughts," declares to His saints, I will remember (your) sins and iniquities no more! Surely all things are possible with God! Certainly, then, There is no more offering for sin! Sins have been remitted, remembered no more forever!

Verse 18: In the words, No more offering for sin, we reach the conclusion of the doctrinal part of this great epistle to the Hebrews. Would it might sink into the heart of every reader that the only offering for sin that will ever be made has been made on the Cross, and can be rested in by any willing heart! From the "Now once at the consummation of the ages hath He been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (Hebrews 9:26) follow on to the "Once offered to bear the sins of many" (Hebrews 9:28), and to

"The offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Hebrews 10.10), "One Sacrifice for sins forever" (10. 12), "By one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified" (vs. 14), down to verse 18. There is no more offering for sin! The soul that leans or rests on that ONE OFFERING will spend eternity in the delights of Heaven!

I

Since Hebrews is an epistle of exhortation, and in Heb 10:19-25 of this chapter we have the great central exhortation, the consideration of this next passage becomes most important:

**Hebrews 10:19 Having therefore brethren, boldness to enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus,
20 by the way which He dedicated for us, a freshly-slain and living way, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh;
21 and having a Great Priest over the house of God;
22 let us draw near with a true heart in fullness of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience: and having our body washed with pure water,
23 let us hold fast the confession of our hope that it waver not; for He is faithful that promised:
24 and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works;

25 not forsaking our own assembling together, as the custom of some is, but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day drawing nigh.**

Three things we have: (1) Boldness to enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus (vs. 19); (2) A freshly-slain and living way through the veil, that is to say, His flesh (vs. 20); (3) A Great Priest over the House of God (vs. 21).

Five things we are to do: (1) Draw near, (2) Hold fast confession, (3) Consider one another, (4) Assemble together, (5) Exhort one another (Heb 10:22-25).

Having a Great Priest over the house of God, LET US DRAW NEAR--

It is into the presence of God, as God, that believers are invited to come with boldness. Our own salvation is, of course, the first thing; and next come love and service toward Him Who saved us: publishing the good tidings to all whom we should reach. Third, we become occupied with God's plan of salvation, doctrinally; and if we are instructed aright, we learn to expect the coming again of the Lord from Heaven, to rapture His Body, the Church, and to sit upon His millennial throne in Jerusalem.

But all these things may be true of us without our entering into that worship into which Hebrews introduces us. To have boldness to enter into the Holiest ... draw near with a true heart in fullness of faith, involves an active godliness which superficial study of the Scriptures may not beget in us. How many saints do we know, who, when they pray, carry us with them into the very presence of God? But Christ is there, maintaining forever that character set forth in verse 20: the Way which He dedicated for us, a FRESHLY-SLAIN* AND LIVING WAY. (Freshly-slain, R.V.: "new": (Gr., *prosfatos*): "Properly, lately slaughtered (Thayer.) "The original sense would be, 'newly slain.' ... Later the word was weakened into 'new'. "--Vincent.)

It is eternally as if just now He had borne our sins in His own body on the Tree, as if just now He had said, "It is finished," and the soldier had pierced His side and there had come forth blood and water. He is evermore freshly-slain. Not, mark it, slain anew, but there before God Who inhabiteth eternity, as His Lamb provided in His infinite love, and just now slain! How shall a sinner then dare be filled longer with terror of God? God's eyes are on His Son perpetually as upon a Lamb just slain, Who has just now put away sin.

"My God is reconciled,
His pardoning voice I hear.
He claims me as His child,
I can no longer fear.
With confidence I now draw nigh
And Father, Abba, Father, cry."

It will not do for us to stop at the Cross where Christ shed His blood for our sins, and where we have peace through that blood, security from Divine judgment. For the blood of Christ has a heavenly ever-present power and efficacy connected with our acceptance and worship, and this is the peculiar message of Hebrews. If we do not become worshipers really occupied with the things of God, with the praises as well as prayers which the blood of Christ has made a delight to God, at which Heaven wonders and worships, this great Epistle to the Hebrews has failed to reach our hearts. For the immediate presence of the all-holy God, Whose Name is LOVE, is where Christ is now sitting; whither every true believer is going; and into which, by the principle of faith, every believer is exhorted to enter with boldness.*

* I have frequently asked an audience of believers, "How many Of YOU want to go to Heaven?"

All hands go up Then I Put another question: "How many of you want to go to Heaven today?" A silence falls, and then here and there goes up a hand of some one whose earthly hopes have died out and to whom the world has become weary. They want to go to Heaven, for they are through with earth. The rest want to go eventually, but as I have often said to Florida audiences "You want to go to Heaven when You have to, but you want to stay in Florida as long as you can!"

But is this to be the spirit of the saints in the book of Hebrews? No, a thousand times No! On the contrary God says, Come near, enter boldly, now, today! And not as with Levitical Priests of old, for a brief tarrying for prescribed worship but to abide forever. For we read in the last chapter "Through Him (Jesus) let us offer up a sacrifice of praise to God continually" (Heb 13:15).

And if people "neglect," or "doubt," or "refused" to draw nigh to God in Heaven, into the Presence of God as a worshiper now--what is that? It is an insult against God Himself, against His holy Being (which was satisfied by the blood of His Son); against His infinite love (which was shown in the free gift of that Son to die); against His righteousness, against His majesty--as the Judge of all; against His truth--for unbelief makes Him a liar! Unbelief is the root sin.

Since the death Of the Son of God, which in its value utterly Put away sin before God, there have been no degrees of standing for those who rely on Christ's shed blood. It is not, as in the old tabernacle, a place into which the People can come, and then the priests, and finally, the high priest, once a year, into the Holy of Holies, the very presence of God. Whether believers realize it or not, the full value of the blood of Christ is reckoned to them by God. They are invited to come into God's immediate presence. All believers are so, here in Hebrews.

Through the veil, that is to say, His flesh--"The Word was made flesh, and tabernacled among us," wrote John. But no one as yet came in before God in Heaven. "The way into the holiest was not yet made manifest" (Heb. 9:8). But when our Lord was pierced, when He poured out His blood, laid down that life (which was indeed His blood--Lev. 17:11), and was raised up, through and in that pierced flesh--behold! the veil was gone! Was not sin gone? Yes, by the blood of Jesus. Was not He the Son of God? Yea, indeed, yet He was man: "See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself." Were we "made nigh unto God"? Yes, in Christ's blood. And His pierced flesh proves all this to our hearts, and lo: we are before the throne of grace in Heaven! So we enter into the Holies (1) by the blood of Jesus, (2) by the newly slain and living way, (3) through the veil ... His flesh, and (4) we have Him as our Great Priest over the house of God.

* "The Way must be opened, for every other way is closed. Through the veil: the veil of the Holy of Holies is rent. Christ's work does not stop short of the believer's complete access to God Himself, through the veil, which consisted in His flesh. His flesh was the state through which He had to pass before He entered Heaven for us. The veil of the temple was rent. He passed through humanity to glory as the Forerunner of His people."--Vincent, Word Studies in the N.T., pp.499-500, Vol. IV.

* On the Cross, upon our Lord's death, the veil of the temple, we know, was rent in two from the top (God's side) to the bottom. This was the veil within which the high priest of Israel was permitted to enter once a year on the Great Day of Atonement. It witnessed this: that Israel, by the whole Levitical ceremony, was shut out from God's immediate presence. But what was signified by the rending of it? First, that which separated man from God's immediate presence was gone. Second, any religious rites, ceremonies, observances, would constitute a rebuilding of the barrier between man and God, and therefore a denial of the rent veil, and a rejection of our Lord's word, "It is finished." Third, all official priesthood is by the rent veil denied. There is no such thing! All believers are alike priests, and our Lord is the one Great High Priest above.

Therefore all human "religion" has become an insult to God, a denial of Christ's finished work, a turning away from grace back to legal things, a refusal to draw near with a true heart, relying on the shed blood of Christ and on His presence as our Great High Priest. God's dear Son is seated at His right hand in all the acceptance of His perfect sacrifice. There is no cessation, day or night, in the delight God has in Christ and His work. But down on earth, people are "observing sabbaths" (despite Col. 2:17); abstaining from certain meats, or from all meats on certain days; "going to church" as a "religious" duty; even going to "the confessional," to a "priest." Others are glorying in men, in "Doctor" this or that, in "my church"--all which things are contrary to Scripture, subversive of the truth, and dishonoring to God. For they ignore the Great High Priest and the heavenly worship being carried on in the Spirit, and the "access" to God's throne which is continually exhorted in this great book of Hebrews.

But there came a time in A.D. 70 when God had Titus burn the temple of the Jews and destroy Jerusalem, having warned the saints to flee the city (Lk. 21:20,24)--a warning which history tells us they obeyed. So also will it be with those today who either indifferently or presumptuously keep on with things God says are done away. He will by and by deal with such inattention and disobedience. (It may be in such a manner as will leave the objects of His dealings quite unconscious of it! We have seen People deeply exercised for awhile by some spiritual question, only to have that exercise fade away; an awful state!) Of course, God looks at the heart: where there is true grace and devotion to Himself, He puts up with "religious" performances, though an abhorrence to Him. God is patient and loving, but He is a God Who can say even yet, "Ephraim is joined to His idols; let him alone." Thus it seems to be with most of Laodicean Christendom. How awful to step into eternity self-deluded!

And having a Great Priest over the house of God--Let us remember that in our worship, we being the house of God over which Christ our Great Priest now is, we do not pray to the priest, but instead, He leads our worship to God as God. (It is not true to say, as do some, that Christ's work as Priest in Heaven did not begin until after His resurrection, for it includes (1) His praying for His own before His death, as the wondrous prayer of John 17; and the particular watching of Lk. 22:31: "Simon, Simon, I have made

supplication for thee." (2) the "offering up of Himself once for all"; (3) His intercessory work in Heaven for those who are passing through this world; and (4) His leading the praises of God's people, and declaring God's Name, for all eternity.) How foreign to all things, on the Day of Atonement when Israel gathered about the tabernacle, would have been a prayer to the priest! The great fact that their priest had gone in beyond the second veil, representing them, was before their mind. To begin to pray to the priest would have been to indict his fidelity to the people.

A prophet came from God to the people: he represented God; he was on God's side. Contrariwise, a priest went in for the people to God. He was on the people's side; he represented the people. So Christ also, having "obtained eternal redemption," is now a Great Priest over the house of God. As we have seen, it is by the will of God that He came to offer Himself: therefore we trust God, and know that Christ is on our side, appointed so by God. He is committed to our case; He is our Priest. As Son He is God; as man, He is Priest. We beseech you, receive this glorious fact, and walk in it by simple faith. He will not cease from being God, and High Priest, forever. (He is God's Christ [not our Christ, as I have heard excellent saints, in testimony or prayer, speak of Him]; He is our Saviour, our Lord, and in His full name. He is our Lord Jesus Christ [in which, Lord governs the expression.]) Get this great matter firmly established in your conscience, laying hold of it for yourself. Then follows fellowship, as it is written, "We have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin." There is no fellowship, we believe, in this universe, such as is enjoyed by believers who are resting, individually and thus as a company, upon the Person and work of our Great Priest over the house of God.

Now, why a Priest? Let me ask in answer, Would you like to go into the presence of God as an independent one—redeemed indeed by the blood of Christ, but set free to go on your own way forever? You know you would not if you are one of God's own. Your union with Christ forbids such a thought. And His revealed priestly work draws the heart. Weaklings are we, passing through a world over which Satan is still the prince, and living in an age of which he is the god—in a world that has not changed since it joined in the cry against Christ: "Crucify Him!" Do we not need help? Ah, we need nothing else! "I can do nothing of myself," cries the apostle; "I glory in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (2 Cor. 12:9). Yes, we need a Priest, and we have a Priest, thank God, a Great Priest over the house of God (vs. 21).

* We might do well to sum up here Christ's varied relations to us: (1) Redeemer (Sin-Bearer); (2) Life (Risen) we have in Him; (3) Our membership in His Body, of which He is the Head, our being "built up" in Him; (4) He is the Giver of the Holy Spirit, and through Him Bestower of "gifts" (as, evangelists, pastors, teachers, apostles, prophets) to His Church: Eph. 4:8-12; compare 1 Cor. 12:4, 28, (5) LORD: Rom. 14:9, John 13:13-14, Col. 3:24, Eph. 6:6, 7. This includes His Lordship over each individual believer, and also His direction of the service and affairs of the Assembly. (6) Great High Priest in Heaven; (7) The coming King according to Heb. 10:13.

Let us mark, however, that we do not serve Him as Priest: He serves us. We are not directed to come to Him as Priest, but to God's throne of grace, relying on Christ's shed blood, and having Him as Great Priest over the house of God.

You and I do not need to "get God on our side." He is already on our side! We may say boldly with Paul, "God is for us." He spared not His own Son: "how shall He not with Him freely give us all things?" So we come directly to the throne of God, having a Great Priest over the house of God. In "things pertaining to God" He still "appears before the face of God for us."

"There is an eye that never sleeps
Beneath the wing of night;
There is an ear that never shuts
When sink the beams of light."

Now the five things we are to do, as outlined on page 344:

1. Hebrews 10:22: Let us draw near:

(a) With a true heart—"The heart is deceitful above all things." Millions pray, even using the Name of the Lord Jesus and speaking of His sacrifice, whose hearts are not true. Repentance of sin has not broken them up. "A broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise." A true heart does not mean a heart that trusts in itself, but one which genuinely comes to a holy God.

(b) In full assurance of faith—This does not mean that there will be no consciousness of unworthiness, but rather, a confidence in a faithful God, Who is sure to bless one who is trusting in the shed blood of Christ.

(c) Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience—This is a beautiful picture of the same deliverance as in Hebrews 9:14: "The blood of Christ, Who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish unto God, cleanseth our conscience from dead works to serve the Living God." And we are told in Hebrews 12:24 that "we are come to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better than Abel." True faith brings about this Divine action of "sprinkling," that is, of so appropriating the effect of the blood of Christ shed on our behalf as to relieve our burdened consciences because we see that our sins have been laid on our Substitute. There is no other deliverance from an evil conscience (that is, a conscience that is accusing us). God "sprinkles" such believing hearts by reckoning to them the value and power of Christ's shed blood; and the heart has rest.

Nearly forty times, beginning with Exodus 29:16: "Thou shalt slay the ram, and thou shalt take its blood, and sprinkle it round about upon the altar," this word "sprinkle" in the Old Testament describes the application of the blood of the typical sacrifice. Writing as he was to Hebrews, Paul addressed their vivid consciousness of the meaning of "sprinkle"—to apply "the blood of sprinkling," with

faith, in obedience to God's directions. This faith is illustrated in Hebrews 11:28: "By faith he (Moses) kept the passover, and the sprinkling of the blood, that the destroyer of the firstborn should not touch them." Peter illustrates the use of the word in Hebrews in the expression: "Unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 1:2). (Note that Paul, in his epistles to the Gentiles, does not use this word.) Thus are fulfilled the types of Leviticus 4 and the Great Day of Atonement (Lev. 16), which spoke of the sprinkling of the blood--though of course repeated then, time after time. Both sprinkling and washing with water are illustrated in the consecration of Aaron and his sons (Lev. 8:6, 24).

And having our body washed with pure water--We believe that 1 Peter 3:21, as well as the necessary spiritual application of washed with pure water, forbids the interpretation of this expression as water baptism. The water washing of the body is not "baptism," for Peter, as noted above, says, "Which after a true likeness doth now save you, even baptism, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God." Also, the baptism of a believer is just as real when he is immersed in muddy water in a stream or pool, as when the water is clear!

Ridout well says: "The body washed with pure water speaks of the sanctifying work of the Spirit in the new birth; and also, of the practical cleansing in connection with the daily life of the priests."--Ridout, page 204.

2. Hebrews 10:23: Let us hold fast the confession of our hope-- * The Greek word here, *krateo*, built from the word meaning force, strength, indicates a holding fast against foes, a fight of faith on earth. For there were many indeed that would rob the Hebrew believer of his heavenly faith and hope, and destroy his confession of them; just as indeed with all believers: such foes as Satan, the world, worldly Christians, the earthly church-system, false friends. So Paul says to us: "If Ye then were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth" (Col. 3:1-2) The beginning of Christian warfare, indeed, the essence of it, we have here!

Here we have again what is constantly urged upon believers--the public confession of our hope in our Lord. This was set forth in Luke 12:8: "Every one who shall confess Me before men, him shall the Son of Man also confess before the angels of God"; and in Romans 10:9-10: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved: for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

It is especially emphasized in Hebrews 13:15: "Let us offer up a sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of lips which make confession to His Name."

That it waver not--How wonderful has been the constancy and boldness of the many saints recorded in Scripture: Abraham, Moses, Samuel, David, Daniel and the prophets, and the apostles in the Acts!

For He is faithful that promised: The great preventive of wavering is remembering that He is faithful that promised. Our hope is built upon the faithfulness of God, and not in any wise upon anything in ourselves.

3. Hebrews 10:24: Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works: You say, Consider one another to provoke, is strange language for Christian guidance. Yes, brother, if we turn to human reasoning and practice, there is plenty of considering others--their faults, their failures, in merciless criticism, which provokes. But this passage reads, To provoke unto love and good works. How can we provoke one another unto love? By loving others, constantly and tenderly. They will find it out, and will be provoked to return love! The same is true concerning good works. We provoke others to good works by constant good works toward them. As I look back through the years, my heart lights upon one and another, and another, whose tender love and constant goodness "Provoked" me, "provoked" everyone to imitate them.

4. Hebrews 10:25: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves--as Christians--This speaks of an assembling together which is remarkably designated as our own (R.V.), or that peculiar to us, Greek *heauton*--an assembling belonging to our very own selves. (*heauton*: This is an emphatic word in this verse. it is thus used in Matt. 8:22, "Let the dead bury their own (*heauton*) dead." So Christians have their Own assembling. There is no thought in Scripture of an assembly of "Hebrew-Christians," as some have dreamed. Such an assembling would build up again the "middle wall of partition" (Eph. 2:14) which Christ "brake down," fill Hebrew believers with legal pride, and end in the rejection of all Paul's gospel.) Since there is a real presence of the Spirit in the whole Body of Christ, as well as His individual indwelling of each believer, this assembling of themselves as believers becomes both the channel of blessing and the protection against apostasy.

The custom of some was to "forsake" this Christian gathering, whether from indifference, fear, ignorance, or self-centeredness. Our own assembling together does not demand a large or outwardly important company: "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name"--we know the promise. The Name in which and unto which we gather characterizes our own assembling. The book of Hebrews does not enter upon what the Assembly of God is, as over against what the Hebrew nation was,--and some day will be, except to say that those written of were "partakers of the heavenly calling." And it is remarkable that even here the gathering together of believers should thus be insisted upon.

Note how continual it was in the early Church, as the quotations from Acts in the footnote show.

* "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship in the breaking of bread and the prayers" (Ac 2:42).

"And all that believed were together ... and day by day, continuing steadfastly with one accord in the temple" (Ac 2:44, 46).

"Being let go, they came to their own company" (Ac 4:21).

"The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul" (Ac 4:32).

"They were all with one accord in Solomon's porch. But of the rest (outsiders) durst no man join himself to them: howbeit the people magnified them; and believers were the more added to the Lord" (Ac 5:12-14).

"For a whole year they (Paul and Barnabas) gathered together with the assembly ... and the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch" (Ac 11:26).

"Peter, therefore was kept in the prison: but prayer was made earnestly of the Church unto God for him ... He came to the house of Mary, the mother of John ... Where many were gathered together and were praying" (Ac 12:5, 12).

It does not mean turning on the radio! Much as that has been blessed, it is, we are sure, often made an excuse for not going to the trouble of gathering ourselves together. You may say, There is no "denomination" in our community where the Truth is set forth as I know it. That may be so, but if you prayerfully seek, you will find at least two or three who will gather in the Name of the Lord in the simple Christian gathering together meant in the passage here in Hebrews.

5. Hebrews 10:25 Exhorting one another—Our "own gathering together" gives an opportunity to fulfill this word, Exhorting one another; especially in view of the coming of the Lord—so much the more, as ye see the day drawing nigh. Christian exhortation means the expression of our hearts to others to urge them to continue on the Christian path. It may include testimony, and often will necessitate warning. May God make us faithful, not only in our gathering as Christians, but also in exhorting one another, for the day draweth nigh, indeed!

One further remark here: May I say that there is a deadly danger to us in this verse, unless we have this whole hortatory passage, Heb 10:19-25, before us? When we come to the words, Not forsaking our own (Christian) assembling, we may say, "Well, I certainly fulfill this condition, for I assemble with Christians, as a believer, every Lord's Day." And there will be those who may say, "I have given especial attention to this very matter of assembling. I have abandoned all divisions and sects, which I see are contrary to Scripture; I gather only with separated believers who meet to remember the Lord in the breaking of bread, as He instructed us."

But listen again: Having a Great Priest over the house of God, let us draw near—For the worship of God is carried on by the Church of God, by those who, having been cut off from the human race in the death of Christ, are called by Paul in Philippians 3, "The circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God, and have no confidence in the flesh." This worship is defined in Ephesians 2:18: "Through Him (Christ) we both have our access in one Spirit unto the Father." I do not say this to judge my brethren, but I profoundly fear, alas, that there are many who take heed not to forsake the assembling of themselves together after the letter, concerning whom it could not be said that they have drawn near ... into the holy place by the blood of Jesus, and by Christ Himself as their Great Priest, and are worshipping "in the Spirit of God." Is it not so?

Have I made it plain that even "Brethren," gathering in the most careful (and some in the most "exclusive" manner), could miss the great exhortations of this passage to draw near with a true heart, into God's very presence, and really worship "in one Spirit"? If I have not made this plain, sad indeed is my failure.

Hebrews 10:26 For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more a sacrifice for sins,

27 but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and a fierceness (Margin, jealousy) of fire which shall devour the adversaries.

28 A man that hath set at nought Moses' Law dieth without compassion on the word of two or three witnesses:

29 of how much sorer punishment, think ye, shall he be judged worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy (Margin, common) thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?

30 For we know Him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto Me, I will recompense. And again, The Lord shall judge His people.

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

In these verses we have a passage which, like Hebrews 6:4-8, views apostates from that faith which they once professed. No true exposition can account for either Hebrews 6 or Hebrews 10 on any other ground. (The danger is that this great warning in Heb. 10 shall be handed over in our minds to outrageous blasphemers, publicly declared apostates; whereas, all three attitudes here spoken of: toward (a) the Son of God, (b) His sanctifying blood, (c) the blessed Spirit of grace, may be drifted into by those who simply "forsake" Christian assembling. They gradually but really desert and reject Christ within, as did those of Hebrews 6 who "crucified to themselves the Son of God." Such will indeed, by their return to the world, out of which their temporary faith in the word of a kingdom delivered them, go on, though not perhaps boisterously, to put Christ "to an open shame." (He 6:6).)

You will notice that just as in Hebrews 6:4-8 there occur the "better things" people, with the "things that accompany salvation"--though Paul did "thus speak"; so in Hebrews 10:32-35, there is the same sharp distinction. There are those who "endured a great conflict of sufferings" for Christ's sake, who were "made a gazing-stock by reproachers and afflictions," and had fellowship "with them that were so used" (vs. 33). They "had compassion on believers that were in bonds," and "took joyfully the spoiling of their possessions," in the knowledge that they had a "better and abiding possession" (vs. 34). They had "boldness" of faith (vs. 35).

But those in view in Hebrews 10:26-31 were those who, after receiving the knowledge of the truth (vs. 26), and being "enlightened" (compare 6:4 and 10:32), sinned hatefully. For the Greek word for "willfully," ekousios, Thayer defines: "Voluntarily, willingly, of one's own accord: tacitly opposed to sins committed inconsiderately and from ignorance or from weakness." The other occurrence of the word (1 Pet. 5:2) translated "willingly" as over against under constraint, illustrates the situation also. In Hebrews 10:26 there is the absence of that holy "seed" which does not consent to sin, which we see in 1 John 3:9: "Whosoever is begotten of God does not practice sin, because His (God's) seed abideth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God."

* There is reference here to that holy nature which true believers have--they having "become partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world by lust" (2 Pet. 1:4). In 1 John 2:1, "These things write I unto you that you may not sin ... we have an Advocate"--we see the possibility of a true believer's sinning, and the benefit of the Advocate. But the case in 1 John 3 is quite different, as vs. 4 reads: "Every one that practiceth (poion) sin" makes sin his business. This is also the statement of vs. 9, which reads literally, "Every one that has been begotten of God, sin does not practice" (Poiei).

As Dr. Charles F. Deems used to say: "The unregenerate man lives in sin and loves it; the regenerate man may lapse into sin, but he loathes it."

The primary meaning of this verb poieo is "to make, to produce, to form or construct." The producing of sin is not the work of the nature (seed) born of God!

Hebrews 10:26-27: There remaineth no more a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and a fierceness (Margin, jealousy) of fire which shall devour the adversaries:

There is no "adversary" equal to a traitor--one who has enjoyed the privileges he now forsakes and betrays. Nor are we at all questioning the blessed doctrine of the security of Christ's sheep in what we say. Remember that in John's Gospel, both those eternally given by the Father to Christ (17:6, 12), and those who were His disciples for awhile and then "went back and walked no more with Him" (6:66) are seen. There is then a "choosing" by Christ, and an association with Him, which may not mean eternally abiding in Him. So John 6:70 sets forth: "Jesus answered them, Did not I choose you the twelve, and one of you is a devil?"

The eternal choosing is set forth in John 13:18: "I know whom I have chosen: but that the Scripture may be fulfilled. He that eateth My bread lifted up His heel against Me." As He says in His great prayer of John 17:12, "While I was with them, I kept them in Thy name which Thou hast given Me: and I guarded them, and not one of them perished, but the son of perdition; that the Scripture might be fulfilled"--which unutterably solemn necessity is set forth by Peter in Acts 1:15-20. Meditate deeply on this: (The distinction to be noted in John 15 between the two branches, is, the branch that did not bear fruit is "taken away," while the fruit-bearing branch is cleansed "that it may bear more fruit." "Taken away"--whither? To Heaven, certainly, for this one was "taken away," but remained a branch in Christ; while the one in vs. 6 refused to abide in Christ, and therefore "as a branch is cast forth, and is withered," and finally "cast into the fire, and burned.") for inexpressibly solemn are the words, "That he (Judas) might go to his own place" (Acts 1:25). The simpler the protection of your own heart here, the better: remember, "Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37).

We know well that the thought of anyone's "tasting" that eternal life that is in Christ and then falling away, as we saw in Hebrews 6:4-6, is alarming and repugnant to the mind of those who have been accustomed to lax or false teaching of the words of God on the subject of apostasy. It is customary often to dismiss these Hebrews passages with a gesture, saying, "That belongs to the Jews." But indeed it does not: certainly it is spoken directly to Hebrew believers, but the truth taught concerns every believer.

Heb 10:28-29: A man that hath set at nought Moses' Law dieth without compassion on the word of two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, think ye, shall he be judged worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? Here there is a complete setting at naught. This comes out further in the words of verse 29, accounted the blood of the covenant a common thing--the true rendering of the Greek word, koinos.

* Note the use of common in Acts 2:44, 4:32; and of "common and unclean" (Acts 10:14, 28). This ceremonial use of the word "common" occurs, for example, three times in Rom. 14:14. The translation "unholy," occurring in both the King James and the Revised is incorrect, as "unholy" is understood today. Not holy, or, not sacred, would be nearer the thought. To a Hebrew, things and acts were either clean or unclean, ceremonially; unclean meaning "common--not sacred." (See Heb. 10:29, R.V., margin.)

Westcott well says, "The offence (against Moses' Law) is regarded in its isolated completeness: the culprit set at nought Moses' Law. His act was final and decisive."

The King James translation falls so wide of the truth as to be dangerous. For this culprit counted the blood of the covenant wherewith He was sanctified not as an "unclean" thing, but just a common thing, to be disregarded, or forgotten. It is implied that he

had had this revelation of truth, that he knew about the covenant. He had "tasted of the heavenly gift" as in Hebrews 6:4. There is no separation from this world, no life apart from the world, except through faith in Christ. They of Hebrews 10:29, therefore, are they of whom our Lord spake, who "for awhile believe, and in time of temptation fall away" (Lk. 8:13). In connection with such apostates neither is the word "salvation" used, nor "sanctification of the Spirit": salvation is rooted in grace; and the Spirit seals and sanctifies God's elect.

The last clause in verse 29 is, hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace--This word done despite, used only here, is an intensified form of the word translated "to treat shamefully" in Matthew 22:6; "to insult" in Luke 18:32, Acts 14:5, 1Thessalonians 2:2. Bagster's Interlinear renders "insulted"; Thayer, "treated with contumely." Now we may agree that perhaps no form of insult is quite equal to that of ignoring one's presence. Yet considering that these in Hebrews 10 as in Hebrews 6, were "enlightened," and were made "companions" of the Holy Spirit (not sealed as born of God; but companions of His presence and operations, intelligently recognized by them); there must have been noncooperation with the Spirit's influences; then such inward resistance as to render His voice less and less audible; and at last so to make the Spirit's voice entirely unheard that they counted as a common thing the blood of the covenant wherewith, in their previous "enlightenment" and "tasting" and so in their Christian confession, and consequent public setting apart as the Lord's, these persons were sanctified.

* As regards the danger of seeking to solve by our puny minds the mystery of the incarnate Christ--Son Of God, Son of Man--we will simply quote a few passages:

"The blood of Jesus" (Heb. 10:19); "The blood of Christ" (Heb. 9:14); "The blood of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 1:2); "The precious blood of Christ" (1 Pet. 1:19); "The blood Of Jesus His Son" (1 John 1:7, R.V.); "White in the blood of the Lamb" (Rev. 7:14).

But the Lamb is worshiped as God, in Rev. 5:11,14!

Christ is ONE PERSON. He is as truly man as any of us! God prepared for Him a body Heb. 10:5); but it is "the blood of Jesus His Son" that "cleanseth us from all sin." See prayerfully these words in 1 John 1:7.

It is God become man with a body of blood and flesh. He poured out that blood to redeem US! Let your faith rejoice in this.

But woe to those who undertake to explain through their foolish reasoning how this could be! Christ, we repeat, is one Person, both God and man. Here let our hearts rejoice!

It is significant that those in Heb. 10:29 who have trodden under foot the Son of God, have therewith counted the blood of the covenant ... a common thing. Here the Son of God and His shed blood are indissolubly connected!

And finally, in Heb 10:29, we must ponder deeply the solemn question, Of how much sorer punishment, think ye, shall he be judged worthy who hath done the things just enumerated, and which we have just studied? Here is a question submitted to our judgment: How much sorer punishment, think ye? In the case of Moses' Law the glorious appearing and authority on Sinai of Jehovah, "Whose voice then shook the earth," are set at naught. But there was no revelation at Sinai of the heart of God. Yet the commandments were righteous, and the creature knew his obligation, and, setting it at naught, died without compassion.

How much sorer punishment? This one has despised the infinite love of God, Who have His Son; and hath trodden under foot this Son. A bit of rebel dust has counted the blood of the covenant which he once confessed, a common thing--the blood by which he was numbered among the Christians--and hath insulted the Spirit of grace Himself! Remember, "The Father hath given all judgment unto the Son," and this bit of creature dust has despised the bleeding wounds of the Son of God, the Creator! HOW MUCH SORER PUNISHMENT? Who can answer!

Verse 30: For we know Him that said, Vengeance belongeth unto Me, I will recompense. And again, The Lord shall judge His people: The judgments recounted in the Book of The Revelation are awful in character and solemnity; but in the book of Hebrews judicial visitation has a peculiarly personal character, because in Hebrews God is speaking in tenderness "in a Son," and woe to them that will not hear! This personal element in God's punishment of Christ-rejecters you hardly hear mentioned in these days. Even earnest preachers, who do show the danger of "losing the soul", rarely describe the far more fearful thing of meeting an infinite God full of eternal jealousy. But what will it be to face the offended Majesty of the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings? To feel the jealousy of love despised? The penalty of contempt of a court where God is judge of all? To meet the fury that comes upon patience finally exhausted--the infinite hatred of God towards rebels who have finally allied themselves with the sin that God hates? To feel the terrible impotence of finite rebels against infinite aroused wrath? To know the meaning of that word "vengeance" when a Being of infinite power arises bent at last upon revenge?

"Love is strong as death;
jealousy is cruel as Sheol;
The flashes thereof are flashes of fire,
A most Vehement flame of Jehovah!" (S.S. 8:6, R.V., margin).

Those who are forever seeking to do away with a God Who is capable of wrath, and to make void His words, are ready to quote the last part of verse 30, The Lord shall judge His people, and claim that the expression His people must make the verse mean that here God is dealing in "chastening" with His own children. But let us turn to the Old Testament passage (Deut. 32:35, 36) from which the words are quoted:

"Vengeance is Mine, and recompense, At the time when their foot shall slide: For the day of their calamity is at hand, And the things that are to come upon them shall make haste. For Jehovah will judge His people, And repent Himself for His servants."

No one with Scripture open before him will deny that in dealing with His people (Israel), God has done "terrible things in righteousness." Korah, Dathan and Abiram, "these wicked men" (Num. 16:26), were "swallowed up" by the earth, and "went down alive into Sheol." "They perished in the gainsaying of Korah" (Jude 11). Thus God judged His people? Will any claim that those whom the fiery serpents slew (Num. 21:6), or the idolaters who fell by the sword (Ex. 32:28), or the 70,000 who died by the plague when David numbered Israel (2 Sam. 24)--will any claim that these were true children of God, dealt with in chastening? Nay, the wicked of whom we read in the Psalms are, in general, the wicked of Israel. And the very first Psalm says, they "...are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous."

"The righteous," of course, are saved Israelites. Every Israelite "written in the book" (Dan. 12:1); "even every one that is written unto life (R.V., margin) in Jerusalem" (Is. 4:3), by Divine grace, will be among the Remnant that are saved even amid the judgment which then is, raised up to salvation along with the preserved Remnant of Daniel 12:1, which we repeat in full: "At that time thy people (Daniel's people, Israel) shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book."

Therefore the word, The Lord shall judge His people, involves the culling out from His people by His judicial action, in any age, those who profess, but who depart from their confession, even to viewing lightly the salvation purchased by the blood of the covenant, of the Son of God.*

* "The more we examine the cross, the more we shall find how all good and evil found its issue, and how it connects together the consummated evil of man in hatred against God. manifested in Christ in love, the full power of Satan as prince of this world, his hatred against goodness, and audacity against the Lord. Then perfection in man in Christ, and love to the Father, and obedience (and we may thankfully add to us), the double character of love to God: as man upward, and divinely to us. And all this in the very place of sin where it was needed, Christ being made sin. Then in God, perfect righteousness against sin, and perfect love to sinners. All was concentrated in the cross."--J.N. Darby,

For, alas, there are those who "neglect so great a salvation," which means that they do not care. There are those whose souls were never really roused, who, while they professed, remained "sluggish," became "disobedient," and "hardened by the deceitfulness of sin"; who forsook Christian assembling; who became unconcerned that God had made an infinite sacrifice for them. Their lives of sin put "to an open shame" Him they had once confessed. They did not care! (Hush! The streets of Christendom are crowded today with those who do not care! though many of them have heard the story of God's love, all their lives.) But their personal rejection of the Living God will bring on the Personal dealing of the Living God. And what will that be? And for how long?

Heb 10:31: It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God:

In Hebrews 3:12 we saw him with "an evil heart of unbelief" "falling away from the Living God"--that is, from all His gracious offers and operations, but not getting away from His jurisdiction. But here, the apostate falls into the hands--frightful thought! Of the same Living God, now unappeased, unpropitiated, forever! "Be silent, all flesh before Jehovah and hear." "What if God, willing to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much long-suffering vessels of wrath fitted (not by God, but by themselves) unto destruction?" We repeat, four times in Hebrews, THE LIVING GOD appears: twice with reference to the saved, who, with conscience cleansed by Christ's blood, serve Him (Heb 9:14); and who are thus come to "the city of the Living God" (Heb 12:22). And twice as to the lost, who fall away in unbelief from the Living God (Heb 3:12), and who here (10:31), unsaved and unsavable, lost and damned, FALL INTO THE HANDS OF THE LIVING GOD.

We may say regarding these eight words:

1. All men are in the hands of God (a) as the Author of their being: "Of Him are all things"; (b) as the Upholder and universal Provider (see Belshazzar, Dan. 5:23: "In Whose hand thy breath is"; the God-forgetters on Mars Hill: Acts 17:25-28; and Rev. 14:7, the God that made all things); (c) as the Judge, Who has pronounced all men "sinners."

2. But all are, potentially, placed in the protection, in this life, of Christ's sacrifice: "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses" (2 Cor. 5:19).

3. To fall into the hands of the Living God is, therefore, to have resisted His love, refused His salvation, despised the warnings of His Spirit, and to have persisted thus past the point where God can consistently show further grace.

4. It is to fall, therefore, into the hands of Infinite Power, moved by naught but wrath, vengeance, and eternal indignation, into the hands of the LIVING GOD; into the hands of unpropitiated holiness, loaded with unexpiated guilt. Vessels of wrath are they which became fitted for destruction only, upon whom shall be poured out forever and ever infinite, continual vengeance.

* Those vacillating in mind concerning eternal punishment should read some of the great sermons of Jonathan Edwards, probably the greatest mind, and one of the most devoted saints God has given America. (May be obtained from Grace Publications, Inc., 100

West Chicago Ave., Chicago.) God greatly used him around the eighteenth century to arouse this nation to a sense of sin, and to the salvation of untold thousands: we quote: "But know, thou stupid, blind, hardened wretch, that God doth not see, as thou seest with thy polluted eyes: thy sins in His sight are infinitely abominable. Thou knowest that thou hast a thousand and a thousand times made light of the majesty of God. And why should not that majesty, which thou hast thus despised, be manifested in the greatness of thy punishment? Thou hast often heard what a great and dreadful God Jehovah is: but thou hast made so light of it, that thou hast not been afraid of Him. Thou hast not been afraid to sin against Him, not afraid to go on day after day, by thy sins, to provoke Him to wrath, nor to cast His commands under foot, and trample on them. Now why may not God, in the greatness of thy destruction, justly vindicate and manifest the greatness of that majesty which thou hast despised?"

"Thou hast despised the mighty power of God; thou hast not been afraid of it. Now why is it not fit that God should show the greatness of His power in thy ruin? What king is there who will not show his authority in the punishment of those subjects that despise it? and who will not vindicate his royal majesty in executing vengeance on those that rise in rebellion? And art thou such a fool as to think that the great King of Heaven and earth, before Whom all other kings are so many grasshoppers, will not vindicate His kingly majesty on such contemptuous rebels as thou art? Thou art very much mistaken if thou thinkest so. If thou be regardless of God's majesty, be it known to thee, God is not regardless of His own majesty; He taketh care of its honor, and He will vindicate it."

"Jehovah is slow to anger, and abundant in loving-kindness, forgiving iniquity and transgression; and that will by no means clear the guilty" (Num. 14:18).

As the Holy Spirit saith in Nahum 1:2, 6, 7: "Jehovah is a jealous God, and avengeth; Jehovah avengeth and is full of wrath; Jehovah taketh vengeance on His adversaries, and He preserveth wrath for His enemies. Who can stand before His indignation? and who can abide the fierceness of His anger? His wrath is poured out like fire, and the rocks are broken asunder by Him. Jehovah is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and He knoweth them that take refuge in Him."

* "We must be careful to define God's enemies as Scripture defines them. There is much looseness in sermons, hymns, and testimonials concerning these things. Recently we were in an assembly of devoted believers who were singing a hymn in which the line occurred:

"That I, a child of hell, should in His image shine."

Now, all called the children of hell in Scripture will go to hell. Scripture does not call the children of men, by nature children of hell, but calls them "children of wrath" (Eph. 2-4), that is, possessed of a nature against which God's wrath must arise. But Eph. 2:5 is, "But God, being rich in mercy"! There is hope for the children of wrath. To them the gospel is preached. David was born a being who would excite the wrath of God: he said:

"Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity; And in sin did my mother conceive me."

But this does not touch the will. Paul (Rom. 7:7-24) mourned the presence of such a nature in himself, but finally found deliverance from its power (as he had from its guilt) "through Jesus Christ our Lord."

In Matt. 23:15 we read our Lord's words, "Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he is become so, ye make him twofold more a child of hell (Gr., Gehenna) than yourselves."

In John 5:39,40, we find these Jews refusing, as a matter of will, to hear the "witness" the Scriptures bear of Christ: "Ye will not come to Me (Gr., Ye do not will to come) that ye may have life," and, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do" (R.V.). "Ye are actuated by him (the devil) of your own freedom, lusts and choice" (Thayer).

Thus do men by resisting the truth become "Satan's children," as Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to Elymas the sorcerer. "O full of all guile and all villany, thou son of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?" (Acts 13:9-10).

Our Saviour called the Scribes and the Pharisees and their dupes "sons of Gehenna," for they then belonged there, having rejected the only Redeemer: He said, "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels."

We have then the fact that the children of men are by nature "children of wrath," but by the mercy of God may become children of God in accepting Christ; and we have other children of men who, rejecting Christ, become such sharers of Satan's attitude as to be called "children of the devil," "sons of Gehenna." Awful thought.

Heb 10:32-39 But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were enlightened, ye endured a great conflict of sufferings;

33 partly, being made a gazing-stock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, becoming partakers with them that were so used.

34 For ye both had compassion on them that were in bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your possessions, knowing that ye have for yourselves a better possession and an abiding one.

35 Cast not away therefore your boldness, which hath great recompense of reward.

36 For ye have need of patience, that, having done the will of God, ye may receive the promise.

37 For yet a very little while, He that cometh shall come, and shall not tarry.

38 But My righteous one shall live by faith: And if he shrink back, My soul hath no pleasure in him.

39 But we are not of them that shrink back unto perdition; but of them that have faith unto the saving of the soul.

Heb 10:32-34: These Hebrew believers, in their earlier experience--the former days after they were enlightened, had endured a great conflict of sufferings ... had had compassion on them that were in bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of their possessions.

Here is constancy in suffering and trial. They had come to the Cross; they had believed on the Son of God Who had borne their sins there and had returned to Heaven in resurrection blessing. Their unbelieving countrymen treated them as they had treated Christ Himself. Look at the words, gazing-stock, reproaches, afflictions, bonds, spoiling of possessions! And how did they endure: In the knowledge that they had for themselves an abiding possession on high! Look again at several other words now: partakers, compassion, joyfully, confidence of a better possession and an abiding one.

Heb 10:35-36: Cast not away therefore your boldness, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, having done the will of God, ye may receive the promise:

The temptation, ever present with all of us, was to grow weary in well-doing, which in their case was to cast away their boldness, that is, to leave the path of simple faith. This path of faith was "bold" indeed to a Hebrew who had been taught from his youth to stand back from the presence of God; that he could not enter: only priests could; that his path was to fulfil religious obligations, only; never come boldly to God!

* The Greek word for "boldness" is a combination of the Greek word *pan*, all; and *hresis*, spokenness--giving *parresia*, all-spokenness, boldness. Ponder and appropriate this great word. The verbal form means "To bear oneself boldly or confidently, to be free-spoken" (Thayer). See 1 Tim. 3:13; 2 Cor. 3:12. "Speaking out every word, as opposed to fear, ambiguity, or reserve" (Vincent).

The boldness toward God of Heb. 10:19 rested on consciousness of sin "remembered no more"--remitted; "no more offering for sin" going on (10:17-18). See Chs. 3:6, "if we hold fast our boldness"; and 4:16, "Let us draw near with boldness," and read the comment at these places.

To Hebrew believers of those days, such "outspokenness" toward God, such consciousness of the absence of any condemnation, or of any conditions, was unheard of. Had not Moses himself said, "Thou hast set our iniquities before Thee, our secret sins in the light of Thy countenance"? And had not even David, who danced before the ark in his love for Jehovah, yet been "afraid of Jehovah on that very day"? (2 Sam. 6:9, 14).

If this boldness toward God be entered upon, then the devil's constant threat is, You are in presumption: cast away this boldness and return to religion. But God says it hath great recompense of reward ... Cast it not away. Witness the apostles in the Acts, and Paul (who says, "In Whom we have boldness and access in confidence through our faith in Him," Eph. 3:12; and John, who having once seen the glorified Christ (Rev. 1), goes in vision to Heaven and speaks with elders and angels, and at last says, "Amen: come, Lord Jesus!")

Hebrews 10:36: And so we see what we might call the gap which patience is quietly, firmly, even ploddingly, to bridge: For ye have need of patience, that, having done the will of God—that is, in our own way of speaking, one bridgehead of the gap; and (that) ye may receive the promise is the other. "Patience" is one of those deep, quiet words of Scripture (Gr., *hupomone*), which means literally to remain down under; so, not to fly up, or be disturbed, either by the afflictions from man's hand, or from the enemy (Jas. 1:12); or by chastening from God's hand, as see Hebrews 12:7. We are to abide steadily in the path despite all opposing temptations from without, or, still more subtly, from within our own fickle, naturally fearful hearts.

Doing the will of God, to these Hebrew believers, meant believing the testimony concerning Jesus as their Messiah, crucified, dead, risen; and their sin put away, and their worship a heavenly one, their High Priest being now at the right hand of God. Then, of course, would follow the afflictions and persecutions; and the temptations to return to Judaism and earthly worship, and to peace with unbelieving Israel.

Having done the will of God, they would be ready to receive the promise: What promise?

Verse 37: For yet a very little while, He that cometh shall come, and shall not tarry.

Throughout Hebrews is this great return of the Lord for His millennial reign in view: see Hebrews 1:6: "When He again bringeth in the Firstborn into the world He saith, And let all the angels of God worship Him." Compare The Revelation 5:11-12. Again in Hebrews 2:5: "Not unto angels did He subject the inhabited earth to come:" this is the millennial earth, not, of course, any mere condition of things.

Then Christ is "named of God a High Priest after the order of Melchizedek" (5:10), and finally to fill that name, must be "a Priest upon His throne"--the throne of David in Jerusalem (Lk. 1:32-33). Again, our Lord is seen in Hebrews 9:11 as "a High Priest of the good things to come," which we believe must be interpreted in the light of the passage just quoted. See also Hebrews 9:15, "A death having taken place ... they that have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance." What then is THE PROMISE of Hebrews 10:36? The coming of the Lord! He'll bring the inheritance. Look also ahead to Hebrews 11:39: "The PROMISE": they

"received it not" as yet.

We repeat verse 37 and ask you to study it phrase by phrase with profound attention: "For yet 'a little while,' how short! how short! The Coming One will be here, and will not delay."--Rotherham's translation.

First, He that cometh--This, believer, is the definition of Christ which God desires to print on your soul. You are not looking for death: like those at Thessalonica, we "wait for His Son from Heaven"; or like the Philippians, "Our citizenship is in Heaven, whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory." (Phil. 3:20, 21).

The Christian who is looking for death is already, as it were, sitting in the cemetery! But, "He is not here, but is risen!" Get your eyes upon this mighty hope: He that cometh is the definition of your Saviour! Let it be in all our hearts, and remember that He said, "Watch," as well as "Wait." See Hebrews 9:28.

Second, He that cometh shall come--As Peter says, "In the last days mockers shall come with mockery, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for, from the day that the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (2 Pet. 3:3-4).

Loathe, abhor, fear, utterly avoid such wickedness! Did not two witnesses from Heaven tell the apostles at His ascension, "This same Jesus, Who was received up from you into Heaven, SHALL SO COME in like manner as ye beheld Him going into Heaven"? Did not Paul in the Holy Spirit write: "The Lord Himself SHALL DESCEND from Heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air"?

There must be no uncertainty of this coming mighty event. It is THE PROMISE before us now. "The promise" to Israel of old was the Messiah: He came. Then He Himself called "the promise" the coming of the Holy Spirit which He would send (Lk. 24:49; Acts 1:4). Now the Holy Spirit has come, and lo, the expression THE PROMISE is transferred to the Person of our Lord in the matter of expectation of His arrival on earth again. This is "the lodestar of the Church."

THE Promise of Hebrews 10:36 is the "blessed hope" of our faith. When our Lord said, "Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is" (Mk. 13:33), He based His warning on our ignorance, I say, our utter ignorance of the time. Nay, He had just said that neither the angels, nor Himself, the Son, knew of that day and hour, "but the Father" alone (Mk. 13:32). Therefore when the opponents of the doctrine of the imminent coming of our Lord begin to point to any event which they say, must come first, such as the evangelization of the world, in the very face of Christ's words, "But watch ye at every season ... in an hour that ye think not the Son of man cometh"; "Take ye heed: ... Ye know not when the time is" (Lk. 21:36; 12:40; Mk. 13:33), they are placing their own judgment about facts or conditions before our Lord's warning to "watch."

Suppose I am a servant, sent to the railway station to meet my master's guest. I go at noon. But I bear the reports of the movements of trains, and judge by them that the guest will not arrive for several hours. I may await, from then on, the guest's arrival; but I cannot watch for him, for I no longer believe he is coming soon: I have so judged from official reports. But if my master has specifically said to me, "You go to the station and watch for my friend's arrival," these directions take precedence of all else. If I am a faithful servant, I will allow nothing to turn me from obeying the command of my master to watch.

Dr. I.M. Haldeman, in His sermon, "The Imminent Coming of Christ," says that the Christian's attitude towards our Lord's coming should be "to be ready for that event--which is not in the sequences of time, nor bound by its laws!" to which we heartily agree. The Christian is to be ready for the "unknown" hour in which our Lord may come.

Someone may object that all events are "in the sequences of time." This we flatly deny! Did not our Lord Jesus Christ, being God the Son, know the "sequences"--the before-during-and-after, of all events? You say, Of course He did--using your reason rather than believing His word, which is, we repeat: "Of that day or that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in Heaven, neither the Son, but the Father!" And again, in Acts 1:7, "It is not for you to know times or seasons, which the Father hath set within His own authority." Nor does this knowledge, exclusive to the Father, detract in the least from the Deity of the Son, Whom our book of Hebrews in one chapter alone calls Son, Creator, Heir, Upholder, God, Lord! (1:2, 5, 8).

* Some 44 years ago, when, although a "church member," I had never heard a sermon on the coming of our Lord, I came down very early in the morning, long before breakfast, from my room in the Alliance House in New York, and heard voices talking eagerly and earnestly. Looking into the front parlor, I saw a circle of perhaps ten or a dozen Christians, and to my complete amazement, they were speaking intimately of the arrival of the Lord Jesus from Heaven as if it might really occur that very day! HE THAT COMETH SHALL COME had filled their hearts and governed their thoughts!

Third, And shall not tarry: Remember, it is the wicked servant that said, "My Lord tarrieth," and he said so "in his heart." He did not want Him to come.* This, by the way, has been the history of ecclesiastical Christendom. Has it not given up really looking for our Lord's return?

* Of course I recognize that the quotation is from Hab. 2:3 ff, where the prophet is agonized by the coming of the Chaldeans against Israel, yea, looking further, to the awful last wicked one (Chaldean, Babylonian, as well as Roman). In Hebrews 2:1 he stands upon his watch to see what Jehovah will say to him. The answer is, "Write the vision, and make it plain upon tablets, that he may run (the godly remnant from Babylon, the Chaldean land: Jer. 50:8, 28; 51:6, 45, 50) that readeth it. "For the vision is yet for the

appointed time, and it hasteth toward the end, and shall not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not delay" (vs. 3).

But again the prophet's anguished eyes are upon him that hath "plundered many nations" (2:8; Rev. 13, etc.), he knowing all the while (vss. 13, 14) that, "The peoples labor for the fire, and the nations weary themselves for vanity. For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea."

But yet, as he is in anguish with the vision in answer to the prayer of Hebrews 3:1, there is shown to him the glorious coming of Jehovah at Armageddon, when He rides upon His horses and "chariots of salvation" to fulfill "the oaths to the tribes" (8, 9). and the sun and moon shall stand still, and He "wounds the head out of the house of the wicked man"--i.e., Antichrist: vs. 13.

The prophet hears, and his body trembles (vs. 16) in his place: "Because I must wait quietly for the day of trouble" (the time of Jacob's trouble), "for the coming up of the people that invadeth us" (Zech. 14--all nations against Jerusalem).

Then the glorious trump of faith of the Remnant: "Yet I will rejoice in Jehovah, I will joy in the God of my salvation" (vs.18).

All this is rendered in the Septuagint as of the coming of the Messiah; the Coming One of Hab. 2 is made the Messiah in the LXX.

Alas and alas, it is not only Christendom in general, that has said, "My Lord delayeth His coming," but those who have been taught prophetic truth, only to turn aside from the plain teaching of the imminent coming of the Lord and the command to watch daily for Him, with some vain--always "religious" excuse! Perhaps the latest one, and that which is deceiving many excellent Christians, is the claim, that the Church has not yet brought the gospel to the whole inhabited earth.

Now the Holy Spirit by Paul in Colossians 1:23 says the gospel in Paul's day was "preached in all creation under Heaven." ("By 'was preached' he means not merely 'is being preached, but has been actually, as an accomplished fact, preached.' Pliny, not many years subsequently, in his famous letter to the Emperor Trajan (B.X., Ep. 97), writes, 'Many of every age, rank, and sex, are being brought to trial. For the contagion of that superstition (Christianity) has spread over not only cities, but villages, and the country.'--Fausett. J.F.B. Commentary, Col. 1:23.)

This affirmation is very positive, the form of language, the aorist participle, indicating what has taken place, not what should or will do so. To call this passage hyperbole is therefore impossible--except we reject the accuracy of Scripture statement. Again, in Romans 1:8, the apostle declares, "Your faith is proclaimed (or better, announced, talked about) throughout the whole world." In Colossians 1:23, it was the whole creation; in Romans 1:8, it is the cosmos, the ordered world. And note 1Thessalonians 1:8: concerning this remarkable assembly Paul says, "From you ... in every place your faith to God-ward is gone forth." Again, Acts 17:6: "These that have turned the world (Gr., oikoumene, inhabited earth) upside down are come hither also," said the jealous Jews to the rulers of the city of Thessalonica. (See Appendix F, "Delayers of Our Lord's Coming.")

Hebrews 10:38: But My righteous one by (ek, along the line of) faith (or, along the line of believing) shall keep living, (or, be living), And if he should shrink back, My soul delights not in him.

The three N.T. occurrences of this quotation from Hab. 2:3-4, "The just shall live by faith," are, Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11 and Heb. 10:38, our text. Proper emphasis in each case brings out the special meaning.

In Romans, the question is one of righteousness before God, so that we read there, "Therein (in the Gospel) is revealed a righteousness of God on the principle of faith, (where faith exists) as it is written, The righteous shall live by faith." Here the emphasis is on the just, or the righteous.

In Galatians, it is the subject of being perfected. They were "foolish." Having "begun in the Spirit," they were now seeking to be "perfected in the flesh" (3:3). So the question is about living, and the answer, "The righteous shall live by faith."

In Heb. 10:38 the emphasis is on the word "faith." The "great conflict of sufferings" of "former days after they were enlightened" has been brought up. They were not to "cast away their boldness ... For they had need of patience, that, having done the will of God (which may involve suffering and trial), they might receive THE PROMISE,--the great promise of our Lord's coming again--His absence being for "a very little while." Meanwhile, God directs, My righteous one shall live by faith, faith being his spirit's constant attitude God-ward--the vital air of all the hosts of witnesses who are about to be set before us in the great eleventh chapter!

Here, of course, not only the first step of faith, but a vital continuing on the path of faith, is set before us as a way of life: not only the obtaining of life, but the manner of life of the true believer--one of whom God says, My righteous one. Then the contrast: one of the most solemn and awakening warnings in all the book of Hebrews: the one who shrinks back from the path of faith, through fear, through weariness, through influence of mere religionists about him; or through neglect of the means of living (the Word of God, and constant contemplation of the great salvation); or through unjudged thorns and thistles of the old life (Hebrews 6); but most particularly through that unreadiness of the human heart to "endure as seeing Him Who is invisible" (Hebrews 11:27).

* The father and mother were out for the evening, and had left little Mary for the first time, in the sole care of her grandmother. By and by, the grandmother took the little girl upstairs, heard her "say her prayers," and covered her up in bed. Then she turned out the light.

"O Grandma, Mother always leaves a light burning till I go to sleep!"

"Oh." said the old grandmother, "God is up here with you. He is in the darkness as well as in the light. Don't forget, He is here with you."

Then she went down to the living room below. After a while there was the patter of little feet and a tremulous voice, "Grandma, please turn on the light for me till I get to sleep."

"Oh, my dear, God is there with you! Go back to bed!"

Reluctantly the little one obeyed, but by and by again came the pleading voice down the stairs:

"Grandma, O Grandma, please come up here and stay with God, while I go down where the light is!"

God has sent Christ; Christ has been here; Christ has "obtained eternal redemption" for us at the Cross; but Christ has gone up out of sight. Yet the living Word is in our hands, and the blessed Holy Spirit Who inspired it is in our midst, and the command is to live by faith, that God's justified ones, having believed, keep on believing. To give up faith, is the greatest of all snares. "We walk," says Paul, "by faith, not by appearance," (2 Cor. 5:7, R.V., margin). It seems a little thing to yield to this fearfulness of the path of faith, to shrink back. But how terrible really are the results: God takes no pleasure in such a one, for he has turned back from God's path; he is no longer conscious of a Living God. He turns back to "dead works" (Heb 6:1; 9:14), from which the shed blood of Christ has set him forever free. The next verse will set forth the end of each path, the one to doom; the other to glory:

Heb 10:39: But we are not of shrinking back (of those who do shrink back) unto perdition; but on the contrary (we are) those of faith unto the preservation of the soul (a preservation [or preserving] of the soul, of course, which has been purchased by the blood of Christ). Here we have the same stepping into the circle--shall we say?--of true believers, as in Hebrews 6:9. There, it was "Beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation"--though he had just spoken most solemnly of those who merely taste, and fall away. Here, we have in the "we" the same circle, and the same blessed consciousness of persevering in that living faith which in the preceding verse was the faith in which God's justified ones were living; the faith is viewed as that which operates to preserve the soul from that perdition unto which go those that shrink back from the path of faith.

* Remember that in Rev. 21:8 "the fearful" head the list of all who go into the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death; the fearful who shrank back from resting upon the work done by any other than themselves--by Another at the Cross.

Once more we shall see them in Hebrews 12:15 in the words, "Looking carefully lest there be any man (that is, any professed believer) that falleth short of the grace of God."

Unto perdition--(eis apoleian) sets forth damnation, especially as the destination and condition of those who have left this world under judgment, as in Rev. 17:11 of the Antichrist: "He goeth into perdition;" and in 2 Thess. 2:3, same word concerning the same being. The wicked, in Rom. 9:22, are called "vessels of wrath fitted unto destruction." Judas is called "the son of perdition." Destruction (Gr., olethron), and perdition, are named together in 1 Tim. 6:9. Destruction, I suggest, indicated the ruin that accompanies their earthly overthrow: compare 1 Cor. 5:5, "the destruction of the flesh," even in the case of this man whose spirit was to be "saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."

Thus in Hebrews 10 is prepared the way for those great examples of faith, living faith, set forth in the following chapter, "the Westminster Abbey of Scripture."

Hebrews 11

1 NOW FAITH IS a confidence giving-substance-to things hoped for, a conviction putting-to-the-test of things not seen.

2 For therein the elders had witness borne to them.

A DEFINITION AND A DESCRIPTION of faith, with an illustration of its action, is contained in these first two verses of Hebrews Eleven. To repeat, Faith is a giving-substance-to, (making real) hoped-for things, a test (R.V., margin) of things when they are not yet seen. ("By faith we are sure of eternal things that they are; by hope we are confident that we shall have them." J.F.B. Commentary, in loc.)

Hoping for something is not yet faith! Faith says, "I have it!" Things not seen shows there is no consulting of human faculties or "feelings." The ark is the test of faith. When Noah entered the ark, there was the same conviction of the fact of the coming flood that he had during the years of building the ark. God had spoken! That was all that was before his mind. He never looked at the sky. Faith is a conviction of things when they are not seen! a giving-substance-to (Greek, hupostasis) things hoped for.

This Greek word for confidence, hupostasis, is used only five times in the New Testament, three of them in Hebrews: Hebrews 1:3; 3:14; 11:1. That in Hebrews 3:14 we remember, reads, "If we hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end," and indicates the same exercise of the soul as set forth in our text in Hebrews 11:1; and the third is in Hebrews 1:3: "the very image of His substance (hupostasis)." This is the correct reading (R.V.)

* Thayer remarks concerning hupostasis, "It is very common in Greek authors in widely different senses:

"1. A setting or placing under, that is, a foundation.

"2. That which has foundation, is firm. Hence, (a) that which has actual existence (b) The substantial quality or nature of any person or thing, as of God (Heb. 1:3). (c) Steadiness of mind, firmness, resolution, confidence, firm trust, assurance." (Here we may class 3:14, and 11:1.)

We speak thus in particular because of the ever-present temptation to confuse faith with feeling--trusting God's Word, with looking for signs. But Paul says, "We walk by faith, not by sight." And our Lord's words in Mark 11:23, following His command, "Have faith in God," vividly illustrate this giving substance to things hoped for:

"Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou taken up and cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that what he saith cometh to pass; he shall have it. Therefore I say unto you, All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye received them, and ye shall have them."

"Believe that ye received" (aorist tense), that is, received them when asking! Faith therefore becomes a power; as Jehovah said through Isaiah, "Concerning the works of My hands, command ye Me" (Isa. 45:11). Westcott well says, "Faith essentially deals with the future and with the unseen; the regions not entered by direct physical experience." Rotherham's happy translation is, "But faith is of things hoped for, a confidence, of facts a conviction, when they are not seen."

Let us remark that it is the subjective state and attitude of the human heart that is in view in these first verses, and indeed right through this chapter. That is, it is not here faith as a "gift from God" that is in view. That true faith is a gift from God, a blessed gift, we fully recognize. But we find on the other hand that doubt, distrust, unbelief, are sins. No man has a right to doubt God for one moment! Our Lord's great command which we have quoted, "Have faith in God," and His questions, such as "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" show that there is a positive sense in which faith may be, should be, exercised by us!

And this human side (if I may call it that) is before us in Hebrews 11. Here in verse 1 there are certain blessings hoped for, but Faith is the substantiating, or giving-substance-to these hoped-for things. (The King James rendering, "Faith is the substance of things hoped for," is devoid of meaning, and disregards the other occurrences of the Greek word *hupostasis*, which we have listed. We love the King James Version, but we must speak plainly here. For instance, how absurd it would be to render Heb. 3:14, "If we hold fast the beginning of our substance"! Therefore, Hebrews 11:1 should be rendered, Faith is the confidence of things hoped for, the sure expectation of these things--arising from a spiritual realization of the things: a giving substance to things hoped for!)

Again, in the second statement of verse 1, Faith is a conviction of things not seen, "conviction" (Gr., *elegchos*) means not merely a "conviction," but a putting that conviction to the test, as we have noted in Noah's building the ark.

We must reflect deeply upon God's order in this matter of faith, for no plague of our hearts is more pernicious than the placing "feeling" before faith.

Verse 2: For therein the elders had witness borne to them: The term "the elders" has in view the Old Testament saints, especially those pointed to in this chapter as prominent in the activity of faith. The assertion is not that they "obtained a good report" in this world; nor does it refer to their reputation among the saints; but rather to that inner "witnessing" of 1 John 5:10, "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself."

The Authorized ("King James") Version of verse 2, by it (faith) the elders obtained a good report, is very unfortunate. The Greek word translated "obtained a good report," is *martureo*, used eight times in Hebrews (7:8, 17; 10:15; 11:2, 4 [twice], 5, 39). We read in verse 4 that Abel through his more excellent sacrifice than Cain, had witness borne to him that he was righteous, God bearing witness in respect of his gifts. The same word in verse 2 is wrongfully rendered in the Authorized Version "obtained a good report." The word here used in Hebrews 11 as connected with personal faith expresses the approval by God of that faith to the consciousness of him exercising it. The "elders" obtained from the Divine side a conscious inner testimony. The word has absolutely nothing to do with any "good report" to those outside! In fact, "the elders" of verse 2, and those associated with them, so far from having from the world "a good report," are described in verses 35,38 as "tortured," "mocked," "scourged," "imprisoned;" "stoned," "tempted," "slain with the sword," "going about in sheepskins, in goatskins," "destitute," "afflicted," "ill-treated," "wandering in deserts and mountains and caves, and the holes of the earth"!

And now notice another mistranslation in the Authorized Version, verse 39. The Revised translation, These all, having had witness borne to them through their faith, is correct. They had indeed a good report" (Authorized Version) in glory, but you see how they were named and treated in this wicked world!

Get a Revised Version New Testament, for although it is not perfect, very many such mistranslations are corrected in it, and you should always seek to know just what God has said.

We shall note this in the various cases following. For example, Abel had witness borne to him that he was righteous ... Enoch had witness borne to him that ... he had been well-pleasing to God (Heb 11:4, 5).

Keep this in mind as we begin the marvelous rehearsal of the deeds of men of faith of the Old Testament. But first, to begin at the beginning, we see:

Verse 3: By faith we understand that the ages (*aionas*) have been framed by the word of God (the uttered word, Gr. *hrema*): so that what is seen (the visible universe) hath not been made out of things which appear (visible matter).

Yea, indeed, the Word begins at the beginning--at the first of Genesis, for "the beginning" in Scripture narration refers to the creation of the "Heavens and the earth." The ages date from that creation. We know from such a passage as Ephesians 1:4, concerning those now in the Risen Christ, that God chose them in Him "before the foundation of the world"; as also in 2 Timothy 1:9: "God saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which

was given us in Christ Jesus before the times of ages." See also Titus 1:2, "In hope of eternal life, which God, Who cannot lie, promised before the times of ages"--same Greek word, aion.

Now faith is the laying hold of God's revealed Word. But this necessitates an understanding of the facts revealed. So that we turn to Genesis 1 and read: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Here the word "create" is the Hebrew word barah. This word is used three times in Genesis 1: in verse 1 as quoted; in verse 21 concerning the "great sea monsters"; and in verse 27, concerning men. It means, to call into existence out of nothing! The other word used is asah, and concerns the framing what has already been called into existence.

It is evident that there is a great gap between Ge 1:1, 2. For, in Isaiah 45:8, God says of the original creation of the earth that He "created it not a waste" (Heb., tohu), but "formed it to be inhabited," whereas the next verse declares: "And the earth was (or became) waste," (a desolation) tohu; and adds, "and void"--bohu; that is void of inhabitants!

"And the spirit of God moved (or, was brooding) Upon the face of the waters, And God said Let there be light! And there was light" (Gen. 1:2-3). As Paul says, "God said Let light shine out of darkness" (2 Cor. 4:6): that is, by creative fiat—not light reflected from some other region where it already existed!

Then follows the "framing" of the six days in which the earth was made habitable for man; and those conditions and creatures which should accompany man's history on earth, were brought into being. Men do not like to study these things. Find the reason, in 2 Peter 3:5-7.

But it is blessed to know that this faith of which Hebrews 11 is speaking fears not to go back to the beginning, and find not only created beings, called into existence by God, but the ages framed by Him! So that "evolution" does not lift its head in the presence of true faith, which, having Divine light shed upon the Divine Word, perceives Divine truth--and knows it is truth!

Heb 11:4 By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he had witness borne to him that he was righteous, God bearing witness in respect of his gifts: and through it he being dead yet speaketh.

5 By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and he was not found, because God translated him: for he hath had witness borne to him that before his translation he had been well-pleasing unto God.

6 and without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto Him; for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that seek after Him.

7 By faith Noah, being warned of God concerning things not seen as yet, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; through which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

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

9 By faith he became a sojourner in the land of promise, as in a land not his own, dwelling in tents, with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:

10 for he looked for the city which hath the foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

11 By faith even Sarah herself received power to conceive seed when she was past age, since she counted Him faithful Who had promised:

12 wherefore also there sprang of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars in Heaven in multitude, and as the sand, which is by the sea shore, innumerable.

We come now to four great men of faith: ABEL, ENOCH, NOAH, ABRAHAM; and one woman of faith, SARAH; each illustrating a special phase of the operation of faith, and its fruit. (Note the "these all" of verse 13, summing up those who have been mentioned; and the "these all" of verse 39, gathering up all those of faith of "old time.")

ABEL. We read that By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain.

1. Mark immediately that Abel and Cain came to worship the same God--the true God! In Genesis 4:2 we read, "Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground" (as God sent the race out of Eden to be).

But Cain forgot the ground was cursed; he came to God with some of his crop, as a patronizer, acknowledging God's existence, desirous of His favor, but not acknowledging himself a sinner, and that "the wages of sin is death", he refused responsibility; went out from the presence of Jehovah; dwelt in the land of Nod (Wandering); begat children and built himself a city--the first city of man; gave it his son's name; and began a line and a civilization, without God--the beginning of the world, with its "lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and vain "glory of life."

God had brought in death, when He "made coats of skins, and clothed" Adam and Eve; so that they had taught their children that death must come--the death of a substitute, if they were to stand before God!

Verse 4: By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain--(1) Abel recognized his sinnerhood, his guilt, his inability to approach God.* This is the first step toward salvation!

* It seems that until the flood the cherubim stood with "the flame of a sword" at the gate of Eden. And while there is no mention in Genesis of Jehovah's being there in any direct manifestation, yet He is spoken of over and over as seated "above the cherubim." His throne is always connected with them. From Gen. 3:24: "He placed at the east of the garden of Eden the cherubim, and the flame of a sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life," we are compelled to deduce that worship was carried on there,

So we read, "Cain went out from the presence of Jehovah" (Gen. 4:16). Even Cain and his descendants knew where the worship of the true God should be carried on!

2. Abel was a keeper of sheep, and brought "of the firstlings of his flock," that is, a lamb, when he came to worship God. This lamb he slew: he poured out the life-blood. Marvelously had God taught man, both as to his own guilt, and as to the offering of a substitute, the poured out life-blood of which should take the place of his own death. Abel brought death to God, instead of life, as Cain had brazenly done.

3. We see that Abel's sacrifice was accepted. Doubtless the fire of Jehovah fell upon it, visibly, as at the tabernacle (Lev. 9:24) and at the temple in Israel's time (2 Chron. 7:1); and upon David's and Elijah's offerings (1 Chron. 21:26; 1 Kings 18:39).

4. Next we read that Abel had witness borne to him that he was righteous, that is, righteous before God. Abel was just as truly a sinner as Cain, for God says, "There is no distinction; for all have sinned"; and "There is none righteous, no, not one." God bore witness in respect of Abel's gifts, not his character! God did not need anything, as Cain's contribution seemed to indicate that He did. But that a sinner should judge himself to be a sinner, worthy of death, and also at the same moment dare to exercise faith in a holy God, on the ground of a sin-offering alone, a substitute, pouring out its life-blood in the sinner's place--this double thing God could with joy accept. This was faith; this was God's way. Cain lacked self-judgment as a sinner, and, consequently, did not have faith; for none but self-condemned sinners can really trust a holy God! Cain was "of the evil one," we read in 1 John 3:12.

What a precious witness Abel carried around in his bosom: "I am righteous, I who have no righteousness! I have been accepted on the ground of poured-out blood!"

5. Finally, he being dead yet speaketh. How? through it, on account of it--that is, his faith. Not only shall the righteous "be held in everlasting remembrance," but their faith speaks with a living voice down through the centuries.

Verse 5: By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and he was not found, because God translated him: for he hath had witness borne to him that before his translation he had been well-pleasing unto God:--As we have seen, ABEL represents the path of salvation by faith in the blood of a substitute. ENOCH is the next step: one who is declared righteous is seen walking with God; NOAH represents the next result Of faith--testimony of coming judgment. And ABRAHAM, a tent-dwelling pilgrim, living on Divine promises.

Heb 11:6: And without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto Him; for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a Rewarder of them that seek after Him: God having made faith the condition of relation with Himself, and being the very God of truth, can be pleased with nothing else than faith. In this verse faith is resolved into its two great primary elements or characteristics: (a) There must be belief that the living God exists: and (b) that He is a Rewarder of them that seek after Him. These elements of faith had Enoch, "the seventh from Adam," who "prophesied" (Jude 14), walked habitually with God, "begat sons and daughters ... and was not; for God took him" (Gen. 5:22-24). These two elements seem most simple, but, alas, how many professing Christians act as if God were not living; and how many others, though seeking after Him, are not expecting from Him as Rewarder!

Heb 11:7: By faith NOAH, being warned concerning things not seen as yet, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; through which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith. Here is a perfect example of the two elements of faith of the preceding verse. We find NOAH in living knowledge and communication with God; and second, we see him building the great ark, expecting to be preserved through it. And so we read that this faith of his had the double effect of condemning the world--which heard Noah's warning as preacher of righteousness, and saw the mighty ark preparing--and, second, the effect of making Noah "heir of the righteousness which is according to faith."

Heb 11:8: By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed to go out unto a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.--ABRAHAM is the next step, the pilgrim character. The world has been judged by the Flood, and as soon as possible set out to build the tower of Babel! Led by Nimrod, idolatry and deification of man set in. Abraham represents separation, pilgrimhood. He is called to leave everything, his country, his kin, even his father's house, going out not knowing whither he went, and, with Isaac and Jacob later, called strangers and pilgrims (Heb 11:13).

* 1. Adam represents federal, racial headship--and failure through sin.

2. Noah represents God's gracious preservation of His own from the utter destruction of the Flood (Gen. 6:6,8, 13; 7:1).

3. Abraham reveals God's counsels of salvation and mercy: "To Abraham were the promises spoken, and to his Seed ... which is Christ" (Gal. 3:16). God promised: (1) To be a God to Abraham and his seed. (2) To bless the world through him.

4. But now, also in Abraham, the principle of strangerhood is first seen: Abraham is called out; for the world had left God. So God's people are to leave it today.

5. Abraham obeyed ... not knowing. So should Christians!

So here we have a precious element of the believer's life: he is a pilgrim out from his land, his city, and, if need be, his father's house, his relatives. On what principle? That of simple faith!

If we had stopped Abraham's caravan to question him, something like this would have been heard:

"Whence do you come?" "From the land of Shinar." "Where are you going?" "I do not know, but I am going to a land that I am to receive for an inheritance." "Who told you that you would find such a land?" "The God Whose I am." At these replies, the world would shake its head and say, "This man has lost his mind!"

But so it is with every obedient Christian. He has come out from the world, for His Lord has said, "Ye are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John 15:18-19; 17:16). The Christian is journeying on to the City that hath foundations--that glorious City of the last two chapters of the Bible. He has not seen it, but he reads, and believes! Faith is the conviction of things not seen.

Verse 9: By faith he became a sojourner in the land of promise, as in a land not his own, dwelling in tents, with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise. Round about him were the high-walled cities of the Canaanite nations, yet this land now belonged in promise, which was in fact, to Abraham. But he accepted the principle voiced by David, when he said, "We are strangers before Thee, and sojourners, as all our fathers were" (1 Chron. 29:15). And he waited for the realization of the promise. Meditate on these verses. It is great food for faith! God says, "The meek shall inherit the earth." And they certainly will! But if they are walking as their father Abraham, they are not seeking now to inherit it, nor are they striving to accumulate as much of its goods as they can!

What an example Abraham set! First, see his family: Isaac, his son, devoted himself to his father's will even unto death (Gen. 22). Had not God said, "Shall I hide from Abraham the thing that I do? ... I have known him to the end that he may command his children and his household after him" (Gen. 18:17-19). And his grandson, ambitious Jacob, humbled by God, saying, at last, "I have waited for Thy salvation, O Jehovah" (Gen. 49:18), and they were laid to rest in the only "real estate" that Abraham had--Machpelah (Gen. 23). Even the Hittites said to Abraham, "Thou art a prince of God among us." What a blessed testimony! And lastly, Abraham got God's vision of the glorious coming city!

Verse 10: For he looked for the city which hath the foundations, whose Architect and Maker is God: What a vision of truth God gave this pilgrim! Our Lord aid of him, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day; and he saw it, and was glad" (John 8:56). And now this second revelation, of the city which hath the foundations. Read Revelation 21:19-20.

Verse 11: By faith even Sarah herself received power to conceive seed when she was past age, since she counted Him faithful Who had promised: Dear Sarah! Always admirable in that subjection to Abraham which is true queenliness in God's sight. For does not Peter thus commend her: "As Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord"? And self-sacrificing: see the story of Hagar, Genesis 16. But God waits thirteen years between Genesis 16 and 17, and then changes the names of both Abram (17:5), and Sarai (vs. 15), Abraham, ninety-nine; Sarah, ninety. Abraham laughs, not in derision, at the thought of his begetting and Sarah's bearing, a child. Sarai's new name, Sarah, is Princess! And she had herself laughed (Gen. 18:9-15). Scores of years before, she had given up "hope." But the record now is, By faith even Sarah herself received power to conceive seed when she was past age. For we read, She counted Him faithful Who had promised. Ye Christian women, let 90-year-old, wrinkled Sarah, teach you: For she laughed at first in unbelief, and then learned to laugh in faith (Gen. 21:6), saying "God hath made me to laugh; everyone that heareth will laugh with me."

Verse 12: Wherefore also there sprang of one, and him as good as dead ... as the stars ... and as the sand--uncounted multitudes. Even Sarah, to whom the promise had not been made directly, entered into the blessing of it. She therefore shows in a remarkable way the power of the principle of faith in bringing blessing from God. By faith Sarah ... wherefore also there sprang of Abraham--multitudes! She counted Him faithful: There is no more complete definition of the power of faith than these simple words: "she counted Him faithful Who had promised."

Life in ABEL, walk in ENOCH, witness in NOAH, pilgrimhood in ABRAHAM, and the power of faith to bring blessing to the weakest, in SARAH.

13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

14 For they that say such things make it manifest that they are seeking after a country of their own.

15 And if indeed they had been mindful of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return.

16 But now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed of them, to be called their God; for He hath prepared for them a city.

Note the words these all, of Heb 11:13-39. Verse 13, speaking of the saints of the Old Testament, says, These all died in faith. Now the Greek of the word in (kata) here means according to: or, as we might say, in the line of, in the path of, the way of. They believed the promises, and kept believing, and died believing: though what was promised had not yet come. Note, in Heb 11:13, that the words "not having received the promises", do not at all mean that the promises failed, or that they lost them! A promise depends on the faithfulness and ability of the person promising!

The second thing noted concerning them is that the promises were ever in their delighted view: Having seen them and greeted them from afar!

The third thing which is noted is that they confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth, and any real trust in God's Word makes a stranger and pilgrim on this earth out of any one!

The fourth blessed word is (vs. 16), Now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly. This marvelous mark on the brow of those bound for Heaven, only enlightened eyes see!

We could almost expect the next words of Heb 11:16: Wherefore God is not ashamed of them to be called their God! We cannot shrink from saying, that of many whose faith is not real, God is ashamed. But think of the King of the universe saying of poor us, "I am not ashamed of him"!

Lastly, He hath prepared for them a City. This City was described in verse 10 as looked for by the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Our thoughts are instantly drawn to Revelation 21:1-4, which I have no doubt was in Abraham's vision expectantly. Furthermore, we must not forget the Jerusalem millennial city and temple, with its mountain foundations, yet to appear (Isa. 2:2, 4; Ezek. 40-48, etc.).

Heb 11:17 By faith Abraham, being tried, offered up Isaac: yea he that had gladly received the promises was offering up his only begotten son;

18 even he to whom it was said, In Isaac shall thy seed be called:

19 accounting that God is able to raise up, even from the dead; from whence he did also in a figure receive him back.

20 By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, even concerning things to come.

21 By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph; and worshiped, leaning upon the top of his staff.

22 By faith Joseph, when his end was nigh, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.

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

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 pleasures of sin for a season;

26 accounting the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he looked unto the recompense of reward.

27 By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him Who is invisible.

28 By faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of the blood, that the destroyer of the firstborn should not touch them.

29 By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were swallowed up.

30 By faith the Walls of Jericho fell down, after they had been compassed about for seven days.

31 By faith Rahab the harlot perished not with them that were disobedient, having received the spies with peace.

Verse 17: By faith Abraham, being tried, hath offered up Isaac--the verb reads thus in the Greek, and should be thus translated. God on His side, when a man believes Him, reckons that faith's account is closed. Abraham took the knife to slay his son, the final action of a completed faith--a faith under extremest trial. God reckoned it done!

Heb 11:18-19: Note the double action of faith within Abraham's heart: first, he remembered that God had said, In Isaac shall thy seed be called--that Isaac would be the father of the coming, promised seed. Second, he remembered that God was able to raise up, even from the dead--for he did expect to slay Isaac. This was indeed to give "substance" to "things hoped for." The result? He did also in a figure receive him back ... from the dead (vs. 19).

Trial comes in the pathway of faith, and trial often touches our affections--what is nearest and dearest to us. God does not delight to deprive us of what we treasure. On the contrary, Paul tells us to have our hope "set on God, Who giveth us richly all things to enjoy." So to prevent His saints from forgetting the only Giver of good things--and thus passing into a life of selfishness, leading on to death, He is continually saying to His own, "Put back into My hands what I have given you." Blessed are they who, like Abraham, prove to God their love for Him above all, by surrendering all. The words of God out of Heaven when Abraham had offered Isaac, are most touching!

"Lay not thy hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him, for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from Me ... And the angel of Jehovah called unto Abraham a second time out of Heaven, and said, by Myself have I sworn, said Jehovah, because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying, I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the Heaven ... and in thy Seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed My voice" (Gen. 22:2-18).

When God tries faith, it is to give still greater blessing. Let us not fear, let us not fail God, but as at the beginning of the life of faith, so in the trial of it, be like our father Abraham.

Heb 11:20: By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, even concerning things to come: Read Genesis 27:27-29; 39-40 (in R.V. if possible, for it is more accurate, and also gives the verses in the poetical form in which they are in the Hebrew). Despite Isaac's craving a venison dinner, there was in him that living faith that spoke the very words God desired. This is proved by his subsequent refusal to change the blessing of the firstborn back to Esau, as he said, "I ... have blessed him, yea, and he

shall be blessed" (Gen. 27:33).

Heb 11:21: By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph; and worshiped, leaning upon the top of his staff. What a beautiful picture! Jacob dying, blessing, worshiping, leaning! It had taken many years for Jacob, by nature so strong and self-sufficient, to sit for this photograph! Years afterward in Egypt we read (Gen. 49:18) his words, "I have waited for Thy salvation, O Jehovah!"

* The God of all grace calls Himself "the God of Jacob" more often than "the God of Abraham"--over 70 times, in fact: hunt them out in your concordance. So we read in Mic. 7:20: "Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the lovingkindness to Abraham, which Thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old." It was "lovingkindness" to Abraham, all undeserved; it was "truth" to Jacob, so undeserved! Because our God "delighteth in mercy" (Heb., lovingkindness), God's grace, in which He delights, extends to Jacob. Not that Jacob is the cause; God is the cause, and Jacob the object.

Heb 11:22: By faith Joseph, when his end was nigh, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones: Like his father Jacob, Joseph when his end was nigh had clear vision and excellent choice. In Isaac's, Jacob's and Joseph's cases, there was the prophetic vision, and the knowledge of what God desired done. But mark this: there was also the essential element of faith in their utterances. It was by faith that Jacob claimed Ephraim and Manasseh as his own (Gen. 48:5). It was by faith that he placed Ephraim before Manasseh (Gen. 48:14, 19, ff). Neither Isaac nor Jacob nor Joseph was an automaton. Each saw God's mind for the future, and said it would be so. Each had a "confidence of things hoped for, a conviction of facts not seen."

How beautiful was the choice by Joseph, the lord of all Egypt, land of magnificent monuments to the dead, to be carried up to humble Shechem for burial in the land of Canaan! "He was put in a coffin in Egypt" (the last words of Genesis). But Joseph was not of Egypt. He had faith, and wanted to be where the people of God were! "A coffin in Egypt" is all any of us will finally hold in this world! It was all Joseph got! But his bones ere carried up to be buried in the piece of ground bought by Abraham when Sarah died (Gen. 23:1-20). Moses remembered to carry them up (Ex. 13:19).

Heb 11:23-28: By faith MOSES--(1) When born, "fair unto God" (Acts 7:20, R.V., margin: "I am persuaded, from that expression of Stephen, 'fair unto God,' that there was an appearance somewhat Divine and supernatural, which drew the thought and minds of the parents unto a deep consideration of the child." With these words from John Owen we fully agree. Later Moses' face was so bright that the children of Israel could not look upon him!) (2) grown up, refusing royalty, (3) choosing ill-treatment with the people of God, (4) rejecting the pleasures of sin, the treasures of Egypt, for the reproach of Christ, (5) eyes fixed on the (Divine) recompense of the reward, (6) he forsook Egypt: the people with him, but he having the God-given faith. (7) He endured, as seeing Him Who is invisible: FAITH defined in a phrase! (8) He hath kept the passover. The people went through the form, but the faith that preserved the nation Jehovah gave to His servant Moses! Note that verse 28 begins, By faith he has kept--and ends, that the destroyer of the firstborn should not touch them.

Heb 11:29: By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were swallowed up: At last we come to By faith they! 1 Corinthians 10:1-2 was fulfilled: "Our fathers ... were all baptized into (Gr., eis) Moses in the cloud and in the sea." Remember Exodus 14:27-15:1:

"And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled against it; and Jehovah overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea ... all the host of Pharaoh ... there remained not so much as one of them. But the children of Israel walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea ... Thus Jehovah saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the seashore. And Israel saw the great work which Jehovah did upon the Egyptians, and the people feared Jehovah: and they believed in Jehovah, and in His servant Moses. Then sang Moses and the children of Israel ...unto Jehovah."

Heb 11:30: By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they had been compassed about seven days: It seemed the quintessence of weakness just to go around blowing horns! But it was what God had commanded, and they by faith obeyed. Believer, keep on blowing the horn of faith. No matter how high the walls about you and before you, keep praying and praising! The walls will fall in due season.

Heb 11:31: By faith Rahab the harlot perished not with them that were disobedient, having received the spies with peace. Note the following seven points about Rahab:

1. Rahab was a common sinner, even a harlot. God says as to all of us, "There is no difference; for all have sinned."
2. Rahab's faith (Josh. 2:8-11) was confessed by her in the words, "I know that Jehovah hath given YOU the land, and that the fear of You is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land melt away before you."
3. This belief meant complete turning against her own People. just as a believer now comes out from, and is no longer of, the world.
4. It included belief that Jericho would be destroyed (Josh 2:13); and it brought concern for her own kin.
5. It brought about the beautiful typical picture of the scarlet cord, tied up in her window, by which the spies also escaped (Josh 2:15-21). How that cord reminds us of the shed blood of Christ!
6. By her faith she, her father, her mother, her brethren, and all her kindred--"Whosoever shall be with thee in the house"--(Josh 2:19), were preserved (Josh 6:22-23, 25).

7. She became the mother of Boaz (Matt. 1:5), great grandfather of David the king! (Ruth 4:21-22).

Now let us go back and run over the names--familiar, blessed, sweet names they--of the "witnesses" of Heb 11:4 to 31, who "had witness borne to them."

BY FAITH--

ABEL learned--and offered a blood sacrifice; ENOCH was told--and believed; NOAH was warned--and took warning; ABRAHAM was called--and obeyed; was tried, and offered up Isaac. ISAAC saw things to come; JACOB blessed each of the sons of JOSEPH and worshiped; JOSEPH (though exalted) clung at his end to Israel and their departure from Egypt; MOSES was hid ... by his parents,* refused royalty, chose ill-treatment, rejected sin's pleasures and Egypt's treasures, looking unto the recompense of the reward: forsook Egypt, endured, kept the passover.

* Moses' parents discerned that God would use him, and were filled with faith. Cf. Hannah, 1 Sam. 1; and John the Baptist, Lk. 1:13-17, where Zacharias displayed unbelief concerning God's purposes for John the Baptist.

BY FAITH Israel passed through the Red Sea, the walls of Jericho fell down, Rahab perished not.

Heb 11:32 And what shall I more say? for the time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah; of David and Samuel and the prophets:

33 who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,

34 quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, waxed mighty in war, turned to flight armies of aliens.

35 Women received their dead by a resurrection: and others were tortured, not accepting their deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection:

36 and others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment:

37 they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were tempted, they were slain with the sword: they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated

38 (of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves, and the holes of the earth.

Right through this great eleventh of Hebrews these men and women of God act in reliance upon Him or His stated Word, wholly apart from their own feelings.

Take Gideon (Heb 11:32): Go to the book of judges and read his record: how he trembled and shrank at the thought of taking a step in leadership of God's hosts. God met his trembling heart, of course, not only twice in the matter of fleece, but afterwards in the dream his servant was given to hear (Jud. 7:9-15). And that trembling heart became strong so that he was able to say to the people of Israel: "Jehovah HATH delivered into your hand the host of Midian." This is Mark 11:24 again, "a conviction of things not seen."

* The proper place of what we call "feeling" is perfectly illustrated in the case of this woman who "heard the things concerning Jesus, came in the crowd behind, and touched His garment" (Mk. 5:25-34). and

First, we read of her wretchedness: she "had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse."

Second, observe she had "heard the things concerning Jesus." Now we know that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ," so we saw she "came in the crowd ... and touched His garment. For she said, If I but touch His garments, I shall be made whole." There was no maybe-so about it: her faith gave substance to the thing she hoped for.

Third, we have the miracle: "And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up." God answers faith! Oh, that we all might touch HIM with the finger of faith!

Fourth, we have the proper place of feeling: "She felt in her body that she was healed of her plague."

And before we pass, note two more points, vitally connected:

Our Lord said, "Who touched My garments?" calling her out to testify before all. "The woman ... fell down before Him, and told Him all the truth," as Luke says (Lk 8:47), "in the presence of all the people."

The last thing Jesus said unto her was, "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole." Here we have grounds for assurance. No matter how she felt the next day or any other day, she could say, "The Lord, Who healed me, said I was made whole, and I am."

I am convinced that many, because of an unwillingness to come out openly and confess all that the Lord hath done for them (whether they be men or women) are robbed of the assurance that belongs to them.

Heb 11:32: Then Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David and Samuel and the prophets, of whom the apostle writes: What shall I more say? for the time will fail me! What a history of triumph he does crowd into the next words:

Heb 11:33: Who through faith subdued kingdoms--David is chief here, though Joshua preceded him, and Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, Josiah, yea, and the Maccabean brethren, faithfully followed him. Wrought righteousness--Elijah, Elisha, and "all the prophets" come in here; and along with them we must not forget King Josiah--read his story: 2 Kings 22 to 23:30. Obtained promises--here comes Caleb, claiming and receiving a promise of God given forty years before (Josh. 14:6-14). Find the promises Gideon and Barak claimed and received. Stopped the mouths of lions--Daniel shines here: "My God hath sent His angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths." Remember also David's victory over the lion and the bear (1 Sam. 17:34), and forget not Samson (Jud. 14), nor

David's mighty man, Benaiah (1 Chron. 11:22), who "went down also and slew a lion in the midst of a pit in time of snow"--"a difficult thing in a difficult place at a difficult time."

Heb 11:34: Quenched the power of fire--Here we think of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in Babylon, who said to the king, "Our God Whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; and He will deliver us out of Thy hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." "And the satraps, the deputies, and the governors, and the king's counsellors (after the furnace) saw these men, that the fire had no power upon their bodies" (Dan. 3:17-18, 27). And why? They trusted God!

Escaped the edge of the sword--Whether it be King Saul's sword or Goliath's, beloved David speaks again: "Jehovah, that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, He will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine." Jeremiah, also, blessed man, who for Jehovah's sake made countless hating foes, escaped the edge of the sword.

* "Now the word of Jehovah came unto Jeremiah, while he was shut up in the court of the guard, saying ... I will deliver thee in that day, saith Jehovah; and thou shalt not be given into the hand of the men of whom thou art afraid. For I will surely save thee, and thou shalt not fall by the sword ... because thou hast put thy trust in Me." (Read Jer. 39.)

From weakness were made strong--Remember weak Sarah, who "By faith ... received power"; and Gideon (of whom we have spoken above), who when Jehovah said to him, "Go in this thy might" answered, "My family is the poorest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house." Then the trembling faith that put out the fleece, and the sending Gideon forth against the mighty host of the Midianites with only three hundred men! as Abraham, with only eighteen more men, conquered all the kings of Mesopotamia (Gen. 14).

Isaiah as he began his service said, "Woe is me! for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips." And Jeremiah, "Ah, Lord Jehovah! I know not how to speak, for I am a child." (If you are a lonely witness amid hostile surroundings, I beg you, read and reread Jeremiah.) And how weak was Job made: "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." But from weakness he was made strong, an intercessor, mighty with God, listed in His Word as one of "these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job" (Ezek. 14:14).

Waxed mighty in war--Hear David again: "By my God do I leap over a wall," "Jehovah my rock, Who teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight." Or take the thrilling tale of David's mighty men, in 1 Chronicles 11 and 12; or King Asa against a million, in 2 Chronicles 14; or Jehoshaphat's great prayer of faith in 2 Chronicles 20:12:

"O our God, wilt Thou not judge them? For we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon Thee!"

Someone has well called this "a prayer of the irresistible might of weakness."

Turned to flight armies of aliens: This, as we have said, did Abraham; also Moses' mighty praying; Joshua's fighting against Amalek (Ex. 17); and Joshua's obeying with power the Divine command, "Concerning the work of My hands, command ye Me" (Isa. 45:11). For we read:

"Then spake Joshua to Jehovah in the day when Jehovah delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel; and he said in the sight of Israel, "Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; And thou, moon, in the valley of Aijalon. And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, Until the nation had avenged themselves of their enemies" (Josh. 10:12-13).

The armies of aliens were those who refused the royal government of the earth through Israel, Jehovah's elect nation.

Heb 11:35: Women received their dead by a resurrection:--So it was with the widow who sustained Elijah, and still more strikingly with the Shunammite, who, leaving her dead child upon Elisha's bed in the prophet's chamber of her home, replied to his question, "Is it well with the child?" "It is well" (2 Kings 4). Blessed faith, here!

And others were tortured, not accepting their deliverance; (lit. the redemption: they could have escaped!) that they might obtain a better resurrection:--Eleazer says in 2 Maccabees 6:30, "Whereas I might have been delivered from death, I now endure sore pain." "The people that know their God shall be strong, and do exploits" (Dan. 11:32) refers to, and was fulfilled also in, the noble Maccabees and their followers.

* While the Apocrypha, in which the books of the Maccabees are found, is not inspired, and was never a part of the Bible, it has been very useful as history of the "four hundred silent years" between the Old and New Testaments. The Maccabees, Books 1 and 2, are, on the whole, godly, earnest, historically accurate, and especially valuable. We here quote portions of 2 Mac 7: "The constancy and cruel death of seven brethren and their mother in one day, because they would not eat swine's flesh at the king's commandment:

"And when he (the first brother) was at his last gasp, he said, 'Thou like a fury takest us out of this present life, but the King of the world shall raise us up, who have died for His

laws, unto everlasting life!" (vs. 9). "So when he (the fourth brother) was ready to die, he said thus, 'It is good, being put to death by men, to look for hope from God to be raised up again by Him: as for thee, thou shalt have no resurrection to life'" (vs. 14).

"But the mother was marvelous above all, and worthy of honorable memory: for when she saw her seven sons slain within the space of one day, she bare it with a good courage, because of the hope that she had in the Lord. Yea, she exhorted every one of them in her own language, and ... said unto them:

"Doubtless the Creator of the world, Who formed the generation of man, and found out the beginning of all things, will also of His

own mercy give you breath and life again, as ye now regard not yourselves for His law's sake.' "Now Antiochus, whilst the youngest was yet alive, assured him with oaths that he would make him both a rich and happy man if he would turn from the laws of his fathers (that is, apostatize) ... But the young man said,

"Whom wait ye for? I will not obey the king's commandment: but I will obey the commandment of the Law that was given unto our fathers by Moses ... Then the king, being in a rage, handled him worse than all the rest, and took it grievously that he was mocked. So this man died undefiled, and put his whole trust in the Lord. Last of all, after the sons, the mother died" (vss. 20-41).

Heb 11:36: And others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: Sometimes God tries faith directly, as in verses 17 ff. Only God and Abraham were--privately, so to speak--in such a trial. The trial of mockings and scourgings from the world is of a different character. Observe this carefully, dear saints: God may take you, as He took Abraham, into trial that will bring the way of God Himself into question, to the very foundations of your own soul. Be not dismayed! Be like Abraham when God called for Isaac; or like the Shunammite woman, whose trial was not from the world, but from God's loving ways with her; or like Ezekiel 24 when God took away his wife "with a stroke" for a parable to those to whom Ezekiel must minister. Or like John Bunyan, who testified that he walked in despair for seven years, yet called God "The God of my salvation," as in Psalm 88, Ps 18:

"O Jehovah, the God of my salvation, I have cried day and night before Thee. ... Lover and friend hast Thou put far from me, And mine acquaintance into darkness."

When we reflect that Paul is writing to earnest Hebrew believers, and that most, if not all, the "Witnesses" of Hebrews 11, from Abraham on, were connected with the Hebrew nation, we see how weightily this history would affect them! Such a mighty influence has been exercised upon the soul of Gentile Christians by Fox's Book of Martyrs.

Heb 11:37: They were stoned--This was peculiarly by Israelitish method of execution. "Stoning was the ordinary mode of Hebrew execution," says the National Encyclopedia (Vol. 4, pp. 250-5, in loc.). (See Ex. 19:13; Josh. 7:25; 2 Chron. 24:21.) Zachariah, son of Barachiah, whom our Lord mentioned in Matthew 23:35, was thus stoned. He in the Old Testament and Stephen in the New, are the most prominent examples of martyrdom by this means. They were sawn asunder--There is a tradition that Jeremiah suffered thus under King Manasseh. (See Jewish Mishna.) Justin Martyr also (158 A.D.) reproached the Jews with this awful accusation concerning Isaiah: "Whom ye sawed asunder with a wooden saw." But these were one or two of many, according to the spirit of this passage in Hebrews 11.

They were tempted--Always, of course, by Satan; but here, probably, especially by those who sought to turn them back from the faithful confession. The word "tempted," standing as it does between the more terrible (physically) sufferings of being "stoned" and "sawn asunder" on the one hand and slain with the sword on the other, has perplexed many; so that some have sought to discover if some other word were not meant. But this will not be entered into by any who have suffered being tempted directly by Satan's guile and power. Do not think that Luther in Wartburg was deceived when he threw the inkstand at Satan! Remember that Peter in his first epistle, the subject of which is suffering, says to saints, "Now for a little while, if need be, ye have been put to grief in manifold trials" (1Pe 1:6). And Paul speaks of our wrestling as having its "evil day" (Eph. 6:13). There are times and occasions when God permits Satan to assault the spirit directly, as we have said; and the anguish of such hours is greater than any other. It is not so much an allurements to evil, as a direct assault. Bunyan knew it, or he could never have written of the fight with Apollyon. To quote Peter again: "Be sober, be watchful: your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet. 5:8). (Thank God for the "may"! Satan must have Divine permission for anything he does!)

They were slain with the sword: So in Acts 12 Herod slew the Apostle James. Millions of God's faithful ones have dyed red with their life-blood the swords of persecutors! They went about in sheepskins, in goatskins. Here were "the excellent of the earth, in whom," God says, "is all My delight." Be ready, O believer, to follow such a path of banishment from man as this indicates! Being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated--there is somehow in our very soul as we look at these words the prophecy that some, probably many, reading them, will experience them.

Heb 11:38: (Of whom the world was not worthy)--What a glory it would be to have it written thus of us by the Holy Spirit, as He writes it of those who suffered of old as God's own! And now see how ends this great passage descriptive of God's saints: Wandering in deserts and mountains and caves, and the holes of the earth: We know how this continued. These Hebrew saints of old have their counterpart in the Covenanters of Scotland, the Vaudois of France, the Albigenses, the Waldensians; remembering always the persecuted Puritans; and, we may add, every real Protestant. For the Roman Catholic harlot (Rev. 17:1-6, 18), seated on her seven-hilled city (Rev 17:9), is still "drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus" (Rev 17:6).

But now, we beg you, hearken to what we are more and more convinced will happen before our eyes, in our days. There is much talk of prayer for a great revival, a world-wide revival, as they call it. But John says, "Ye have heard that Antichrist cometh" (1John 4:3). Let me say boldly, I profoundly fear that in the hearts of many who pray for world-wide revival, there is that unconscious desire: that we may be delivered back into a time of

reverence for God's Word, such as the Puritans brought to these shores; into a time of deliverance from the hideous scandal of Sodomite indecency that flaunts itself more and more before our eyes every day; into an old-fashioned revival in-gathering of thousands into respectable, God-fearing churches; into a condition of things where godly preachers and Bible teachers will be

subjects of the old-time regard from men of the world; and their sermons and teachings be welcomed by the public press and read by hundreds of thousands, as Spurgeon's and Talmadge's sermons used to be.

But what if these closing verses of Hebrews 11 should be prophetic of the world's attitude toward true Christians—true men of faith, as of old? Are we ready for this in our prayer? Suppose that our prayer for revival should result in such a quickening of faith and entering into complete separation from the world, that the world would turn upon us in persecution? Are we not praying for a respectable, nay, a regenerate and yet bearable condition, rather than our becoming "the scum and offscouring of all things" with Paul? Will you let your prayer include that? Destitute ... afflicted ... ill-treated! Deserts ... mountains ... holes of the earth! Suppose God should choose to have His Church, before its rapture, as separate as it was on the day of Pentecost? Or suppose, the Church having given its testimony, a "great persecution" should arise against it, such as followed the death of Stephen?

May God in mercy search us all out, making us as sincere as was Paul, who was ready to say at any time, "God is my witness."

God in His wisdom has already permitted His dear saints in many lands to suffer at the hands of their enemies. Devoted missionaries tell of the horrors inflicted upon Christians in many lands; and there come trustworthy reports of believers lying in prison, or starved in concentration camps, in many parts of the earth. The temptation of the devil is for Christians in such trials to question God's kindness or justice. But we learn in this very epistle that God's own dear Son was perfected through the things which He suffered!

The Divine movement in this age is not that righteousness shall triumph, but on the contrary, that human wickedness shall have full headway and come to its climax, before being visited by the Great Day of Wrath preceding the Millennium, and be finally judged at the Great White Throne at the Millennium's close. Even during the Millennium it will be peace by compulsion

In the Hebrews narrative of triumphs, pursuits, and escapes on the one hand, and captivity, torment, pursuits and death on the other, we have been seeing that FAITH is victorious under all circumstances. But let us beware of falling into the Delilah arms of a Philistine world. For this world is an armed camp against God, against Christ, and against all operations of the Holy Spirit! Does not Peter warn us, "Forasmuch then as Christ suffered in the flesh, arm ye yourselves also with the same mind" (i.e., same expectancy)? It were kinder to young converts to warn them from the first of the deadly foes in the heavenly places and among men, through whom the life of faith takes us, than to let them, unwarned, choose that life--only to "shrink back."

Heb 11:39 And these all, having had witness borne to them through their faith, received not the promise, (Rotherham's rendering, "Bare not away the promise" is good here.)

40 God having provided some better thing concerning us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

Heb 11:39: Having had witness borne to them--This precious word "witness" accompanies this "so great cloud of witnesses" from Hebrews 11:2 to Hebrews 12. God spoke to them, and they knew it; their hearts were filled with an expectancy--of what? Paul's great general definition of the saints in Romans 2:7 will give the answer: "Them that by patience in well-doing seek for glory" (that is, connected with the presence of God) "and honor" (the opposite of the guilt, disgrace, and uncleanness of sin) "and incorruption" (that is, a state of bodily deliverance).

Through their faith--Their faith brought the witness and the expectation, but not yet the realization. Received not the promise--As Joseph said down in Egypt as he lay dying, "God will surely visit you"; and he asked that his bones be carried up to Canaan, the land of promise, for burial. There they lie yet--waiting.

* We beg you, go through the Word of God studying the word "wait," as toward God. It is one of the great words of Scripture. Jacob said, "I have waited for Thy salvation, O Jehovah."

Isaiah:

"They that wait for Jehovah shall renew their strength" (Isa 40:31).

"They that wait for Me shall not be put to shame" (Isa 49:23).

"For from of old men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen a God besides Thee, Who worketh for him that waiteth for Him" (Isa 64:4).

Jeremiah:

"Jehovah is good unto them that wait for Him, to the soul that seeketh Him. It is good that a man should hope and quietly wait for the salvation of Jehovah." (Lam. 3:25-26).

And David:

"I waited patiently for Jehovah, And He inclined unto me and heard my cry" (Ps. 40:1).

"Rest in Jehovah and wait patiently for Him" (Ps. 37:7).

in waiting, the saints give God His place. Blessed is the man who finds himself taken by sovereign grace into His plans of infinite wisdom. God says to the Hebrew believers and to us, "Ye have need of patience, that, having done the will of God, ye may receive the promise" (Hebrews 10:36-37).

Heb 11:40: God having provided some better thing for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect: First, here, who are the "us"? They are Hebrew believers spoken to and of, as "partakers of a heavenly calling." (This the Israelites, the "these all" of verse 39, never were and never will be, "Us" discriminates between them and all believers on an exalted, heavenly Christ.) What is the "better thing"? We believe that our heavenly calling, our membership in the Body of Christ, is that "better thing." Oh, let us

cherish it! Since the lives of these great believers in Hebrews 11, Christ the Son of God has come, has died and been raised; and we died with Him, and were raised with Him into "heavenly places" and "seated" there with Him.

* "This better thing" than the O.T. saints had, is not explicitly described in Hebrews, for the great message of Hebrews is to a religious nation to whom Jehovah had spoken, and given a "religion." But now that God had "Spoken in His Son," former things--temple, sacrifices, days, seasons--were done away. The constant temptation of these Jews was to go back to this Judaism. But the only Priest God now recognized, having been offered for sin on earth--yea, "outside the gate" of Jerusalem itself, was at God's right hand in Heaven.

Infinite love had given Christ to die for sin. But, as today, and ever with wretched man, there was a turning to "religion," from which GOD had turned away! Man said, "I am a Jew"--just as today they say "I am a Presbyterian," "I am a Methodist," "I am a Baptist"--and so on. (And this despite specific forbidding in 1 Cor. 1:12-13.) But Christ died for sinners! Whether Jewish, Protestant, Catholic, infidel or atheist, or idolater, Christ died only for the LOST!

And He is the Great High Priest in Heaven of sinners, who as sinners, helpless, lost, and undone, have come to faith in a God Who "so loved" sinners, and in a Saviour to Whom alone at God's right hand is given the blessed work of maintaining believers on the way and bringing them where He is, in Glory!

They of the Old Testament were continually conscious of the great veil that hung between them and the ark of God's presence. How infinitely "better" it is to be invited "by a new and living way," by the blood of Christ and with Christ, to enter into the presence of God, by the Spirit! They of the Old Testament had a legal yoke which Peter said neither their fathers nor they "were able to bear"--the "ten thousand things" of God's Law. We have fellowship in the Spirit, He dwelling in each believer and, in a peculiar way, in the Assembly of believers. We have the Lord's Supper by which to keep in vivid memory that He has finished, Himself, the work He did at the Cross; and by which we show His death "till He come." And we have the blessed hope of our blessed Lord's return, looking for Him "so much the more, as we see the day drawing nigh" (Heb 10:25).

That apart from us they should not be made perfect: Here indeed is a glorious unity of all God's people: Israel with the earthly calling, and the saints now with the heavenly calling, looking forward to that day when shall be consummated in them and for them all their desire, yea, "exceeding abundantly above all they have asked or thought." Concerning the patriarchs our Lord Jesus told the Pharisees: "Ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and yourselves cast forth without" (Lk. 13:28). And as to the antediluvian saints, Enoch, for example, has been in Heaven between three and four thousand years. What it will be for Enoch to be "made perfect" must, we believe, concern bodily things; for we read in Hebrews 12:23, "Ye are come unto the spirits of just men made perfect." The spirits of these saints, now in heaven, had already been made perfect." The "perfecting" of Heb 11:40 looks forward to that salvation" consummated at the coming of Christ (Heb 9:28), which includes the redemption of the body. Compare Romans 13:11.

The same Greek word is used in Hebrews 6, where the exhortation is to "press on unto full growth." This "full growth," "no longer babes," is seen in Philipians 3:15, and 1Corinthians 2:6. That such an adult spiritual condition is attainable in this life is manifest. It corresponds to "him that is spiritual" of 1 Corinthians 2:15: that is, controlled by and walking in the Spirit. May it be the condition of all of us!

Hebrews 12

1 THEREFORE LET US ALSO, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

2 looking unto Jesus the File-Leader and Perfecter of faith, Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross, despising shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

3 For consider Him that hath endured such gainsaying of sinners against Himself, that ye wax not weary, fainting in your souls.

4 Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin:

5 and ye have forgotten the exhortation which reasoneth with you as with sons, My son, regard not lightly the chastening of the Lord, Nor faint when thou art reprov'd of Him;

6 For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, And scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.

7 It is for chastening that ye are enduring; God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father chasteneth not?

8 But if ye are without chastening, whereof all have been made partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

9 Furthermore, we had the fathers of our flesh to chasten us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?

10 For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed good to them; but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness.

11 All chastening seemeth for the present to be not joyous but grievous; yet afterward it yieldeth peaceable fruit unto them that have been exercised thereby, even the fruit of righteousness.

12 Wherefore lift up the hands that hang down, and the palsied knees;

13 and make straight paths for your feet, that that which is lame be not turned out of the way, but rather be healed.

THE ELEVENTH OF HEBREWS has been called "God's Westminster Abbey," in which He puts up monuments to the saints of the past. Rather, it is the heavenly amphitheater from which those who have gone before, the so great cloud of witnesses, are viewed as looking upon the race that you and I are running, down in the arena right now!

Therefore let us also, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, lay aside every weight, and the sin which does so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us--

Notice first the distinction between "weight" and "sin." How runners strip themselves of every weight possible, wearing the lightest clothing, the lightest shoes!* Many a weight carrier who may eventually get to Heaven, will be passed on the way by those who have laid weights aside.

* Mr. Ridout well says here: "We often hear, alas, the question: What is the harm or the sin in my doing this or that thing; engaging in this business, or indulging in that pleasure? The question is answered just here. Is the thing a weight, or is it a wing? Is it that which speeds you on your course or does it hold you back? ... Weights are not necessarily external: they are first of all in the heart. Duties are never weights. But the moment a thing gets a place in my heart and mind which is not in God's mind for me, it becomes a weight, no matter what it is."

Now as to the sin which doth so easily beset us--some make this the flesh, which is with the believer, although he is not "in the flesh" but "in the Spirit," Who gives him the victory. Others regard the sin which so easily besets as unbelief, that terrible temptation which these Hebrew believers were ever beset with, of letting go heavenly things for an earthly worship. "Easily" is a Greek word often translated plausibly, and meaning literally, "well-standing, around." The sin easily besets us. One well says, "Let us never forget that; nor think for a moment that we can get in a position in which sin will not be natural to the flesh, or where we do not need to be on our guard. Sin is as natural to the flesh as it is for an animal to breathe. And the moment the eye is taken off Christ, you have the certainty of the sin besetting you."

Next we have, And let us run with patience the race that is set before us--This "patience" is illustrated in Abraham in Hebrews 6:15: "And thus, having patiently endured, he obtained the promise." God could take each believer up to Heaven as soon as he believes. But then all would be babes, would they not? God sets before each of us a course, a race. It is not carried on in Heaven, but here, where is only the wilderness, with its constant trials of faith, the patient endurance of which is the only way to perfecting. So indeed it was with the Lord Himself, Who was "made perfect through sufferings" (Heb 2:10), "learned obedience by the things which He suffered," and thus was "made perfect" (Heb 5:8-9).

Lay aside every weight, and the sin ... let us run with patience the race--First we have the preparation for the race, then the running. This running our course is in view, as we have said, of the great examples of faith of the preceding chapter. (How dare you or how dare I count ourselves exempt from this race? Christendom is full of professing Christians who are not running this race, but are weighted down, and have never even considered laying aside cares, riches, pleasures, and "lusts of other things," as our Lord puts it in Mk. 4:19--"weights," all of them. Let us not dare to be like these!) Paul said to the Ephesian elders, "I hold not my life of any account as dear unto myself, so that I may accomplish my course" (Acts 20:24).

And again, "Know ye not that they that run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? Even so run; that ye may attain. And every man that striveth in the games exerciseth self-control in all things. Now they do it to receive a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, as not uncertainly; so fight I, as not beating the air" (1 Cor 9:24-26).

Later, writing from prison in Rome, he says he has not yet finished his course, but: "I am pressing on, if so be that I may lay hold on that for which also I was laid hold on by Christ Jesus ... I count not myself yet to have laid hold: but one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:12-14).

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And finally, just before Nero set his spirit free to go to be with Christ, which is "very far better," he writes, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown" (2Ti 4:7,8).

Hebrews 12:2: And now comes the great positive attitude in this conflict: Looking steadfastly on Jesus, the Leader and Completer of faith: Who, in view of the joy lying before Him, endured the Cross, having despised the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God! Our Lord is here made the Archegos, the Author and Captain or Perfecter of faith (not for all of "our faith," as the A.V. and also unfortunately the R. V. render, interpolating the word "our" which is not in the Greek). Jesus is the One Who Himself had perfect faith! Thayer well translates Archegos, "One who takes the lead in anything, and thus affords an example, a predecessor in the matter," adding of Christ, "Who in the pre-eminence of His faith far surpassed the examples commemorated in Hebrews 11." Our directions here are, to look objectively at our Lord Jesus, the File-Leader of the column of believers, those who had perfect faith to look at Him just as objectively as we would look at Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, or any of the other great cloud of witnesses.

Mr. Darby's words are illuminative: "When looking at Jesus" (which is here enjoined as the positive engagement of the soul, laying aside being negative) "the new man is active; there is a new object, which unburdens and detaches us from every other by means of a new affection, which has its place in the new nature and in Jesus Himself, to Whom we look, there is a positive power which sets us free." And Grant: "To get on in the road is the way to escape entanglements and the need of a battle. Christ is the

goal; and if our eyes are upon Him, we find at once the perfect example and the energy for the way."

Jesus endured the Cross, despising shame, to reach that place of eternal joy at the Father's right hand set before us as an example of faith. Even His enemies confessed, as they saw Him on the Cross, "He trusted on God!" What a wonderful thing, then, to be compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses as we find in Hebrews 11! Yea, and to be among those witnesses ourselves, traveling through this wilderness, remembering always to look upon the great Chief Witness, the Archegos—the File-Leader of all who have trusted God—even upon Jesus!

* The Greek verb *aphorao* translated "looking unto" (Thayer) means, "to turn eyes away from other things, and fix them on something"--in this case, a Person. The meaning here is not to look to Him for help, but to consider Him.

The One leading the column of witnesses was He who in view of the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross--For Jesus knew--had set before Him by the Father, in all its Divine fullness, the reward, and that eternal, that awaited Him risen from the dead and re-entering the glory which He had with the Father. There was no joy in all eternity like that of our Lord's meeting the Father after Calvary--meeting His Father's infinite delight in His Son's absolute obedience--"unto death, yea, the death of the Cross"!

There is no joy like the accomplishment of a noble task: and of the noblest task of all eternity, Christ was to say, "I have finished it."

There is among us on earth no joy like that of rescuing a fellow-creature from ruin. But Christ had the joy set before Him of rescuing and redeeming from endless woe so many that He would "see the travail of His soul and be satisfied"!

There was no joy like that of lavishing His infinite love on those eternally lost and undone without it and Him: for, being God, He is Love: and now it became possible to let love freely out, fully and forever.

There was no joy like unselfish love receiving, without stint or limit, that love for which true love longs: "Only love seeks love, and only love satisfies love."

There was no joy like looking forward, after the ages of sin, to a New Creation, based on His sacrifice, "where righteousness is at home."

There is no earthly delight like that of doing the will of, perfectly pleasing, another to whom our will is properly subjected. How infinitely more with Christ, Who said: "I delight to do Thy will, O My God; Yea, Thy Law is within My heart."

And, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to accomplish His work." "The cup which the Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?"

The joy of being the means of letting out the heart of God toward His creatures was set before Christ! When He bare men's sins and put them away, then the mighty river of grace, pure grace, from the heart of God, Who delighteth in mercy, could pour forth! "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses." "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." Or, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the Propitiation for our sins." Or, "We know and have believed the love which God hath in our case."

Finally, there is the joy of the Victor: "I also overcame, and sat down with My Father in His throne" (Rev. 3:21). God the Father eternally speaks to Him: "Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity" ... "Thou didst resist unto blood, striving against sin." And now, "Judgment has returned unto righteousness, and all the upright in heart rejoice with Thee and with Me forever."

Hebrews 12:3: For consider Him that hath endured such gainsaying of sinners against Himself, that ye wax not weary, fainting in your souls: When this we do, our strength to endure is unconsciously recovered, just as it is in lesser measure when we contemplate any of the heroes of faith of the Bible or of history. MacArthur and Wainwright and their brave men, in their heroic stand in the Pacific, roused the patriotism of all lovers of liberty, and strengthened those who were beginning to wax weary ... in their souls. We are not instructed, when being chastened or in time of distress, to cry unto the Lord only--excellent as that is--but to run with patience the race set before us, considering constantly our Lord; to consider Him in His enduring! It is God's plan that we shall keep considering Him, follow His path in "the days of His flesh," study His attitude in every trial--for He had all the trials! Such contemplation will deliver us from fainting in our souls.

Hebrews 12:4: Then these believers are told, Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin: Your strife against sin has not entailed the shedding of your blood, as it did that of many of the Old Testament worthies, and of Jesus Himself! To "strive" here is literally, in the Greek, antagonizing. In fact the two strongest words for conflict occur here in Hebrews 12:4 within five Greek words! Blessed is the man that has made no inner truce with sin! And ye have forgotten the exhortation which reasoneth with you as with sons.

* Striving against sin: "Sin is personified"--Vincent.

"The personification of sin is natural and common: Jas 1:15; Rom. 6:12 ff. Sin is one, whether it show itself within, in the Christian himself (vs. 1), or without, as here, in his adversaries."--Westcott.

Hebrews 12:5-6: My son, regard not lightly the chastening of the Lord, Nor faint when Thou art reproved of Him; For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, And scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.

In these verses the Greek word for son is *huios*, adult-son, son come-of-age. Five times is this word used in Hebrews 12:5-8!

(See the author's note on the Greek words *tekna* and *huioi*, in *Romans Verse by Verse*, p. 312-316.) Infants (Gr., *tekna*) we cannot reason with. Little children in the family may not understand the parents; but as they grow up and become adult-sons, *huioi*, it is our delight to see them entering into and hearkening to our parental counsels. Here in verse 5 the parental reasoning is called the exhortation, the word that characterizes the Hebrews epistle (Heb 13:22). Beautiful expression, the exhortation which reasoneth with

you as with adult-sons!

Then we have the two attitudes toward God's dealing with us, which we must guard against: (a) regarding lightly His chastening hand; or (b) fainting: saying, "My trouble is greater than I can bear." (a) Many and many a believer, when God brings chastening, refuses to consider the matter as from God, forgetting that in His hand our breath is, and His are all our ways (Dan. 5:23), forgetting that nothing merely "happens" to us. Are you regarding lightly some chastening of His?

(b) Nor faint when thou art reprov'd of Him: We are told by the Spirit through Paul that "God is faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able" (1 Cor. 10:13); that "all things work together for good" (Rom. 8:28); that our Lord's "grace is sufficient" (2 Cor. 12:9).

And now look at the word "chasten." Mr. James McConkey emphasized the fact that the word for a child-at-school, or under discipline, the Greek word *paideuo*, is here formed into a verb, *paideuo*, which one may translate, as he does, to "child-train."

* This word in vs. 5, as well as the verb in vs. 5, 7, 8; and 6, 7, 9, 10, indicates a child in relation to parents, from infancy to young manhood. Springing from this word are:

Paideia, meaning education, training and nurture of children (Eph. 6:4); instruction, discipline (2Ti 3:16); and here in Hebrews, corrective chastisement: Hebrews 12:5, 7, 8, 11.

Paideuo (Heb 12:5-13) to give admonition, training, chastening. This verb is frequently used: 2Ti 2:25; Tit. 2:12; 1Cor 11:32; 2Cor 6:9. See Rev. 3:19: "As many as I love, I reprove and chasten": the very words of Heb. 12:5-6: Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth.

Hebrews 12:7: It is for chastening that ye endure; God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father chasteneth not? Alford says, It is "not for punishment, not for any evil purpose. You are beneath the attention and affectionate superintendence of the Father." (So, if a real son!)

Hebrews 12:8: But if ye are without chastening, whereof all (sons) have been made partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons of chastening and its place, note here beloved King David's treatment of Adonijah, the son who rose up to kill his father: it is written, "His father had not displeas'd him at any time in saying, Why hast thou done so?" No chastening, ever!* (1 Kings 1:5-6.) But from another son of David, Solomon, to whom God gave wisdom concerning human life as to no other man, we quote from his Book of Proverbs as follows: and how we beseech parents to read these passages! In these wretched days, when children are not chastened, hear what God says:

"He that spareth his rod hateth his son; But he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes" (Prov. 13:24).

"Chasten thy son, seeing there is hope; And set not thy heart on his destruction" (Pr 19:18).

"Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; But the rod of correction shall drive it far from him" (Pr 22:15).

"Withhold not correction from the child; For if thou beat him with the rod, he will not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, And shalt deliver his soul from Sheol" (Pr 23:13-14).

"The rod and reproof give wisdom; But a child left to himself causeth shame to his mother" (Pr 29:15).

Let no shallow wickedness of a teaching developing in these Sodom days deceive you, O parent! But literally obey—always prayerfully and with love—these Divine directions for bringing up your children, and God will reward you.

* "The meaning of vs. 8 is, If ye are not dealt with as all legitimate children are, it would follow that ye are considered as not belonging to them." (Stuart.)

Calvin says, "the profession of Christ would be false and deceitful if they withdrew themselves from the discipline of the Father, and they would thus become bastards, and be no more children."

And Owen: "Those who have only the name of Christians are called bastards or spurious or illegitimate children, because they are not born of God, being only children of the flesh—not Isaacs, but ishmaels, whatever their profession."

A "bastard" bears the family name—but does not belong! Of all dooms, to bear the name of a child of God, and not be a child, is worst!

Hebrews 12:9: Furthermore, we had the fathers of our flesh to chasten us, and we give them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of our spirits, and live? We gave them reverence—Note this, ye parents. A child's "reverence" for a parent springs from Proper "chastening." Shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?—How unutterably solemn these words! For life, and that eternal, is involved! In God's providence the fathers of our flesh did not have our spirits in their hands. Man is essentially a spirit, living in a body, Possessed of a soul. Here again God is seen as "the God of the spirits of all flesh" (Num. 16:22; 27:16). Compare "The spirit returneth unto God Who gave it" (Eccl. 12:7); "And her spirit returned" (Lk. 8:55). And live?—"Living" is dependent on being in subjection unto the Father of our spirits. (Alford well says here, "Your endurance, like Christ's endurance, will not be thrown away. He had joy before Him, you have a life before you.") As Paul said, "God is my witness, Whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of His Son."

Compare also John 3:6: "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit," without which birth a man cannot even see the kingdom of God. Note that this verse does not teach annihilation—that those who refuse to be subject to the Father of spirits cease to exist. On the contrary, it teaches the regeneration, and the life thereafter, both in this world and that to come, of those who become in subjection to the Father of spirits. We are constantly taught that those are saved who become obedient to the word of truth, the gospel (Acts 6:7; Rom. 15:18).

Heb 12:10: For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed good to them; but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness: Here temporary parental chastening is contrasted with the loving Divine discipline of Heb 12:6. How long it takes us to learn this! How blessed it would be if at the very beginning of the believer's life he were taught to surrender himself into a loving Father's hands for whatever discipline necessary, looking to the glorious goal-partaking of God's own "holiness." Everyone begotten of God has tasted this holiness, but the full bliss of it lies in the future, when His servants "shall see His face and His name shall be in their foreheads."

Hebrews 12:11: All chastening seemeth for the present to be not joyous but grievous; yet afterward it Yieldeth peaceable fruit unto them that have been exercised thereby, even the fruit of righteousness: Let this verse speak for itself! Note the yet afterward--and the other word, exercised thereby. To be exercised thereby is neither to "lightly regard it", nor to "harden" oneself to it not seeing the Father's hand but to enter into its meaning with Surrender and joy.

Hebrews 12:12, 13, Wherefore Lift up the hands that hang down, and the palsied knees; and make straight paths for your feet, that that which is lame be not turned out of the way, but rather be healed--These verses contain quotations from the old Testament in the Septuagint Version (as are all O.T. quotations in Hebrews). Verse 12 quotes Isaiah 35:3, "Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees." Verse 13 quotes Proverbs 4:26: "Make level the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established." (See Conybeare and Howson here.)

The exhortations turn upon the word "wherefore." Hands that hang down have ceased glad service; palsied knees are not joyfully walking! The limping limb (that which is lame) is in danger of being permanently so; whereas God desires to have it healed! These exhortations are that we may not misunderstand the blessed end of God's fatherly chastening and discipline. Mark Paul's experience when, after the great revelation, the catching up to Heaven of 2 Corinthians 12:7-10, there was given to him a thorn in the flesh! He went to the Lord three times regarding it, begging its removal. When, behold, his Lord says to him, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for My power is made perfect IN weakness"! And now note, and let us all remember, Paul's glorious response: "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me! Wherefore I take pleasure in weaknesses, in injuries, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong!"

And look at God's saints of old: At David, when God's hand fell upon him regarding the child by Uriah's wife, (2 Sa 12:1-23), or when Absalom drove him Out (2 Sam. 16:9-14).

Or at Job, declared by Jehovah to be the best man on earth, yet everything taken from him! He moaned, protested, but always prayed. And at last Jehovah said to Eliphaz and the three friends:

"My wrath is kindled against thee; for ye have not spoken of Me the thing that is right, as My servant Job hath. Now therefore, take unto you seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to My servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt-offering; and My servant Job shall pray for you; for him will I accept" (Job 42:7-8).

Or look at such a saint as Frances Ridley Havergal, who never saw a well day, but the fragrance of whose devotion to the Lord has filled the Church! We had just such a woman in Chicago--Mrs. Fred Soukup, now with Christ. Many, many years she lay on her bed, unable even to lift a hand to feed herself! But saints came from all about to hear her words of praise, and see her heavenly face!

This is the experience of all who learn from the heart, the blessed words, "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth"! Oh, let us believe it, and be ready to rejoice in tribulation as it comes. And meditate often on such verses as Paul sets before us, and Peter.

"We also rejoice in our tribulations: knowing that tribulation worketh steadfastness" (Rom. 5:3).

"Patient in tribulation" (Rom. 12:12).

"I am filled with comfort, I overflow with joy in all our affliction" (2 Cor. 7:4).

"Insomuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, rejoice" (1 Pet. 4:13).

"Wherefore I ask that ye may not faint at my tribulations for you, which are your glory" (Eph. 3:13).

"Let them also that suffer according to the will of God commit their souls in well-doing unto a faithful Creator" (1 Pet 4:19).

"The discipline of the human father is regulated 'according to his pleasure.' Even when his purpose is best, he may fail as to the method; and also his purpose may be selfish. But with God, for His part, purpose and accomplishment are identical; and His aim is the advantage of His children. The spiritual son then may be sure both as to the will and as to the wisdom of his Father."--Westcott, p. 403.

We have in Heb 12:5-13, here in Hebrews 12 the clearest teaching of the relationship of children with God the Father that is found in Hebrews.

Hebrews 12:14 Follow after peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord:

15 looking carefully lest there be any man that falleth short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby the many be defiled;

16 lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one mess of meat sold his own birthright.

17 For ye know that even when he afterward desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected; for he found no place for a change of mind in his father, though he sought it diligently with tears.

In these verses we have another solemn exhortation and warning. First, verse 14, Follow after peace with all men: The words Follow after translate a Greek word meaning to pursue, as in a chase or battle. Paul frequently uses the word, as "Follow after love" (1 Cor. 14:1). Peace, in a world like this, and especially peace with all men, will not just come our way. It must be pursued by us. We may well remember that the Greek word is used often to denote persecution, in which the persecuted were followed, hunted, sought out. Let us examine ourselves as to whether we are thus diligently seeking peace with all men.

And the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord. Here is at once an excuse for all "holiness" conventions and camp meetings that ever took place! Remembering that this whole verse is governed by the word "follow" in the sense of "pursue," we find, Follow on after ... the sanctification (hagiasmos)--This word is used ten times in the New Testament, all but once by Paul; the other use, 1 Peter 1:2, "sanctification of the Spirit," even emphasizing and defining its other occurrences.

* Many earnest believers are very poorly instructed as to scriptural "sanctification."

Let us note:

1. All those who are in Christ are "sanctified." This is seen from 1 Cor. 1:2, "the Church of God which is at Corinth, even them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus." This cannot refer to their "experience," for we see from Hebrews 3:1-3 that they were "babes" and "carnal." But they were no longer in Adam, but in the Second Man, Christ, and 2 Cor. 5:17 was true of them--they were "new creatures."

2. Sanctification in Hebrews has this meaning, separated to God. It does not refer to our experience or feelings. "We have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb 10:10). It was brought about through the blood of Christ--Who, "that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered without the gate" (Heb 13:12). Christ's shed blood is called "the blood of the covenant wherewith one was sanctified." In Hebrews 10:29, we see that this separation to God could wholly be abandoned by apostasy--by "counting the blood a 'common thing.'" In Hebrews 12:14 we see that this separation to God, accomplished by the blood shed for us, and trusted in, was to be persisted in, not apostatized from.

3. In 1 Thess. 5:23 we read, "And the God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly." This refers to the work of the Holy Spirit in a believer, by which the life and walk become separated and devoted to God. It is this passage that "Holiness" people constantly emphasize, and rightly! But we must not be ignorant of that sanctification which is true of all believers, of all "in Christ," that of 1 Cor. 1:2. Nor must we be intolerant of degrees of devotion short of 1 Thess. 5:23. Let us not, also, base our assurance of "holiness" upon some "experience" we have had, but rather upon the fact that all in Christ were sanctified (as said in paragraph No. 2), and have the Holy Spirit, and are asked to yield to Him! to be "filled" by Him!

Howbeit, in 1 Corinthians 1:30, it is used in its fundamental sense, which must be attended to by all who would receive, the gospel as given by God: "Of Him (God) are ye who are in Christ Jesus, Who was made unto us wisdom from God: (which included three things:) righteousness and sanctification, and redemption.

We must remember our Lord's prayer in John 17:19: "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth." It is evident that our Lord's "Sanctifying" Himself could not signify any moral or spiritual change in Himself, but rather a setting Himself apart to the task that was before His mind, even the Procuring of our being separated, handed over, to God, through Christ's sacrifice. God made Christ "to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." In Christ we have been cut off (at the Cross) from the world, and belong in Heaven! He said, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."

Again, let us observe, that "sanctification" or holiness in such texts as Romans 6:19, 22; 1 Thessalonians 4:3, 4, 7; 1 Timothy 2:15, does not refer to making the believer any more a "new creature" than when he first believed, when he was "sanctified in Christ Jesus." But it does refer to that result of surrender to the operation of the indwelling Spirit by which He takes charge of our conscious faculties. It is written to believers, "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be the Spirit of God dwelleth in you." For upon and in connection with this marvelous operation called "sanctification of the Spirit" (2 Thess. 2:13), the Spirit Himself indwells those "created in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:10). This "sanctification of the Spirit" refers to the whole work of the Holy Spirit in us, in accordance with the fact that we died with Christ, and are now in the Risen Christ (Rom. 6:8-11). It is the "renewing" referred to in such passages in Romans 12:2; Ephesians 4:23; Colossians 3:10; Titus 3:5. It is accomplished by the Spirit through the Word, Ephesians 5:26: "That He might sanctify it (the Church, Eph 5:25), having cleansed it by the washing of water with the Word." "Sanctification" in this aspect becomes a Conscious state in the believer, a complete change in our conscious faculties, as is described in Philippians 4:7: "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus"; or Colossians 3:17: "Whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."

* While on the one hand we must guard against any thought that the flesh is changed, or that our bodies are to be trusted; yet, on the other hand, we must either accept the fact that God takes complete charge of us, or deny these, His plain words, and such testimonies as Paul's: "To me to live is Christ." How sane is his word, also: "For I know nothing against myself; yet am I not hereby justified; but He that judgeth me is the Lord."

The "holiness" people (dear Saints, and none of them modernists!) Make "a clean heart," which as we have seen, is taught in the N.T. (1 Tim. 1:5; Acts 15:8-9), to be "eradication of the sinful principle from the flesh"--which is tragic error.

The "flesh" will be with us till we get our new bodies. Paul could have "walked after the flesh," for the flesh was present with him; but he did not! instead, he says, "Thanks be unto God, who always leadeth us in triumph in Christ" (2 Cor. 2:14).

--Sanctification, without which no man shall see the Lord: We are made to tremble (as we ought to tremble) many times in this book of Hebrews; and here again. Shall we say that none but those who have followed on unto entire control by the Spirit of God shall see the Lord? No, for although this warning is most solemn, connected as it is with the exhortation to look carefully (Heb 12:15) concerning some who might come eternally short of salvation, yet it must be connected with those Scriptures which reveal the infinite reach of Divine grace! As for example, the passage about the incestuous man of 1 Corinthians 5; or those of 1 Corinthians 11 who, partaking of the Lord's Supper in carelessness or ignorance, had been chastened unto physical illness and even death (1 Cor. 11:30), that they might not "be condemned with the world"! (1Cor 11:32).

Yet on the other hand, we must not miss the truth that there is that sanctification which all true Saints yearn after, and in their measure "pursue." John in his first epistle says, "Whosoever is begotten of God doth not practice sin, because His (God's) seed abideth in Him; and he cannot practice sin, because he is begotten of God."

Again, in Hebrews 12:14, do not confuse the sanctification with our pursuing it. God does not say that no man shall see the Lord except those who have pursued sanctification (do we not all feel that we have pursued it too feebly?) But He does say that no man without that sanctification shall see the Lord.

Heb 12:15, 16: looking carefully lest there be any man that falleth short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby the many be defiled; lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one mess of meat sold his own birthright. These verses are directed to all the Assembly, but especially to those, as in Hebrews 13:17, who "had the rule over them," and "watched in behalf of their souls."

These were to watch for four kinds of troublers:

1. Lest (there should be) any man that falleth short of the grace of God.
2. Lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you.
3. Lest (there should be) any fornicator.
4. Lest there be any profane person.

On reading this, our hearts sink within us as we contemplate the churches today, for who is ready to observe these so searching directions of the holy apostle?

1. First, then, Lest there be any man among professed believers that really was falling short of or (literally in the Greek) falling back from the grace of God. What sort of person is this, and how does he fall short of the grace of God? Westcott insists, "The construction marks a falling back from that with which some connection exists, implying a moral separation. The present participle describes a continuous state and not a single defection." This agrees with that fatal "falling away" of Hebrews 6:6--after "tasting." Is it not also suggested in Paul's plea in 2 Corinthians 6:1: "And working together with God we entreat also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain"--through neglect or sloth falling back from it? Chrysostom says, "The image is taken from a company of travelers, one of whom lags behind, and so never reaches the end of the long and laborious journey."

We remember how the rocky-ground hearers of our Lord's parable at first eagerly responded. The seed sprang immediately up, but there was little soil and unbroken rock beneath; and the Lord said, "These have no root, who for awhile believe, and in time of temptation fall away" (Lk. 8:13). How solemn is the use of this word "fall" in the book of Hebrews! First, Hebrews 3:12, "Take heed, brethren, lest haply there shall be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief, in falling away from the Living God." Then Hebrews 6:6: "tasting," and then "falling away"—impossible to "renew," because "rejected" of God!

Then Hebrews 4:11 "Give diligence to enter into that rest, that no man fall after the same example of disobedience."

Next, Hebrews 10:31, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God"!

And now, Hebrews 12:15, To fall back from (or fall short of) the grace of God! Compare 1 Timothy 4:1; Galatians 5:4; remember Revelation 2:5!

2. Lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you--This is a quotation from Moses' terrible warning to some presumptuous hearer of the Law, who, listening to the warnings, "blesses himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I do walk in the stubbornness of my heart" (Deut. 29:18-21). Such a one was called "a root that beareth gall and wormwood." Now such may be in the Assembly undiscovered, until they spring up and trouble--by evil doctrine or practice. For if not dealt with, such will defile the many. (Alas, how frequently has a whole assembly of saints been "defiled" by such a root of bitterness permitted after it springs up, and is plainly evident. Time after time we have ourselves seen it, and Church history is full of such instances. The time the leaders in an Assembly (the episkopoi, 1 Tim. 3:1) should deal with such an one, is immediately upon his "springing up," that is, manifesting himself. Thus Paul directs the Corinthians: 1 Cor. 5:13.) Is there anyone reading this who knows himself to have been the cause of "bitterness" and trouble among the saints? Let him beware!

3. Lest there be any fornicator--In Hebrews 13:4 we read, "for fornicators and adulterers God will judge"--that is, in the future; but the leaders of the Assembly, and in fact all in the Assembly of God, are to watch that fornicators are not tolerated. There are also warnings in 1 Corinthians 5:9-11 and 6:9 against such toleration; for Corinth was notorious throughout the world for its extreme looseness in this thing. The immoral men of the world in England in the eighteenth century called themselves "Corinthians." Indeed,

this sin was so universal in the Greek world as not to be a matter of conscience at all; and the council at Jerusalem of Acts 15 decided to lay upon the Gentiles "no greater burden than these necessary things: that ye abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication."

4. Lest there be (in the Christian Assembly) any profane person, as Esau, who for one mess of food sold his own birthright: Note how the example of what is here called a profane person is set forth in Genesis 25: Esau came in from his hunting (for he was a "sporting man," taking life as a thing of enjoyment, with no appreciation of the God with Whom his father Isaac and his grandfather Abraham had dealt) faint with hunger. His brother Jacob, we read, was "a perfect man" ("a quiet man" A.R.V.). Not perfect morally, but appreciating what human life means, and giving himself to its tasks. We find him attending to the family needs, boiling pottage of red lentils. Esau, the "man of the field" points to the Pot of red lentils Jacob's industry has prepared, and then to his own red beard, and utters one of the very few "jokes" the Bible records, saying (literally), "Feed that red to this red." Jacob, without yet fully comprehending the vastness of blessing which the Divine Abrahamic covenant conveyed, yet rightly valuing it above all else, meets his elder brother's jesting but selfish demand with a shrewd request of his own: "Sell me first thy birthright." Out blurts from Esau's "profane" mouth: "Behold, I am about to die!" (ridiculous falsehood!) "And what profit shall the birthright do to me?" Jacob, not trusting him, puts him under oath, then feeds him his fill of red lentil pottage. And off he goes, having "despised his birthright" (Gen. 25:34).

Now, God did not forget this profane despising of Himself and His covenant promises. Esau knew no more of God than did the beasts he hunted! He was godless in the sense that God was not "in all his thought." As the Psalmist says, "Man being in honor abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish" (Ps 49:12). So here in Hebrews he is called a profane person. (The Greek word *bebelos* translated here profane, has no necessary reference to blasphemy or violent wickedness, but, almost, if one might say so, the opposite. It denotes literally "a threshold that anyone and everyone may trample over." It refers to something in which there is no special consciousness (1 Tim. 1:9; 4:7; 6:20; 2 Tim. 2:16). We must gather that a profane man, then, is one in whom there is no thought of God!) And why do we quote all this? Lest there be any professing Christian or known professor, who becomes like Esau, a profane person, no real godliness about him; no sense of the infinite value of eternal things; for whom the devil has probably already laid the trap to sell out eternity for one mess of meat in this passing, dying world. Unbelievable as it may seem, you know such people! Alas, how many thousands does this describe, for the Hebrew believers in this passage are being exhorted concerning their own company--Lest there be among them a profane person! Alas for the day when, like Esau, such as have despised spiritual privilege will desire to inherit the blessing of eternal bliss and be rejected! For there follows Heb 12:17:

For ye know that even when he afterward desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected; for he found no place for a change of mind in his father (Gen. 27:33, 40), though he sought it (the despised blessing) diligently with tears. This Revised Version change from the King James reading is correct. It is strange that some excellent commentators have translated *metanoia*, change of mind, as "repentance," and made it mean a spiritual state which Esau strove to attain and could not. No doubt the will of God, which Isaac clearly knew, was behind his words to Esau: "I have blessed him (Jacob) ... yea, and he shall be blessed ... I have made him thy lord ... Thou shalt serve thy brother" (Gen. 27:33, 37, 40). But Esau was not seeking God, or repentance from sin, but a lost birthright, and the blessing it would have brought.

Heb 12:18 For ye are not come unto a mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, and unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest,

19 and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard entreated that no word more should be spoken unto them!

20 For they could not endure that which was enjoined, If even a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned!

21 And so fearful was the appearance, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake!

22 But ye are come unto Mount Zion; and unto the city of the Living God, the heavenly Jerusalem; and to innumerable hosts of angels,

23 the general assembly; and to the Church of the firstborn who are enrolled in Heaven; and to God the judge of all; and to the spirits of just men made perfect;

24 and to Jesus the Mediator of a new covenant; and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better than that of Abel.

In this great passage we have before us the marvelous contrast between the position of those under Law and that of those under Grace, set forth in an overwhelming manner. The infinite moral distance between the holy God and sinful man is the foundation. It is not a setting forth of man's inability to carry out the instructions of the Law that is here before us, but the presence of the Lawgiver. God is present, and at the foot of the mountain sinful man is present. And what is the effect on man? Terror! Inability to endure the consciousness that no one--not even a beast--should touch the mountain. Here is guilt unexpiated, and God's presence inescapable! Therefore they cried out to Moses, "Go thou near, and hear all that Jehovah our God shall say: and speak thou unto us all that Jehovah our God shall speak unto thee; and we will hear it, and do it" (Deut. 5:27).

* In Romans and Galatians Paul shows that even this promise was vain, if sincere. Yet until the Lord Jesus came and put away sin at Calvary, God suffered Israel to have the Law and the Levitical code, with its sin-offerings on its Day of Atonement, all Prophetical and typical, of course.

Heb 12:18: For ye are not come--(The word "For," in this place is not specially to be connected with its immediate context, but with the whole preceding part of the epistle.) Contrast Ye are not come, with verse 22, But ye are come. Now follow some eight things which the Holy Spirit of God declares Christians--Christian believers, whether Hebrews as here, or any who get under Judaizing influences--are not come to:

1. For ye are not come unto a mount that might be touched--This at once sets forth the walk of faith which is ours, in contrast to the visible, earthly things the Hebrews had. "We walk by faith, not by appearance" (2 Cor. 5:7, R.V. margin).

* God speaks in Rev 22 of the heavenly Jerusalem to which we have come. We shall find in Rev. 21 that this is a literal city, whose streets of gold will indeed be "touched" by the feet of the risen bodies of the saints. But the description here of Mount Sinai sets forth the fact that God came down to a nation in the flesh--came demanding holiness and righteousness, and He was entirely too near! If He had spoken from Heaven, they would have Promised themselves obedience, and peace thereby--promised in the self-delusion of sinners, certainly, but cherishing their delusion.

But when God came down to a mount at the foot of which they were, unto a mount that might be touched, it was terrible to them. While it might be touched, their touching it would cost them death, (Sinai was a tangible mountain. It could be touched by fingers of flesh. God's commanding is not to be touched by unholy man is another thing altogether.)

Read Ex. 19:11-13. "Jehovah will come down in the sight of all the people upon Mount Sinai. And thou shalt set bounds unto the People round about, saying, Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely Put to death; no hand shall touch him, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether it be beast or man, he shall not live."

No wonder we read in vss. 16-18: "And it came to Pass on the third day, when it was morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of a trumpet exceeding loud; and all the people that were in the camp trembled. And Moses brought forth the People out of the camp to meet God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. And Mount Sinai, the whole of it, smoked, because Jehovah descended upon it in fire; and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly."

It is a strange but almost universal tendency of the human heart when seeking to deal with God, to try to find some sacred place. But our Lord said to the Samaritan woman, "The hour cometh, when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father" (John 4:21). Let all legalists assemble and hearken to the thunders, and the trumpet "exceeding loud"! If they must have Moses' Law, let them go and stand beneath Sinai. There is no other place from which God declares it.

But let the Seventh-Day people of all sorts (whether or not they mix Adventism with it); the "under-the-law-as-a-rule-of-life" people, proud with Reformed orthodoxy; also those who would abstain from meats forbidden to the Jews; and those who "observe days, and months, and seasons, and years" (of whom Paul was "afraid"); yea, all whose conscience accuses them because of trespasses done, or duties undone: let all these hearken well to this word of Heb 12:18: YE ARE NOT COME! and to that of verse 22, But ye ARE come! Mount Sinai must disappear, O Hebrew believer, for God hath said, Ye are NOT come there! (And God never brought a Gentile believer there!) For hear further:

2. And that burned with fire--There is no approach here, but death only! In Deuteronomy 4:11 we read, "Ye came near and stood under the mountain; and the mountain burned with fire unto the heart of Heaven." And Moses repeated to Israel in Hebrews 5:4-5: "Jehovah spake with you face to face in the mount out of the midst of the fire (I stood between Jehovah and you at that time, to show you the word of Jehovah: for ye were afraid because of the fire, and went not up into the mount)."

Remember that disobedient sinners will one day find the realization of Hebrews 12:29, "Our God is a consuming fire." He had taught Moses at the burning bush that the bush burned with fire and not a leaf withered! Moses saw the great sight: "The bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed" (Ex. 3:2). So is God with His people: it is our God Who is a consuming fire, and yet His name is Love, and He delighteth in mercy!

Then why the scene at Sinai? Let us proceed with the description and then seek to answer.

And unto blackness and darkness--(The third and fourth things Ye are NOT come unto.) Here was no real revelation of God, except of His infinite distance from sinful man. That there should have been "fire to the heart of Heaven," as we quoted above, and yet "thick darkness" as the people looked, seems impossible. But there could not be a truer description of what the Law does spiritually for sinners. There is the awful energy of fire, and yet no revelation of light, but instead, darkness. There is the mountain "quaking"--irresistible power, but no means of approaching or appeasing God. The people showed fear, indeed, of the majesty displayed, but no such self-judgment as was in the publican who "smote his breast, saying, God be Thou merciful (lit., 'propitiated') to me a sinner." Let those mark well who would come the Sinai-route to God, by "good works" that they do, or think they have done: He is a consuming fire, but there is no revelation of Himself: fire, but blackness and darkness. God's name is LOVE, we repeat, but He is also infinitely holy and righteous.

5. And tempest--Again there is the sense of terrible power, but no hint of a way of approach for a Sinner. God's power, but not Himself. "Tempest" is the exhibition of Divine energy in judgment, the very opposite of peace, which we have found in Christ. Even when Elijah "stood upon the mount before Jehovah" (1Kings 19:11-12): "Behold, Jehovah passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before Jehovah; but Jehovah was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but Jehovah was not in the earthquake: and after the earthquake a fire; but Jehovah was not in the fire; and after the fire

a sound of gentle stillness" (R.V., margin, Heb.).

These first three manifestations were what Elijah expected God to show. ("Wilt Thou that we bid fire to come down from Heaven, and consume them, even as Elijah did?" asked James and John. They are not the only ones who have had that desire!)

Now God is ever the same, and you ask, Can blackness, and darkness, and tempest be of Him Who took up little children in His arms, and laid His hand on the leper, and said to the wretched woman, "Neither do I condemn thee"? Yes, the very same! And this was why the Law was given on Sinai: that it might be "the ministration of death," "the ministration of condemnation" (2 Cor. 3:7, 9) which God calls it. Let us not dare to think of

it differently. "The Law came in alongside, that the trespass might abound" (Rom. 5:20). Sin was there before, but when the Law was given to Israel, they knew the mind of Jehovah! What was sin, now became trespass--which means, breaking through bounds. See the effect of the Law on the meekest and best servant of God then on earth: Moses said, "All our days are passed away in Thy wrath --. Thou hast set all our iniquities before Thee, our secret sins in the light of Thy countenance" (Ps. 90:9, 8).

Compare that with John 1:17: "The Law was given through Moses; Grace and Truth came through Jesus Christ ..." And in that first of John, God the Father is a Bosom (Jn 1:18), Christ a Lamb (John 1:29), and the Holy Spirit, a Dove (John 1:32). God is not angry with us, but God is God--infinitely loving, or He would not have given His Son; but absolutely holy, for when our sin was placed on this Son, God did not spare Him, but delivered Him up. Friend, it is because of that hatred of God for sin, and His having at the Cross dealt with sin, forsaking His own Son, that we can trust God! If the judgment against sin at the Cross had not been complete, we could but fear that at some time in the future God would bring up our sins again. He never changes: but we are not come unto a mount where His presence in fiery judgment is being exhibited.

* The obstinate perversity of man is not more clearly shown than in his attitudes toward Law and Grace. The Jews gloried in the Law that cursed them, yet turned back to their lusts which the Law forbade. The Gentiles, to whom are given the good things of Grace, instead of Law, habitually turn back to the Law. See their "Standards" and "Creeds". Their "services" sometimes hear the Ten Commandments read several times on a single occasion! Yet they pass by God's Word, that affirms, over and over, that the believer, being not under Law, but Grace, shall be delivered from sin's bondage.

6. (Heb 12:19) And the sound of a trumpet--Here is authority; here is the awakening, awful command of Divine Majesty, from Sinai, covered with blackness and darkness. How different the gentle words of the gospel of Grace! "the illumination of the gospel of the glory of Christ, Who is the image of God" (2 Cor. 4:4, margin). A trumpet of awful warning and alarm--we are not come to that.

* "On the third day ... thunders ... lightnings ... a thick cloud ... and the voice of a trumpet exceeding loud; and all the people that were in the camp trembled ... When the voice of the trumpet waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice ..." (Ex. 19:16, 19).

Again, a trumpet called Israel into assembly or into marching order: "And Jehovah spake unto Moses saying, Make thee two trumpets of silver ... and thou shalt use them for the calling of the congregation, and ... they shall blow an alarm for their journeys ... and when ye go to war ... ye shall sound an alarm with the trumpets" (Num. 10:2, 6, 9).

So much for trumpets used by man. In The Revelation you remember the seven trumpets (8:1 ff). We read also of a trumpet in connection with the Rapture of the Church, when: "The Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God" (1 Thess. 4:16).

See also 1 Cor. 15:52, where that trumpet is again connected with the resurrection of the just.

7. And the voice of words--Remember Heb 12:26 of our chapter, "Whose voice then shook the earth"! (Now you may say, Such a display of glorious majesty and Power would certainly bring about in the very hearts of those who heard, godliness. Friend, you are utterly astray! The Law written on tables is said to be "a ministration of condemnation and death" (2 Cor. 3:7, 9). God says the Law was given that the trespass thereof (paraptoma, the breaking through its commands) might abound (Rom. 5:20). What are you going to believe: your own "reason" or God's repeated statements? Christendom has what it calls "the Christian religion," but remember that God gave one religion, Judaism--which has passed away; and that "Christian," as we said, is a Gentile, ignorant name for believers, a name of Contempt (Acts 11:26), like the name "Jesus-men," as the Oriental called believers. God may and does say that believers are not under Law, having died unto the Law principle: and are now "annulled" (katergeo) from that principle (Rom. 7:6). God may devote an epistle of burning, loving remonstrance against any Gentiles even looking toward Sinai, warning, "Ye are annulled from Christ, ye who would be justified by the Law" (Gal. 5:4): and again, "The Law is not of Grace." God may, and does, in Heb. 7:18, say, There is a disannulling of a foregoing commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness; (for the Law made nothing Perfect!); and may follow with the setting forth of a better hope, even Christ and His work, "through which (Christ) we draw nigh unto God." What will men do? They will mix Law and Grace! Every so-called "great" denomination holds fast to Moses.)

There are those today who would seek for visions and voices to arouse their faith. Dear friend, we are not come to that, but rather, "These things" are "written unto you, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, even unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God" (1 John 5:13). Our Lord said, "The words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life" (John 6:63). Yet you want to go to Sinai. Are you prepared to hear the voice that shook the earth? Do you prefer that to the sweet tidings of a finished work of Christ on the Cross? God has chosen to give us the gospel by written words, I beg you, learn to rest in these, asking no sign.

See the effect upon those at Sinai who heard the voice of words: it was, which voice they that heard entreated that no word more

should be spoken unto them. If only those who trust in their law-keeping could go where the Law was given, and hear that voice, they would do as Israel did--at that time--flee as far from Sinai as they could, and beg for a mediator.

Heb 12:20: For they could not endure that which was enjoined, If even a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned--At last man was made conscious of the immeasurable distance, the awful gap, that sin had made between himself and God. It made the place untenable: If even a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned: Here was a mount that "might be touched," but it was death to touch it, death to approach that mount. Man and the creation over which he has been placed, and which had been "subjected to vanity" in man's fall, are shown lost, undone, hopeless, in the presence of the Holy One demanding a righteousness and a holiness which the fallen creature can never produce. Here is shown the bridgeless moral distance between man and God.

Just now, for your comfort and relief, behold Jesus, taking up the children into His arms and laying His hands upon them and blessing them. That is not Law: we repeat, "The Law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." And yonder comes a leper: the Law sternly said, "Stand off and cry, Unclean, unclean." But Jesus, when the leper, bowing at His feet, pleads, "If Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean," moved with compassion, stretches forth His hand and touches him, and saith unto him, "I will, be thou made clean."

"Yes," you say, "It is well to heal a leper, but why touch him?"

Grace, I reply; grace unmixed with Law or human religion has touched him! Let us bow and give thanks to God!

Heb 12:21: And so fearful was the appearance, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake: In order to lead us into that fear of Jehovah which is the beginning of Wisdom (Pr 1:7), God must reveal His holiness: "Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, Whose name is holy" (Isa. 57:15). Therefore Jehovah, Who had spoken out of the bush to Moses, Who had "caused His glorious arm to go at the right hand of Moses" (Isa. 63:12) in the miracles of Egypt, and afterwards; and with Whom Moses was (as we would say) acquainted, now comes down upon Sinai with so fearful an appearance as to cause Moses to say, I exceedingly fear and quake.

O my friends, if we do not learn a lesson here, where then shall we learn it? How shall we ever again put our faith in works? HOW shall we ever again go back to Sinai?

Fear and quake? That is just what the twentieth century does not do. It will not hear preachers that speak of this God. Not because they have "fled for refuge to the hope set before them" in judgment that fell on Christ are they free from fearing and quaking but because they are sin-hardened, sin-blinded, and know not God, Whom they will shortly meet.

Oh, that day, that day! when the Law-trusters of every stripe and degree shall stand in the presence of this same unchangeable, holy God! "Our God is (not was) a consuming fire"! Happy those who know His grace! Moses had indeed seen Him in the burning bush, where fire was, yet life was. No green leaf was withered. That same fire in tongues of flame sat upon the heads of those in the upper room at Pentecost while they were filled with joy unutterable. And why? Let us see unto what these Hebrew believers in the Lord Jesus had come, instead of unto Sinai.

Heb 12:22: But on the contrary ye are come--In these words there is truly awful import. These Hebrews addressed had heard the gospel concerning Jesus the Son of God and had accepted or professed to accept that gospel. Now their whole position was changed. Into new spheres of blessing, new relationships and responsibilities they had never known, they were come! Before hearing and believing they had indeed known that to their nation God had spoken by Moses at Sinai, and by the prophets; whereas the Gentiles knew nothing of the true God, being, as Paul said to Peter, mere "sinners of the Gentiles." Now, however, all was changed. The meaning of the stupendous fact of the Cross, the "consummation of the ages" (Heb 9:26), God had shown them--which changed everything for the one learning it. The Temple left by Christ "desolate," Judaism as God's way gone--but Heaven opened! Oh, that all believers might hear these solemn words, Ye are come! Redeemed ones, justified, reconciled, dead and risen with Christ; raised of Him to "heavenly places," "citizens of Heaven," they were to walk in the consciousness of all these new relationships. They now belonged in Heaven!

* Let us remember that while we are members of the Body of Christ, even as were these Hebrew believers: "partakers of a heavenly calling"; nevertheless the great fundamental attitude and acts of the life of faith are the same in every age. This makes the O.T. a mine of gold. What believer has not been thrilled with encouragement and renewal of heart when reading of those great O.T. men and women of faith in Heb. 11?

And so here we have the great contrast between those at the foot of Sinai and Hebrew believers today! We, if wise and willing, will here learn much. Not following the folly of so many readers of this passage, we shall not say, "Oh, that belongs to the Jews!" My friend, those whom the Spirit is addressing here are on their way to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the Living God! To what city are you journeying?

Therefore, when God says to these Hebrew believers, Ye are come--He is describing facts into which they by simple faith have entered. Hence it follows, in Heb 12:22-24 that these believers are told the things to which they are come:

1. To Mount Zion.
2. To the city of the Living God the heavenly Jerusalem.
3. To myriads of angels, the general (heavenly) gathering.
4. To the Assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in Heaven (the Church of God).

5. To God the judge of all.
6. To the spirits of just men made perfect.
7. To Jesus, Mediator of a new covenant.
8. To the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better than Abel.

* Note carefully that it is absolutely necessary in the understanding of Heb 12:22-24 to adhere to the Greek text. After opening up the subject with the words, But on the contrary (Gr., alla) ye are come to Mount Zion, God's Word opens each following particular with the word "and" (Gr., kai). This careful arrangement connects heavenly Jerusalem with city of the Living God. Not, "and (kai) to myriads of angels, the universal assembling." Only note that it is in apposition with myriads of angels--such a "gathering" as appears in Rev. 5:8, 11, or Rev. 19:4, 6; it should read, therefore, and (kai) to innumerable hosts of angels--the general (heavenly) assembly."

Literally the Greek of Heb 12:22-24 reads But on the contrary ye are come to Mount Zion and (kai) to the city of the Living God, the heavenly Jerusalem; and (kai) to myriads of angels--panegyric and (kai) to the assembly of firstborn ones enrolled in Heaven and (kai) to God judge of all and (kai) to spirits of righteous ones perfected and (kai) to Mediator of New Covenant, Jesus and (kai) to blood of sprinkling speaking better than (the blood of) Abel.

No one has any right to use the words, the "general assembly" with "the Church" (Ekklesia); for God connects it with the "myriads of angels," just preceding the word, "the Church."

1. A believing Hebrew has come, in God's sight, to Mount Zion. If God's purposes of forgiveness for national Israel, for all connected with the promises by natural birth (Hebrew believers), if God's future blessing is connected with Mount Zion, what more natural, indeed, necessary, than that these Hebrews, who had heard the gospel and believed, should be told, Ye are come to Mount Zion? Certainly they are immediately instructed about heavenly things, the heavenly Jerusalem, the Church of the Firstborn on high, as we shall see. But God's purposes of grace upon Israel are connected with Mount Zion.

Three mountains an Israelite would remember: first, Mount Sinai, of which we have spoken: God's majesty, power, holiness and righteousness, and yet requiring righteousness from Israel, with what results we know! second, Mount Moriah, which God pointed out to Abraham upon which to offer up Isaac his son, wonderful type of a Redeemer! (Gen. 22:2). And after Israel's utter failure in the land--the breakdown of the priesthood under Eli and the King in Saul--yea, and the pride of His chosen King David in numbering the people, bringing judgment upon seventy thousand of Israel, and sackcloth and ashes upon the King, Moriah again is pointed out as the place where sacrifice turned away wrath (1 Chron. 22:1), and which became the site of the temple of Jerusalem (2 Chron. 3:1). There were offered the typical sacrifices, for there the Shekinah glory dwelt till Ezekiel saw it return to Heaven (Ezek. 8-11). And yet after seventy years the restoration temple was built, by God's direction, under Zerubbabel--relatively insignificant--yet acknowledged, and greatly enlarged (after the flesh) by Herod. But types are not actual blessings.

Unto this Moriah temple our Lord Jesus came, and every type and sacrifice spoke of Him; yet He, as we shall see in Hebrews 13, "suffered without the gate."

Third, Mount Zion, connected in Scripture with actual blessing upon Israel. It was the other hill, the higher in Jerusalem (Moriah being the lower), where David finally overthrew the Jebusites (2 Sam. 5:6-9): "David took the stronghold of Zion; the same is the city of David ... And David dwelt in the stronghold, and called it the city of David." Mount Zion stands in Scripture for grace, the opposite of Sinai, which was Law, and judgment for disobedience. We all know that in the future, when the Lord Jesus returns, "He will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen" (Acts 15:16). That will be the millennial temple, and that mountain will be "exalted above all the hills" (Isa. 2:2-3). See the last nine chapters of Ezekiel for the description of that beautiful temple. Mount Zion, therefore, to Hebrew believers, represents final pardon and blessing for the Remnant--those "that are escaped" (Isa. 10:20). Inasmuch, therefore, as pardoning grace was to be given to the nation from Mount Zion under the new covenant, it was most fitting that these Hebrew believers should be told that they were "already come unto Mount Zion." The great spiritual realities of mercy and pardon, theirs already, would belong to the nation in the future. Meanwhile, the calling of the Hebrews of our epistle was heavenly.

It would not do for a Gentile to say that he had come unto Mount Zion, for he had never been of the nation to which Mount Zion was to be the place of great blessing. If a believer, his calling, with that of all true believers, was immeasurably higher than that of the earthly nation, Israel. Mount Zion, then, is the chosen scene and source of future saving blessing for Israel. But as Paul Says, "The Jerusalem that is above is free, which is our mother" (Gal. 4:26). Their hearts and thoughts are set upon that city, being upon Christ, as Paul directs: "Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth" (Col. 3:2).

* In Ps. 78:68-70 we find that God "Chose the tribe of Judah, The Mount Zion which he loved!"

See also Ps. 132:13-14: "For Jehovah hath chosen Zion; He hath desired it for His habitation. This is My resting-place forever: Here will I dwell; for I have desired it."

such words from God should overwhelm us! yet, speaking with reverence and humility we may say, God made man "in His image, after His likeness," and at the right hand of God in glory there is a MAN, concerning whom God has said: "yet I have set My King Upon My holy hill of Zion" (Ps. 2:6).

If God has set His affection upon a certain place in His earthly creation, Mount Zion, shall we who love our homes wonder?

We can but refer here to the 144,000 of Rev. 14: "And I saw, and behold, the Lamb standing on the Mount Zion, and with Him a hundred and forty and four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father, written on their foreheads." That is the place of

Israelitish blessing (Rev. 7:4). They are seen there in millennial victory and song. What a place to be standing, "on the Mount Zion" that God has loved and chosen of all places on earth!

2. Unto the city of the Living God, the heavenly Jerusalem--This city is described in Revelation 21:9-27; 22:1-5. It is a literal city of which the description is given (dimensions, materials, walls, gates), together with the fact that there is "no temple therein" (Rev. 21:22).

* Read the author's book, *The Revelation* (pp. 348-9), or any work that does not "spiritualize" these heavenly things, but takes them in their reality thus honoring God, instead of man's ingenuity. Abraham looked for a city, and he will see one. God "hath prepared for them a city" (Heb. 11:16).

In the expression--Ye are come unto--we find the sphere of relationships entered, whether by Israel at Sinai, or by the Hebrew believers on the Lord Jesus. Wherefore we understand that in applying the expression, for example, to the heavenly city, the New Jerusalem, we are to remember of course that our bodies are not yet redeemed, and we are on earth. Yet read in Ephesians 2:5 ff, that we were "Made alive together with Christ, and raised up with Him, and made to sit with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus." The facts about us, therefore, are that we who are in Christ are "not of the world, even as He is not of the world"; that we have "a heavenly calling" (See Heb. 3:1): even as Paul declares: God "made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; who delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love" (Col. 1:12-13).

3. And to innumerable hosts of angels--the general (heavenly) gathering--*

* See Greek of Rev. 5:11: "I saw, and I heard a voice of many angels round about the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads (myriades, myriadon), and thousands of thousands" (chiliades chiliadon). Note the other heavenly beings here; also include the six-winged seraphim of Isa. 6, and the four-winged cherubim of Ezek. 1:6, 26, who support the throne (which is above them), and the four six-winged living beings of Rev. 4 and Rev 19; "In the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, four living creatures ... the voice of a great multitude ... of many waters ... of mighty thunders, saying, Hallelujah: for the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigneth"--(Rev. 4:6; 19:6).

Remember also, the "principalities and powers in the heavenlies" of Eph. 3:10, primarily indicate servants of God.

The word *panegyris* includes the "myriads of angels," and all heavenly beings. As Alford happily puts it, "A complete, multitudinous, above all, jubilant, festal and blissful assembly!"

It is unto this heavenly host that the Hebrew believers (and, of course, all believers, for all now partake of this heavenly calling) are come. Since we are exhorted to "come boldly to the throne of grace" above, where the Son of God Himself is our Great High Priest, it is no marvel that we are come to those thus naturally belonging to Heaven! But it is well and blessed that we are reminded of this. (Note, however, that "our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ" by the Spirit. Though we are come to this heavenly *panegyris*, we are not to seek fellowship with these heavenly beings, or become "worshippers of angels" (Col. 2:18). Indeed, to be in Christ, one with Him, is a higher calling than angels have!)

4. Heb 12:23: to the church of the firstborn who are enrolled in Heaven.

The Church (better translation, Assembly): This is the Greek word *Ekklesia*, used over 100 times for the Church of God. (Literally it is "called-out-assembly.")

The firstborn (ones)--The Apostle James, speaking of those who hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, says, "of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures" (James 1:18). Not for the seraphim (Isa. 6) nor the cherubim (Ezek. 1-11), nor the four living ones (Rev. 4 and 5), nor the myriads of angels, was the blood of the Son of God shed; nor have these been "created in Christ Jesus," "members of His Body."

Because they were "born from above" (see John 3:3, 7; 31, "from above," of Christ; Jas. 1:17; 3:15, 17), our Lord said of His disciples, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." Believers, therefore, since our Lord ascended, since Pentecost, when the gospel was first announced, have been the first beings to enter the new creation. ("Those who compose it (the Assembly of firstborn ones enrolled in Heaven) are here characterized: (1) in relation to Him Who was carefully shown us in Hebrews 1 to be the Firstborn ... (2) in relation, by Grace, to our proper and destined sphere of glory, Heaven, and not earth, where Israel as such look for their blessedness and triumph under Messiah's reign."--Wm. Kelly.) Christ Himself having been raised from among the dead, is named "The Head of the Body, the church (*Ekklesia*): Who is the Beginning, the Firstborn from among the dead ones" (Col. 1:17-19).

* The word "Firstborn" is in Rom. 8:29 a title: "The Firstborn among many brethren"; in Col. 1:15, Christ is called "The Firstborn of all Creation," in view of the fact that all things were created "through Him and unto Him" (Col. 1:16). But in Col. 1:18-19, where He is seen as "The Head of the Body, the Church," we read the wonderful words "Who is the Beginning, the Firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the pre-eminence," because in Him "was pleased to dwell the whole fullness of God" (R.V., margin).

Jehovah said by Moses to Pharaoh, "Thus said Jehovah, Israel is My son, My firstborn" (Ex. 4:22). Israel is the firstborn of earth--as if there had been no other nation, and should be no other. The Church is enrolled in Heaven as "firstborn" there, "the first-fruits of God's creatures" in this new creation, sharing Christ's risen life (2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 2:10; 4:24; Col.

3:10).

Enrolled in Heaven--When the disciples came back to Jesus rejoicing that the demons were subject to them, He said, "In this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rejoice that your names are written in Heaven" (Lk. 10:20). God is acting now wholly according to Himself, which the Cross set Him free to do; and He can place these redeemed, blood-bought creatures as the "Firstborn--those through whom He reveals Himself fully, as He could not by mere creation. There is no limit, therefore, to the favor in which God in sovereignty, in uncaused grace, places redeemed man. Could any other creature than man say as said Paul, "To me to live is Christ"? It is not a question of our deserts or attainments or service. It is a question of where God in His sovereign Will placed us! "That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in (showing) kindness toward us in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:7). The last thing we wretched humans desire and learn is to be the recipients of unearned, undeserved, unattained, bloodbought Divine favor, through the sovereign will of God: objects merely of grace!

5. And to God the judge of all--What a place for sinners! But what an eternal place of blessing for believers! They have heard and believed the gospel, telling how Christ drank the cup to the full, that God, the Righteous Judge, in unspeakable love to sinners, had given to Him, His only begotten Son! How He forsook Him instead of us, the sinners, and how Christ finished the work of our redemption and brought us to God, "through His own blood."

God is in Heaven, and is judge of all. But the Lord Jesus said concerning believers, "He that believeth on Him is not judged" (John 3:18); and,

"He that heareth My word, and believeth Him that sent Me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life" (John 5:24).

So that these solemn words, God the judge of all, do not mean that God is judging you, believer! That judgment is past! So that you need not fear this judge of all--among the eight things unto which "Ye are come." Unless we think carefully here, we would expect God to be named as Father, for we have just seen the word "firstborn." But the words are even more wonderful than that. It is God as God Whom we meet in this Epistle to the Hebrews. Consistent with this are the words, God, judge of all (for there is no article in the Greek). The name of Him Who certainly is judge of all His creatures is not placed before us here as One actively judging, but in His Person only. Again, note that these Hebrew believers had been brought to Him Whose voice at Sinai, in giving the Ten Commandments of the Law covenant, had shaken the earth; which covenant their nation had broken. But Another had borne the judgment of it all, and here they are come, unafraid, to God the Judge of all!

Even to Moses, though on Sinai "fearing and quaking" (Ex. 33:11), "Jehovah spoke face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend." And God testified to Miriam and Aaron in Numbers 12:8, "With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even manifestly, and not in dark speeches; and the form of Jehovah shall he behold." And this before Christ had come; before sin was put away by the blood of the Cross; before the Lord had been raised from the dead and hailed as Priest forever; before He had entered into the Holies above through His own blood and sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, there "to appear before the face of God for us"!

You may say, I can enter into such a verse as 1 John 3:1: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and such we are."

But is not this God, Who in the new birth has become your Father indeed, yet in very truth judge of all? It is told of Emperor William I of Germany, that as he sat at the head of a great table surrounded by his lords and counselors, his little son, a mere child, got into the room, and, running to his father, pulled down his head to speak something into his ear. The father put his arms around him lovingly, and hearkened. Then, patting him gently, sent him quietly out, and turned again to the affairs of state.

O saints of God, what a company is this to which ye are come! Innumerable hosts of angels, the general assembly of heavenly beings; the Church of the Firstborn enrolled in Heaven! And behold, we are come to God, judge of all--not, as we have said, judging us, but judge of all is His eternal place. Let us meditate upon it, with faith indeed, but with applied hearts, for such is the company into which we have come! That God, judge of all, should be one of this company, puts us in the very dust of humble gladness, brings rest beyond measure! If He Who is judge of all saith to us poor sinners who know that our judgment was finished at Calvary--if He saith, Ye are come to the judge of all, there is peace without end, rest!

Nevertheless, although God's saints, those who are born again, know God as their Father, and have the sweet witness of that fact by the Holy Spirit in their hearts, saying, Abba, Father; yet Hebrews sets forth God as God, "not in His relationships." When the blood of Christ is spoken of, it is with reference to the approach to the holy God, rather than as redeeming us. For example, Jesus is spoken of in the next verse (12:24), but not as "our Saviour," or "our Redeemer," but as Mediator of a new covenant, and His blood not as procuring our forgiveness, but as the blood of sprinkling. It is most conducive to true godliness to remember that we are come, as pardoned and cleansed, to God the Judge of all.

* The extent to which the fact reaches, that our judgment was borne by Another at the Cross, is magnified in our minds when we reflect that God will, by-and-by, commit judgment, both of men and of angels, to His Church saints! "Know ye not that the saints Shall judge the world? ... Know Ye not that we shall judge angels?" (1 Cor. 6:2, 3). "And I Saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them" (Rev. 20:4). God does not cease here as the judge of all. But that He should commit to redeemed creatures the position and qualification of judge of other creatures, shows how complete was Christ's work for us: not only "no condemnation," but made judges!

6. And to the spirits of just men made perfect--In Hebrews 11:39, reading of the Old Testament saints, we found that these saints had as yet "received not the promise," that is, the full realization of what God had revealed they were going to have; and the explanation there is, "that apart from us they should not be made perfect."

But now, Christ having died and been raised and glorified, it is freely said that we are come to ... the spirits of just men made perfect. The future program for each of these saints has not yet been realized (for example, Dan. 12:13), yet as to their spirits they have been "made perfect" by the sacrifice of Christ. They were "just men," justified by faith while still on earth, as was Abraham. It should move us unto a profound unworldliness and holy reverence to remember that God's word is that we are come ... to the spirits of just men made perfect. What a revelation! But remember that this does not mean that we are to endeavor to communicate with these spirits of just men made perfect, any more than with angels, as we noted. It refers to our heavenly position: we belong among them, and not to this world!

(I have often wondered in what state Moses and Elijah were when they "appeared in glory" with our Lord on the Transfiguration Mount. We know they had not their bodies, for Christ is the firstfruits of the resurrection. But they appeared "in glory," and when the bright cloud came, disappeared, going back into Heaven, evidently. If this could be written of them before our Lord's death and glorification, what God now means by their being "made perfect" we must humbly and reverently leave to Him.)

As to what companies of saints are already in Heaven: first, there are the Old Testament saints, called the spirits of just men made perfect, as we have seen. Second, those of the Church of God who have "departed to be with Christ," which is "far better." (Respecting the Church, the Assembly of the firstborn enrolled on high, whatever their place as members of Christ (unspeakable marvell!) they have not yet been glorified with us who are still on earth. They are fulfilling Heb. 9:28, for they with us await His coming. Who "Shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for Him, Unto salvation." "Apart from sin" does not mean that they are not now in Heaven, delivered from sin: they certainly are. But as we have noticed elsewhere it means that His second coming, for which we wait, will be apart from all question of sin. "Salvation" here in Hebrews 9:28 is the consummation of that wonderful work, in the redemption of our bodies. He will in that day "present the Church to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Eph. 5:27)

Evidently made perfect does not include that glorification for which all the saints are waiting, sharing Christ's manifested glory at His second coming (1 John 3:2; Rom. 8:19; Col. 3:4; Heb. 11:40); but rectifying in the sense of completing any deficiency of development. Delivered from all presence and effects of sin, in the full value of Christ's atoning work, they are in the presence of God, the judge of all, up yonder, resting and waiting there for Christ's manifestation when they shall "see Him as He is," and "be like Him," be glorified!

We are of course not to hold communication with these spirits of just men made perfect; or have any consciousness of them; but only that we are come into the same sphere and stage as they! Such is the measureless power of the blood of Christ! Are they--these spirits--now fit to be in Heaven? So are we. Are they made perfect? So are we, in this epistle, while exhorted to go on unto full growth, told that we are come, already, to these made perfect.

7. And to Jesus, the Mediator of a new covenant--Sweet name, Jesus! as over against "Judge!" Now what new covenant is here meant? Matthew Henry well says: "Christ is the Mediator of this new covenant; He is the middle Person that goes between both parties, God and man, to bring them together in this covenant ... to offer up our prayers to God, and to bring down the favors of God to us; 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, and to be a Mediator and fruition between them forever; they beholding and enjoying God in Christ, and God beholding and blessing them in Christ." These Hebrew believers had "come" to Jesus, not in the sense necessarily that they had heard Him personally, as did the disciples, and received Him. They are "come" here refers, as in all this remarkable series, to that spiritual sphere with its relationships into which, by faith in the gospel of Christ they had entered. Further, they had found in Jesus a Mediator of a new covenant--not referring, of course, to the new covenant of Hebrews 8:8, which will be brought in "after those days" (that is, this present dispensation), and will be made "with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah" as we saw, at Christ's second coming. This new covenant with Israel, we repeat, lies yet in the future, in the Millennium. Nevertheless, in Hebrews 8:6 we saw that Christ "obtained a ministry the more excellent, by so much as He is also the Mediator of a better covenant, which had been enacted upon better promises." Do you ask, Of what covenant is our Lord the Mediator? We rejoice to say, Of the new covenant of which He speaks in Luke 22:19, 20--and in Hebrews 13:20 (see below). After the last Passover Feast, closing Jewish matters, He brings in the Lord's Supper, which belongs to believers now, whether Hebrew or Gentile. "And He took bread, and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and gave to them, saying, This is My body which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me. And the cup in like manner after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in My blood, even that which is poured out for you."

Now we turn to Hebrews 13:20, 21, the great Christian benediction of this whole epistle: "Now the God of peace, Who brought again from the dead, the Great Shepherd of the sheep, with the blood of an eternal covenant, even our Lord Jesus, make you perfect in every good work to do His will."

As we have said in connection with this passage, it is necessary to view the blood of this "eternal covenant" between "the God of peace" and "our Lord Jesus," as the source, cause and means of all blessing to us sinners, Jew or Gentile. We know that Israel and Judah will be blessed as such in the future; but they are not yet so blessed. And when the new arrangements with them shall be entered into (as we see in Hebrews 8), it will be on the ground of "the blood of an eternal covenant," the one we are speaking of

here, in Luke

22:20, and in Hebrews 13:20-21.

In our present verse, then (Hebrews 12:24), Jesus is spoken of as Mediator of a new covenant. His blood having been shed as the means and fulfillment of this eternal agreement between the God of peace and our Lord Jesus, He naturally and necessarily becomes the Mediator of this covenant, of which the cup at the Lord's Supper is a constant reminder.

For there is one God, one Mediator also between God and man, Himself man, Christ Jesus. Thayer well remarks, "A mediator does not belong to one party, but to two or more." "Christ is God's," 1 Corinthians 3:23 says; but in Hebrews 1:2 of that same epistle, the saints are told that the Lord Jesus Christ is "ours"! It is not only of blessing but of necessity that we remember that God has given His beloved Son not only for us, but to us! This draws us immediately close to God. We are Christ's and Christ is God's. God has His Mediator, and is satisfied; we have our Mediator! To be the Mediator of this new, eternal covenant, our blessed Lord receives all whom the Father has given Him (John 17:12), "keeps" them, perfects them, and presents them before God (Jude 24; 2Cor. 4:11; Eph. 5:2; Col. 1:22; Heb. 12:2). You will ask, What, then, is our part? To hear the good news--yea, to hearken, and believe (as we shall see in vs. 25)!

8. And to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better (things) than Abel: We have come now to the most solemn thing of all. We remember that in Exodus 24, in connection with the legal covenant, Moses "sprinkled both the book itself and all the people" with the blood of that covenant (Hebrews 9:19-20). "The tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry" were also sprinkled (Heb. 9:21), and thus set apart to God. (We recall that the sprinkling of the blood upon the people, in connection with the Law covenant, brought to the front the liability to death upon any who disobeyed. God, however, acted in great mercy and patience.)

The ordinance also of the sprinkling with "the water for impurity," made from the ashes of the red heifer and "living water" (Num. 19:1-9, 13, 17-19), comes to mind. The blood of this heifer had been shed, and the heifer was to be burned, and the ashes with "living water" made it an application of sacrificial death readily available to anyone defiled!

Again, in Leviticus 8, we find Aaron and his sons, when they are consecrated, sprinkled with the blood, and thus set apart to the priesthood. It is striking also that in Leviticus 14:7 when the leper was cleansed, he was sprinkled with the blood, indicating his entire freedom from defilement, before God. Compare Hebrews 9:13, 14, 19; 10:22, and 11:28, where Moses "By faith kept the passover, and the sprinkling of the blood," when God said (Ex. 12:13), "When I see the blood I will pass over you." It protected them from the judgment of death which was falling upon all Egypt. But as we examine the other passages named above, we find the "sprinkling" to be connected with cleansing--and that of the conscience--as in Hebrews 9:14: "the blood of Christ" cleansing the conscience "from dead works to serve the Living God." This refers to the individual's receiving and understanding, by his cleansed conscience, the power and effect of the shed blood, rather than to God's apprehension of it. In Hebrews 9:22, both God's side and the effect upon us are seen in, "all are cleansed with blood, and apart from shedding of blood there is no remission."

The blood of sprinkling that speaketh better than Abel, then, points not only to the shedding of Christ's blood, but to the personal application of it to an individual's heart; so that peace, which Christ "made through the blood of His Cross," is spoken unto the heart of believing souls. No amount of prayer, no resolve of consecration, will relieve a burdened conscience, which keeps accusing the heart. The conscience keeps saying "Oh my sin!" (and won't say anything else!) The Holy Spirit says, "It was borne by Christ, and His blood put it away on the Cross." Then conscience is robbed of its power to affect the heart. This blood of sprinkling is not an experience, but is a view of what happened at the Cross, and what was done for us there. We read in Genesis 4:10-11 God's words to Cain:

"What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto Me from the ground! And now cursed art thou from the ground, which hath opened its mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand!"

Thus the blood of Abel called for judgment. But the blood of sprinkling--that is, the application by faith of the shed blood of Christ--speaks of judgment past forever, and of eternal peace with God Himself! No wonder, then, that the next verse reads as it does:

Heb 12:25 See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh! For if they escaped not when they refused Him that warned them on earth, much more shall not we escape who turn away from Him that warneth from Heaven*

26 Whose voice then shook the earth: but now He hath promised, saying, Yet once more will I make to tremble not the earth but also the Heaven.

27 And this word, yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that have been made, that those things which are not shaken may remain.

28 Wherefore, receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us have grace, whereby we may offer service wellpleasing to God, with reverence and awe:

29 for our God is a consuming fire.

Heb 12:25: Him that speaketh, as we learn at the beginning of this great book of Hebrews 1:1-2, is GOD. The eight marvelous contrasts with the Mount Sinai revelation have just been set before us in Heb 12:22-24 ending with, The blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than Abel. The overwhelming possibility of refusing such a God meets us first of all with the warning, See that ye refuse not. Mark, it is God the judge of all (Heb 12:23) Who is speaking. Beside Him is Jesus the Mediator (Heb 12:25. Before Him, and us, The blood of sprinkling: Limitless, uncaused, Divine love--unutterable sacrifice! It is thus the Voice cometh!

Friend, see to this! How personal, how definite, how distinct, this word, -sect" All about You, People are "seeing to" this and that: occupied therewith; most, seeing to business; many, to Pleasure; many, to bodily health. But how many are seeing to this one great call to the creature, from His Creator?

See that ye refuse not! Oh, that awful word, "refuse"! Can it be that the God to Whom "the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are accounted as the small dust of the balance" can mean that one of these infinitesimal bits of dust can refuse HIM? It means just that. Oh, that our hearts, our very beings, might be overwhelmed with a sense of values! These creatures of dust are rushing forward to meet Him, the infinite, almighty One, Who speaks here! See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh"

* The reader's attention is solemnly called to Deut. 29:18-21, where there was no outward denial of Jehovah's testimony, but an inner heart-excusal. The Greek word for "refuse" used as we see in verse 25, and in verse 19 (literally "excused themselves, asking that the word be not addressed to them any more,") primarily means to excuse oneself. See it in Lk. 14:18, translated, "began to make excuse."

O friend, I shout at you, See that ye refuse not! I cry unto you! You have a will. This is the most solemn, awful thing about the bits of dust you and I are: we have wills, we can refuse (for the brief life) the Almighty!

Now mark what follows: For if they escaped not when they refused Him that warned them on earth, that is, at Mount Sinai and onward in Israel's history. For however terrible were the warnings of the Law (Heb. 2:2; 10:28; Deut. 17:2-7; Nu 15:32-36) and its accompaniments, they concerned a God, not revealed fully, but hidden behind the tabernacle veil.

Heb 12:26: It was one thing for Jehovah to descend to Mount Sinai and speak to an earthly nation, Israel, about morality on earth--the Ten Commandments: His voice then shook the earth (Ex. 19:17-188). But it was quite another thing when in His infinite love God sent His Son to be born of a humble human virgin; and to walk the path of loving care and tenderness for men, and submission to the Father's will at every step; having "no place to lay His head": traveling on to Gethsemane and the Cross; to "bear our sins in His body on the Tree."

Thus God spake from Heaven, opening out His whole heart and holy being to sinful man!

In view of God's revealing thus from Heaven in His own Son His righteousness and love at Calvary the uttermost is uttered regarding coming judgment: Now He hath promised, saying, yet once more will I make to tremble not the earth only, but also the Heaven!

Heb 12:27: Then comes the Divine interpretation: And this, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that have been made, that those things which are not shaken way remain: Three great facts are to be noted here.

First, The earth and the Heaven are to be utterly done away! Such words as Revelation 20:11 cannot be avoided: there are many Scriptures corresponding:

"I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat upon it, from Whose face the earth and the Heaven fled away! and there was found no place for them!"

As our Lord often said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away! But MY words shall not pass away!" To teach, as do many, that these words refer merely to a "change" in the present creation, is to take a stand beside the modernists, who do not believe the words of God! Sin began in Heaven with the anointed one of the cherubim (Ezek. 28:11-18; job 15:15; 25:5); and all things of the present creation have been defiled. The New Creation is founded upon the redemption of Christ! This only is eternal! ("The scope of creation has been the establishing of the kingdom of redemption that it, the transitory and baseless, may pass away when its work is fulfilled, and give place to that which shall never pass away. This view is strongly taken by Delitzsch, after Crotius Bengel, Tholuck, and others.--Alford. This view is Scriptural. See Isa. 65:17; 34:4; 2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1.) There are two spheres of eternal duration of God's creatures: The Saved: "New heavens and a new earth, wherein righteousness shall be at home" (2 Pet. 3:13). The Lost: "The eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels ... eternal punishment" (Mat. 25:41, 46; "eternal fire," Jude 7). Of course, there will be no annihilation of lost beings: their destiny is plainly affirmed again and again (Rev. 20:10).

* Three realities (none of which modern "theology" grasps) are then before us here.

1. The blotting out of the present creation.
2. The fact that those saved are new creatures in the Risen Christ: of whom it is already said, "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit"; and to whom will shortly be given bodies "like unto the body of His glory."
3. The existence and eternal duration of a literal hell of literal fire into which go not only Satan and his angels, but also (Rev. 20:15) "any not found written in the Book of Life."

Second: The reason: their end is accomplished! It is as of things that have been made that these words are spoken. These shall be shaken and done away. There was object in their creation: that object was fulfilled, and they are gone! They were of the first, the "former" creation: not of the second, which is wholly based on Christ's redeeming work!

Third: That those things which are not shaken may remain: God's uttered Word will abide forever; every one who has in heart received and believed that word will remain forever! You cannot say of one who has by God's direct miracle been "created in Christ" that he is one of the things that have been made.

Heb 12:28: Wherefore, receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us have grace, whereby we may offer service wellpleasing to God with reverence and awe: How blessed, being "new creatures in Christ," to be part of that kingdom that cannot be shaken. Believers belong to that New Creation which is so marvelously set forth in the last two chapters of The Revelation! Knowing and believing this fills saints with that blessed grace (or thankfulness) whereby, with godly fear [R.V., margin] and awe, we are able to offer service well-pleasing to God.

And now for Heb 12:29: For our God is a consuming fire. The comparison here is to Sinai. See Exodus 19:17-18; Deuteronomy 4:11: God changes not. This last verse of Hebrews 12 is literally true: it terrifies not His saints, but ministers to godly fear. But it should terrify His enemies, or any careless-hearted ones reading the words. What will you do with it? Will You relegate the book of Hebrews to the days of Moses, when the whole voice of this epistle contrasts it with those old days? These Hebrew believers were told they were "NOT come unto a mount that burned with fire," and yet the solemn warning with which this chapter closes declares that now our God is a consuming fire. Of course, this announcement is drawn forth by the possibility of some refusing to hear, turning away from Him that warned from Heaven. But what about His words concerning those who come up in judgment before a holy God, having chosen to retain their sins, with iniquity unpardoned? O modernist, O trifler, remember there is no preacher who spake so much, proportionately, of the doom of the damned, as did our blessed, loving Lord Himself! He announces that He, the Judge, will say to you:

"Depart from Me, Ye cursed into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels" (Mat. 25:41).

And again, "Neither doth the Father judge any man, but He hath given all judgment unto the Son; that all may honor the son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father that sent Him ... And He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is a Son of man" (John 5:22-23, 27).

This marks Christ as the Sitter on The Great White Throne of Revelation 20, "from Whose face the earth and the Heaven flee away." (See author's Revelation, pp. 327-334.)

Through simple faith only we reconcile Hebrews 12:29 with "God is Love," and "God so loved the world." Let no one yield to the delusion that "God out of Christ is a consuming fire"! Mr. Darby well says, "This expression, Our God is a consuming fire, they say, is spoken of God out of Christ. We know nothing of God out of Christ! We may be out of Christ ourselves, and then indeed as a consuming fire the presence of God would be destructive to us. But, as known to those who are in Christ, He is a GOD intolerant of evil, of all that is inconsistent with Himself."

Let us hold fast by faith to the blessed words that begin this last verse, Our God! And let Him open it to us! There will be a day when the infinite holiness of God will become an indescribably blessed delight and joy, as His saints look forward to the ages to come!

Hebrews 13

Heb 13:1 LET LOVE OF THE BRETHREN continue.

2 Forget not to show love unto strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

3 Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; them that are ill-treated, as being yourselves also in the body.

4 Let marriage be had in honor among all, and let the bed be undefiled: for fornicators and adulcerers God will judge.

5 Be ye free from the love of money; content with such things as ye have: for Himself hath said, I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee.

6 So that with good courage we say, The Lord is my Helper; I will not fear: What shall man do unto me?

THE EXHORTATIONS for practical daily living in this closing chapter are strikingly befitting. The first is:

Heb 13:1: Let love of the brethren continue. There would be a natural attraction to others, especially to prominent and wealthy ones of their own race; but these were not the brethren. Most of the brethren were classified by God in 1 Corinthians 1:26-28: "foolish," "weak," "base," "despised," zeros--"the things that are not"! The word for love-of-the-brethren is philadelphia, love of the brotherhood. It should be the determination of the very heart and soul of every believer that nothing should interrupt or mar this love for the precious brotherhood, that is, for those in Christ. But by all means let him "continue" it, at any cost of self-sacrifice! For as we find it in Hebrews 10:24, "Let us consider one another to provoke (by our own kindnesses and example) unto love and good works."

Paul thus commends a beloved household, that of Stephanas: "Ye know the house of Stephanas ... that they have set themselves to minister unto the saints.... I beseech you, brethren, that ye also be in subjection unto such, and to everyone that helpeth in the work and laboreth." There is no ministry that brings such a response in a heart subjection of love!*

* The author's book, Romans Verse by Verse (p. 471-2), makes this comment on Heb. 13:1-5:

We have in Heb. 13 three uses of the Greek root phil--meaning love:

(1) "Let love of the brethren (philadelphia) continue"; (2) "Forget not to show love unto strangers" (philoxenia); and, (3) in verse 5, "Be free from silver-loving" (philarguros). If you are tempted to philarguros, Philadelphia and philoxenia will cure you! ... Let us make

"Strangers' Inns" of our homes. We are not staying here long. And the Lord may send "angels" around when we least expect! ... Even if the reference in "unawares" is not to Abraham in Gen. 18 (for he at once recognized the Lord, and knew His attendants), yet the statement seems rather an absolute one of inspiration, suggesting such a possibility for any of us! See also the case of Gideon in Jud. 6; and Manoah, Jud. 13.

Heb 13:2: Forget not to show love unto strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares: The old version renders this precious word, "entertain strangers," but God did not say "entertain," but show love unto strangers. (See Revised Version.) And "hospitality" is but a weak rendering of this word. Love to strangers is possible perhaps only to believers, for in them the Holy Spirit lives and exercises the very emotions of God. How often have we heard someone say, "I attended such and such a church for weeks and no one spoke to me." Or, "I was a stranger, and the only ones these Christians seemed to recognize were their own company and friends."

These Hebrew believers, "partakers of a heavenly calling," have only Christ, and Him in the glory. They are relieved from earthly, "religious" things and can let their love, or rather His love through them, be extended to "strangers."

The personal attitude of Christians toward strangers, who are not of their own regular assembly, particularly, is in view here, as well as the truly Christian attitude toward just common "strangers." There is to be love shown such. It is not duty, formality, nor in any wise pretense: it is allowing the love of God in Christ to go through us toward them, without seeking some reward from their side. We verily believe that an assembly of saints showing love to strangers will soon have plenty of strangers to love. The expression some have entertained angels doubtless has included, through the centuries, many who still remained unaware of their heavenly visitants. Therefore let us not forget to show love unto strangers. Visit them--especially if sick! Look after them--even to loaning, or giving them money! "Love is love!"

Heb 13:3: Next, an equally beautiful exhortation: Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them. (Excellent commentators refuse to confine these counsels of mercy regarding the stranger, prisoners, and the "ill-treated," to Christians only; but make them include all, as Conybeare: "Remember the prisoners, as though ye shared their prison.") Beloved Paul yearns for such fellowship: "Remember my bonds" (Col. 4:18). This takes peculiar grace, but grace can do peculiar things! It enables one in freedom, even in ease, to enter the deepest dungeons of saints in affliction, and the Holy Spirit, in both this praying saint and that bound one, working in both, administers comfort. Blessed is the saint gladly entering into these sufferings!

(Remember) them that are ill-treated, as being yourselves also in the body: These are no common directions to "pity" those suffering bonds and ill-treatment, but to enter by the Holy Spirit, in love and prayer, into their condition with them, visiting them when possible.

Heb 13:4: And now such a needed exhortation: (If needed then, how vastly more in these days hurrying on toward Sodom!) Let marriage be had in honor in all things and let the bed be undefiled: for fornicators and adulterers God will judge: The entire conduct of married people as such toward each other is looked at here. (See Eph. 5:25-28; 1 Cor. 7:1-5; Mk. 10:2-12; 1Pet. 3:1-7).

* "In all things: Greek, en pasin: 'In all respects and circumstances.' Pasin is neuter as in verse 18, 'all things'; 1Tim. 3:11, etc."--Westcott.

Heb 13:5: Be ye free from the love of money, content with such things as ye have! (See note on verse 1) Money--and the love and pursuit of it, has ever been a snare to the Hebrews (as Gentiles constantly mark and remark: though with no less covetous hearts, and probably less acquisitive ability!) But mark the great word "content," that God uses to describe that state of heart pleasing to Him in His people. Content with such things as ye have. Would that these words described all Christians!

Heb 13:6: Loving trust in the Lord banishes all fear, so that the psalmist here quoted writes,
The Lord is my helper; I will not fear: What shall man do unto me?

Surely he had entered into the truth of the "in no wise fail... in no wise forsake thee." How blessed this life of simple faith!

Heb 13:7 Remember them that had the rule over you, men that spake unto you the word of God; and considering the issue of their life, imitate their faith.

8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yea and forever!

9 Therefore be not carried away by divers and strange teachings: for it is good that the heart be established by grace; not by meats, wherein they that occupied themselves were not profited.

10 We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat that serve the tabernacle.

11 For the bodies of those beasts whose blood is brought into the holy place by the high priest as an offering for sin, are burned without the camp.

12 Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered without the gate.

13 Let us therefore go forth unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach;

14 for we have not here an abiding city, but we seek after the city which is to come.

15 Through Him then let us offer up a sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of lips which make confession to His

name.

16 But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

17 Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit to them: for they watch in behalf of your souls, as they that shall give account; that they may do this with joy, and not with grief: for this were unprofitable for you.

Verse 7: Remember those leading you--In three verses (Heb 13:7, 17, 24) these "leaders" (them that had the rule over you) in the assemblies which these saints had known, are set before us, always in Hebrews, with a lesson to all believers.

1. They were leaders (lit., those leading). (It is very instructive that in the New Testament this Greek word, *hegeomai*, meaning to go before, to be a leader, etc., is used only in the participial form, which indicates that it was their work, and not an office, to which God is calling attention. There are no popes, no bosses, in the early Church; and there is no other church than after this pattern. "Judas called Barsabas, and Silas," in Acts 15:22, are called "Leading men among the brethren." In rendering this word "have the rule over you," both the Authorized and the Revised Version show the relics of popery. The Assembly of God has no earthly popes, though it does have Divinely appointed and therefore Divinely anointed brethren upon whom God has placed the burden of the care of the Assembly. These are elders (*presbuteroi*) to care for the Assembly spiritually and to defend it from error; and deacons (*diakonoi*) to care for the temporal matters, such as looking out for the poor, as did the seven of Acts 6. Both elders and deacons are to be clearly distinguished from those who are gifted by the Spirit in any of the nine or ten ways spoken of in 1 Cor. 12: "apostles, prophets, teachers," etc., for example. Leadership involved responsibility for the condition of the Assembly; whereas a teacher would "give himself to his teaching." One of the supreme needs of the hour now is for Christians to find out from God exactly what He has fitted them for.)

God raises up by His Spirit in each assembly of saints those whom He fits to care for it. They are not rulers as "bosses."

2. These leaders spake the word of God unto the saints. This is illustrated in Acts 14:12, where Paul was the chief speaker, literally, took the lead in speaking: the same Greek verb, *hegeomai*, as Hebrews 13:7. (This is the very opposite of the Satanic tyranny over the Roman Catholics, in which the "priests" do not even permit the people to read the Scriptures for themselves!) These Scriptural leaders were, of course, by no means the only ones in the assemblies of saints who spake the word of God, for there is wondrous freedom in a Scriptural assembling of the saints. As Paul says, "When ye come together, each one hath a psalm, hath a teaching, hath a revelation, hath a tongue, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying" (1 Cor. 14:26). Here was no one-man ministry!

But the "leaders," while including the God-appointed elders or overseers, especially taught the Word of God, as an excellent commentator translates 1 Timothy 5:17: "Let the elders who take the lead well (among the saints) be esteemed worthy of double honor." In each assembly there would be those fitted by God to do as Paul exhorts the elders of the Ephesian assembly to do: "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of the Lord which he purchased with His own blood ... Wherefore watch ye" (Acts 20:28-31).

* Greek, *episkopoi*. Note two things about these overseers here: (1) There were not one but several in each Assembly. Compare with Phil. 1:1, addressed to "all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi, with the overseers (*episkopoi*) and deacons." How eagerly the human heart seizes the least excuse for self-exaltation, and for aloneness and aloofness of power, is seen in the sad misapplication of the term "overseer" (used always in Scripture, we repeat, of several in each assembly) as arrogating to itself the title of "Bishop" and even of "Archbishop" of many assemblies--such a person to be addressed as "My Lord Bishop"!

(2) Note again in Acts 20 that those addressed as overseers (*episkopoi*) are simply "the elders" of the assembly (Acts 20:17): Paul "sent to Ephesus, and called to him the elders (*presbuterion*) of the assembly."

Note also that Scripture confines eldership to a local assembly. In Acts 11:30 the elders are those of the assembly at Jerusalem. In Acts 14:23, Paul and Barnabas "ordained elders in every assembly." Compare 21:18; and Tit. 1:5: "ordained elders in every city." Again, Jas. 5:14: "Let him call for the elders of the assembly."

An elder, therefore, was such in the assembly where he was. There was no hint by the Holy Spirit of a confederating of various assemblies into what is now called a "Presbytery," "Conference," an "Association," or a "Convention," any more than there is Scripture for denominations.

3. The saints were to imitate their faith--the faith of such, leaders, and to be especially drawn to this imitation by considering the issue of their life. The word "issue" has special reference to the character of their closing testimony, "Considering what kind of an end they made."--Vincent. So we do well to remember the leaders, and to consider the end of their kind of life. Thus are our hearts drawn out to imitate, not them, but "their faith"; not their mannerisms, but their methods with God; their separation unto Him; their reliance upon Him; the boldness and confidence in their trusting Him.

* For myself, for instance, I look back first to my father, a godly minister, who lived to within three years of a century, in whose life I cannot remember the least dishonorable or unchristian act, and whose end was perfect quiet and very peace! Then I think of R.A. Torrey, in the Moody Institute in Chicago, whom Mr. Moody had appointed superintendent. When I consider Mr. Torrey's manner

of life, and the ending thereof, my heart is peculiarly filled with tenderness. Once, in his praying with me and for me, I happened to glance at his face, and tears were running down. So I remember that leader!

As for Mr. Moody, he came to the Chicago Auditorium Theatre, and held two meetings a day, morning and afternoon. In that last series in Chicago, how he preached! One day, for instance, on Elisha's receiving Elijah's mantle, when you could fairly see that old camel's hair garment drop from the skies, and Elisha rending his own clothes, taking Elijah's mantle, and smiting the waters with the words, "Where is Jehovah, the God of Elijah?"--and the Jordan dividing!

Mr. Moody went from Chicago to Kansas City, to a great audience in Convention Hall, where he was stricken, and went home to Northfield to go to be with the Lord on what he called his "Coronation Day," saying just before he went home: "Earth is receding and Heaven is opening; God is calling me."

Heb 13:8: Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yea and forever!--Let this mighty verse grasp our hearts, for it is spoken of our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Out of past eternity, never having had a beginning--for is He not God the Son--He comes to us. (Sapphir well says, "All their departed teachers and elders had shown them in life and death what they had declared: The just shall live by faith. They had passed away; but the Great Prophet, the Great Apostle and High Priest, the true Shepherd, remained--Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever... His yesterday has no beginning but it ends with His burial in that new tomb. His today commences with His resurrection, and is even now the 'today' while we hear the voice of grace. His 'forever' commences with His second advent. His incarnation is only the manifestation of the mind that was in Him from all eternity.")

Yesterday--Oh, what a word! Remember out of this eternal yesterday" He comes to do the Father's will and also to let His infinite love work for us.

And today--His obedience to His blessed Father and His infinite devotion to us, we see in the choice of the cup of Divine forsaking, and the drinking of it to the finish on the Cross. When does this blessed word "today" begin? I beg you to consider if its meaning be not since His resurrection; since He sent the message to His disciples on that resurrection day, "Go to My brethren"; since He appeared that night to them saying, "See My hands and My feet"; and He ate with them, and "showed Himself alive ... by the space of forty days." Then He ascended to the right hand of Him Who said, "Thou art a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek," and, "Sit Thou at My right hand until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool." Then in ten days He sent forth the blessed Spirit upon His beloved believers, and lo, the Church, the Body of Christ is found! All this--and how much more is included in the blessed words "and to-day!"

What an unspeakable marvel! There is One Who changeth not. Our God changes not and in the blessed quotation from Psalm 102:27, we find these words applied to the Lord Jesus:

"But Thou art the same, And Thy years shall have no end."

And unto the ages (Gr., eis tous aionas)--This is, of course, for the eternity to come! But in the mind of the Spirit, "eternity" is looked at as a succession--endless, of course--of periods during each of which some purpose of God is fulfilled, for example, the age (aion) succeeding the present one is called the age to come.

* The meaning of aion must be understood despite man's dispensational ignorance or prejudice, if we would understand what the Word of God says to us in this word: It means a duration of time during which God is accomplishing certain things. It never means the created world itself.

How tragic it is that even the Revised Version banishes to the "margin," the word age, substituting the word world as for example in Matthew 24:3: "Thy coming, and of the end of the world." The disciples asked literally, "What shall be the sign of Thy coming and the consummation of the age?" In Matthew 13:39, 40, 49 and 28:20 also the word age (aion) is banished. What right has anyone to substitute the word cosmos (world), God's word to denote the earth (Matt. 13:35; John 21:25; Acts 17:24; 1John 3:17), that is a material creation, for the characteristic operation of God in that created world? His creation is cosmos (world). His operation is age (aion).

Change with us is constant, universal. How unspeakably blessed that the Christ to Whom we have transferred our life and hopes is the same unto the ages, yesterday and today, and forever! Of no one but Deity could this be spoken. Even of angels it is written, that they "desire to look into" certain things. And so with all creatures: how blessed that we know One Who changeth not! The love that redeemed us was in His bosom from all eternity. We therefore wholly reject divers and strange teachings (Heb 13:9).

Heb 13:9: Be not carried away by divers and strange doctrines"--Strange teachings": Look at them today! Buchmanism, Bullingerism, Unity, Christian Science, Seventh Day Adventism, Russellism, British Israelism, Psychianna, and many more! God may bring back to truth and soberness some of these foolish folk, who have been carried away by them, but the real apostate has turned his back on Christian things and Divine mercy forever. For it is good that the heart be established by grace; not by meats, wherein they that occupied themselves were not profited: Here you must turn to Leviticus 11. We beg you, go read this chapter, The conscientious Israelite was occupied with meats! But the Law "made nothing perfect," as we found in Hebrews 7, so that there was "a disannulling of a foregoing commandment," and now comes GRACE, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

* "Nothing is plainer proof that the heart is not practically in possession of that which gives rest in Christ, that it does not realize what Christ is, than the restless search after something new--divers and strange doctrines. To grow in the knowledge of Christ is our life and our privilege. The search after novelties which are foreign to Him, is a proof of not being satisfied with Him."--Darby, Syn.

Heb 13:10-11: We have (that is, in Levitical things, especially on the Great Day of Atonement) an altar, whereof they have no right to eat who serve the tabernacle. For the bodies of those living creatures whose blood is brought into the holies by the high priest as an offering for sin, are burned without the camp: The opening word in the Greek, We have, is merely a verb making a statement, referring to Old Testament things, and not a statement of any distinction between Jews and Gentiles. In We have, the writer is speaking as a Hebrew, and the emphatic words are "have," and "altar." This "altar" is the one that was in the tabernacle of old. (Note that it is the "tabernacle"; not the temple as existing when this epistle was written. This use of "tabernacle," instead of temple, is consistent throughout Hebrews, for the temple looked forward to kingdom times; the tabernacle in the wilderness, meant atonement and worship. We expect, therefore, to hear of some ordinance or ceremony connected with that tabernacle, and we have this in Heb 13:11.)

The altar was not the offerer, much less the victim. It was the place where the victim was presented, slain. Christ is nowhere called an altar, nor is the Cross.

* To make the altar Christ, now in Heaven, is to pass by the work done at the Cross, and pass on to the worship in Heaven--which cannot be carried on except in view of the perfect sacrifice on earth. To make Christ in Heaven the altar would be to set up in Heaven what He finished on earth; for the altar was not the place of worship, but of sacrifice.

The altar was standing in front of the temple at Jerusalem when the Apostle was writing; and on it was the sacrifice, the sin-offering (vs. 11) of which none were permitted to eat. It was of course afterwards destroyed by the Romans.

To suppose this altar to be what we today call "the Lord's table," will not do; for all partake of that table; but no one partook of the sin-offering, which was burned without the camp, symbolizing God's wrath against sin.

Indeed, Heb 13:11, the chief point of the passage, does not support this. It carried on the explanation concerning the altar in the tabernacle. Of that altar those who served the tabernacle were indeed to eat: but not of the bodies of those living creatures whose blood is brought into the holies by the high priest as an offering for sin. (See Lev. 6:26, 30; 4:7, 12, 18, 21; 16:15, 27, 28.) We see in these passages that when the blood of the sin-offering on the Great Day of Atonement was presented in the Holy of Holies (in the immediate presence of God, as most precious to Him), the bodies of those living creatures of which the blood had been shed were burned without the camp. So Christ suffered the wrath of God without the gate (Heb 13:12), and entered into the presence of God "within the veil" (Heb. 6:19; 10:20).

Going back for a minute to verse 10, we must see what truths are set forth by this burning without the camp:

1. The fire represents God's wrath upon Christ-made-sin at the Cross.
2. This took place without the camp, showing Him becoming a curse and forsaken of God.
3. The burning of these bodies had nothing to do with atonement for sin, because "it is the blood that maketh atonement," and the blood of these beasts had been poured out, and taken into the holy place as an offering for sin, not only on the Great Day of Atonement, but also whenever sin had been committed, as we saw in Leviticus 4, cited above.

From man's side, carrying out the type, Christ should have died in the temple at the altar. But human religion was on the throne there, and human religion has no place for atoning blood. Men give up hope in "religion" when they transfer their trust to the poured-out blood of the Son of God! Jerusalem was the "holy city": "religious" sinners are out for His blood, but will not have it shed there. So they take Him to Golgotha, outside the whole religious camp. And that day saw a world of sin with the Redeemer cast out by them!

Note now that Heb 13:11 connects itself with Heb 13:10 by the word "For," and Heb 13:12 opens out the new subject with the words Wherefore Jesus also. (Vs. 11 refers to and depends on vs. 10.) (Vss. 10 and 11 refer to the type, vs. 12 is the application of it, vs. 13 is the exhortation in view of it, vs. 14, our expectation, and vs. 15 our true sacrifice in praise to God.)

Heb 13:12: Here we have the object of this burning without the camp, fulfilled by our Lord's suffering without the gate. (Remember the brazen altar was inside, not without!) It was that He might sanctify the people through His own blood. Here the meaning of the word sanctify as it is generally found in Hebrews prevails. It is, to separate unto. (See comment on Heb 10:14, 29; 12:14). When our blessed Lord died, outside the gate, outside all "religious" connection, despised and rejected of men, the way was laid for Him, risen from the dead, to give us His own life and place. Joined to Him (for "Both He that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one") they are, and are worshiping. There is no other worship. The world, even the religious world, has been left behind by a Risen Christ, and so by all His own. The saints, believers, are sanctified, separated, unto God. "They are not of the world even as I am not of the world," our Lord said (John 17:14). Was He despised? Was His place without the gate, without the camp? Then the place of all His own is there. The world despises them, knows them not, as it knew not and despised the Lord. The world is a black ball doomed, rolling on to judgment!

Heb 13:13: Let us therefore go forth unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach: Inasmuch as Jesus had suffered without the gate down here, "a reproach of men, and despised of the people" (Ps. 22:6), believers were now to go forth unto Him without the camp. It is a blessed thing that in thus going forth without the camp we go forth UNTO HIM. For Christ is known only by and in the Holy Spirit, and true worship is that of Ephesians 2:18: "Through Him we both (Jew and Gentile believers) have our access by one

Spirit unto the Father."

* Our Lord's suffering is without the gate, while we are exhorted to go forth unto Him without the camp. The types of Hebrews are those of the tabernacle in the wilderness, but by the Spirit of prophecy (Rev. 19:10) the word "gate" is used, referring to our Lord's going forth through the gate of Jerusalem to the hill of Calvary.

"The camp" to those Hebrew believers whom Paul is addressing, of course meant apostate Judaism that had crucified their Messiah. But the term "camp" includes all those "religious" developments, by whatever name called, which, though professing to be Christian, are Judeo-pagan. (This refers not only to Roman Catholicism, which openly claims temporal power, holding not one Christian truth in purity, and having an order of "priests" who blasphemously undertake to do that work for men which our Great High Priest has done on the Cross, and now is accomplishing in Heaven. It refers also to all who, despite God's Word to the contrary, disobey God's command not to "divide Christ" by sectarianism. Thus we see what is called Christendom, where Christ is named, but which believes in human righteousness, hates grace for the guilty, and thinks of itself as having "the Christian religion": people not born again, not having the Holy Spirit, never having been convicted of their lost state "joining" what are called "churches.") You must choose between earthly "religion" and heavenly reality. You must know a heavenly Christ or not know Christ at all, Your worship must be by the Spirit, or be worse than paganism.

Six words might sum up the believing Hebrew's position: "Within the veil" (6:19; 10:20); without the camp. "Within the veil" is the heavenly position: Christ is there, and believers in fact are there in Him, and are to be there in constant entrance (10:19 ff). Without the camp reveals where Christ is and His followers are, as to this world and its "religion." If God takes Judaism away from the Hebrews, and commands them to "draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace," having "no continuing city" on earth, no temple, ceremonies, special days--no religious camp, but Christ in the glory only--let us beware of any "religious" things man sets up on earth! All earthly religious things are of the flesh, which has been forever rejected of God. Let no man build it up by religious forms, lest it prove his doom. ("It (the kingdom of Christ) has no sacred days or seasons, no special sanctuaries, because every time and every place are alike holy. Above all, it has no sacerdotal system. It interposes no sacrificial tribe or class between God and man. The only priests under the Gospel, designated as such in the New Testament, are the saints, the members of the Christian brotherhood. As individuals all Christians are priests alike."--Bishop Lightfoot, of Durham.)

Again and again we say, since their "religion" is taken away from the Hebrews (to whom God gave it), let no Gentile (to whom religion was never given) dare to claim to have it! You--who are you? A publican, we trust, who has smitten his breast, saying, "God be merciful to me, a sinner" (Lk. 18:9-14). Otherwise, you are a Pharisee!

Bearing His reproach: For if there is anyone despised or reproached on earth, it is one openly holding a hope of Heaven, yet having no connection with human "religion." Let such an one love fellow Christians, and unsaved people too, however much; and let him testify ever so faithfully of God's infinite gift of love, even Christ, dying for our sins--yet the question the world will ask will be, "What religion do you profess?" or, "What denomination do you belong to?"

And if he says, "To none: I belong to Christ," they cast him out. Yea, the "denominations" themselves will persecute him. And why all this? Hearken:

Because the sins of such a one were put away by the blood of Christ, and he knows it.

Because he died with Christ and is a new creature in a Risen Christ, and he knows it.

Because, wonder of wonders!--he is a member of the Body of Christ; and the Spirit, Who baptized him into that Body, indwells him--and he knows it.

Because he finds in the Cross the end of all human religions, the end of all man's hopes of whatever sort.

Because he is not of the world even as Christ was not of the world; and he is hated because Christ is hated--and he knows it.

Of course all this makes him "different" from the world. Unless your only hope is not "religion," not being a "church member," not so-called Christian activity, but--the blood of Christ Who entered Heaven "through His own blood," having shed it on the Cross, forsaken of God for your sins--your hope is a damning delusion, whatever your "priest," "pastor," or "spiritual adviser" may tell you.

So any man or woman who knows the true gospel is in a world where he will bear His reproach. "All that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3:12. The world will not have Christ Himself set before them: as their only hope of escape from hell; as having immediate claims upon them as their Creator God, as the Redeemer at the cost of His own blood; as their appointed judge. Let these claims of Christ be set forth in the power of the Holy Spirit, and you will find the wrath of this Satan-ruled world to be just what it was when they spat in the face of the Son of God, and nailed Him to the Tree!) Let it be known that you believe the mere profession of "the Christian religion" to be a delusion, and you will at once find yourself bearing His reproach. "Religion" is a false hope. Christendom has put on this garment and goes right on sinning. Salvation, on the other hand, involves men's knowledge of and acquaintance with Jesus Christ in Heaven Who bore their sins in His own body on the Tree. Saved people have HIM. They have deserted "religion" for a Person--a Divine Person--and are waiting for Him from Heaven. The nation that had "religion," blind to their sins, crucified their Messiah. So religion's day was done.

* In the Millennium to come, as shown in the prophets (see Ezek. 40-48) there will be a temple, with memorial sacrifices. But this will be only after the Remnant of Israel have "looked unto Him Whom they have pierced," and "mourned for Him," and have rested upon His sacrifice.

Heb 13:14: For we have not here an abiding city, but we, seek after the city which is to come: Thus did Abraham, as we have said (see Hebrews 11:10); and all the patriarchs (Heb 11:13-16). They "confessed they were strangers, and pilgrims on the earth" ...that they were "seeking after a country of their own ... that they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly."

Thus these Hebrew believers not only were "partakers of a heavenly calling," but saw they had a heavenly destiny. Those whose consciences have been cleansed by the blood of Christ (Heb 9:14) "to serve the Living God," come to the city of the Living God (12:22)--not only in expectation now, but in realization shortly!

Heb 13:15: Through Him then let us offer up a sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of lips which make confession to His name:

* One Sunday night, many years ago, the writer was preaching in the old Moody Church building in Chicago, on the finished work of Christ on the Cross, and His present priesthood in Heaven. As usual on Sunday nights, the song service led by beloved D.B. Towner had crowded the auditorium. All seats were full, and people standing against the walls, both upstairs and down.

A little Irish woman, a Roman Catholic, who was unattractive in appearance and had lost one eye, hearing the great volume of song, came to the entrance, could not get in on the first floor, and went to the gallery. There too she found people standing, but pressed on to the aisle which led down through the gallery to a point opposite the pulpit. There she took a stand, looking right down at the pulpit.

At that moment the speaker was saying, "Let this Bible in my left hand represent the world's sin, your sin and mine. I now transfer this book to my right hand" (and he did). "Thus God transferred the sin of the world, your sin and mine, to Christ, and now says to us, 'Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world!' God forsook Christ on the Cross, instead of forsaking us; for there the judgment of human sin was being held, held ahead of time, that we sinners might not be judged, but our Substitute judged in our place!

"And now God has raised Him from the dead, and He has entered Heaven 'through His own blood ' and in the value and power of that shed blood He is at God's right hand just now. Believe on Him, believe that He has put away your sins by His blood on the Cross, and lo, you have Him as your Great High Priest in Heaven, in things pertaining to God, making intercession for you, sympathizing with your every need. Your conscience is then forever free as regards guilt and judgment, for the Lord Jesus has said,

"He that heareth My word, and believeth Him that sent Me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life."

That little Irish Catholic woman, just as she heard, believed--believed God's Word, believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. She left that gallery, that building, and went home to the convent where she was a servant, and began to pack up her belongings to remove from there.

They said, "What do you mean? You cannot leave us!" She answered, "I must leave you, and I will, tonight! For I have heard tonight that Jesus Himself put away my sin forever, and is my Great High Priest in Heaven!"

And she did leave that convent! She went to live in a humble rented room, and began to publish in every spare moment the good news of salvation she had heard and believed.

What a straight course in the truth she held! She testified to everybody, on the streets, everywhere. Soon all the policemen in the "Loop" knew her, and let her alone, for they knew that her message of salvation helped, rather than hindered, good government.

One night about 11 o'clock I was on a State Street car coming from a meeting on the South side. The snow lay many inches deep. What was my astonishment, as the car stopped opposite a vacant lot surrounded by illuminated billboards, to see standing in the snow 75 or 100 men, and, on a box, "Sister" Duffy, telling those men the good news, from her very soul.

What had happened to her? That night in the old Moody church, the swelling song of 2,000 voices had drawn her in, and she had joined--what? Through simply believing the blessed message of Christ's work on Calvary, and His present priesthood on high, she had joined the great company of adoring worshipers who through Christ have become real believers in God Who raised Him from the dead!

So may this book of Hebrews I pray, draw any who have not yet believed, who have not yet rested on the transferring of their guilt to the head of Christ on the Cross, and the putting away forever of their sin from God's sight by the offering of Himself! May this book of Hebrews lead us to join the glad song of worship which the Risen Christ, Himself the High Priest, leads, the heavenly worship of His saints, those who have believed!

Heb 13:15: Through Him then let us offer up a sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of lips which make confession to His name: Friend, this exhortation of Hebrews takes you into heavenly worship. The subject of Hebrews is not our justification, not our being delivered from condemnation: but our being brought into the glad company who are worshiping and praising God, Christ leading this worship. As He said concerning us, in the wonderful Twenty-second Psalm (vs. 22 ff--the Risen Christ),

"I will declare Thy name unto My brethren: In the midst of the Assembly will I praise Thee."

But you say, My time is occupied with getting a livelihood! I hope to get to Heaven by the blood of Christ shed for me on the

Cross. But as to my occupation now, I am a practical man. I attend church faithfully, but when Monday morning comes, it is out in the world for me, to make my way. This absorbs my thoughts.

Nay, you are wrong, you are tragically wrong! You can "praise the Lord in all things"! See Psalm 145:2-3; 146:2; Lamentations 3:22-23; Acts 5:42; and Psalm 55:17, as wrote David with the uncounted burdens of the whole kingdom on his shoulders! Do you not remember that the Lord Jesus said, "The Father seeketh worshipers"--in spirit and in truth? What does your little earth life amount to? As James says, "What is your life? For ye are a vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away" (James 4:14). And you say, I have not time to be a worshiper. Is not that tempting God? "The God in Whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified," as said Daniel to Belshazzar (Dan. 5:23). And a creature depending on God for breath "has not time" to use that breath to praise him!

What is time compared with eternity--endlessness of being? We can believe nothing else than this: that the vast majority of professed Christians refuse to become worshipers, want to do as the world does as far as they safely can; place their little earth affairs before the heavenly Father's desire for worshipers--those who offer up a sacrifice of praise to God continually. The hope of most Christians is "to go to Heaven when they die." Meanwhile, they are to pray for grace to "live the Christian life." But believers are to enter into Heaven, where Christ is, NOW.

* Vincent well observes that this sacrifice of praise "was the Levitical term for a thank-offering," quoting the LXX, Lev. 7:2, 35, etc. Various commentators also quote an ancient saying of the Jewish rabbins: "In the future time all sacrifices shall cease; but praises shall not cease." Philo says, "They offer the best sacrifice who glorify with hymns the Saviour and Benefactor, God." Oh, that this might have been entered into by the whole Hebrew nation! Instead, alas, the nation, with no Messiah, no blessed Holy Spirit to guide and fill their hearts with worship in the name of the Great High Priest appointed for believers, build synagogues, and observe "feasts" at which there can be no festivity, for God is not in it!

Most of Christendom, imitating the poor Jews, has "Christian" synagogues and forms of worship. But on how many lips is there the sacrifice of praise to God continually, open confession to His name, which should be the true "fruit" of Christian lips? Instead, alas, a printed form of "service," a one man ministry, a paid choir, and the lips of the saints silent. It was not so in the early assemblies of the saints (1 Cor. 12, 14).

In Hebrews as in no other book, is set forth a believing human being left here for a few years of pilgrim existence as to earth, but really occupied with Heaven, with the throne there, the throne of grace; with the Great High Priest there, Jesus, the Son of God. As regards the earth, the world, and all human religion, believers have gone forth unto Christ "without the camp, bearing His reproach." But, as to Heaven, they enter into "that which is within the veil." Nor is their entrance there to be spasmodic or temporary, but habitual and permanent. The "heavenly minded" saints we all have read of or perhaps blessedly known, are simply those who had exercised the rights, yea, obeyed the invitation God had given them and us, through the blood of Christ. Indeed, the book of Hebrews sets before us the Christian life as something that absorbs the whole attention of the believer. This fifteenth verse of Hebrews 13 is its great message.

And wherefore? We are to draw near to God in the holiest above, are we not? Suppose any other creatures in God's presence should undertake to live the low, casual, absent-minded, interested-in-other-things life that most professing believers engage in. What would all Heaven think of that? Suppose cherubim, seraphim, or angels, undertook to engage in an occasional worship or service of God; prayed to be "excused": that they had other interests, not connected with God's service? What would God think of that?

If God's creatures in Heaven constantly, gladly, serve and worship, His saints on earth, for whom He gave His Son, should respond to His unspeakable kindness with the utter devotion which befits it, devotion to God such as no other beings have!

But we "go to church" for an hour, and go home and go about other things with no thought of that constant worship which is being carried on in Heaven. Ah, this is not Hebrews! For in this great epistle there is no thought of our withdrawing from nearness, from worship. There is constant spiritual activity, praise continually. We have elsewhere noted that forever and ever in eternity new discoveries of the infinite glories of God will be revealed to His saints; and evermore the Leader of their praises is Christ. Through Him, then, here and now, and by His blessed indwelling Spirit, yea, by Christ formed within us by that Spirit (Rom. 8:2, 11; 2 Cor. 3:17, 18), let us offer up a sacrifice of praise to God continually. There is nothing occasional about the true Christian life. It is continual! Against spiritual sluggishness, now-and-then-ness, indifference, unbelief, we are warned in Hebrews. It is neglecting "so great a salvation"!

Beloved, we are in a world rapidly rushing to judgment. At the bottom of the heart of every unsaved "religious" one today lies the perhaps unexpressed, even unconscious, word of the high priest and his company to Peter and the apostles: "Ye have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and intend to bring this Man's blood upon us!" (Acts 5:28). Jesus said of the world, "Me it hateth, because I testify of it that its works are evil." Despite all its dreams and delusions about a "lasting peace," iniquity is increasing—every honest, unbiased observer knows this. The earth is daily becoming more godless, getting ready, and fast, for the Great Tribulation and the worship of the Antichrist: these are dead ahead. As our Lord said, "I am come in My Father's name and ye receive Me not: if another (Antichrist) shall come in his own name, him ye will receive." (Thank God, the Church will be raptured away from that hour of trial! Rev. 3:10)

* Be not deceived: today men are seeking to unite the nations in a perpetual bond of peace, with their "post-war planning" for a

"new and better world"! But Scripture, which cannot lie, says that Until the very end there shall be wars and rumors of wars; and that only when our Lord returns as High Priest for His Melchizedek reign, will He "make wars to cease to the end of the earth."

We need, as never since our Lord ascended, to leave this world; to "set our mind on the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God"; to become such as are offering up a sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of lips which make confession to His name. Finally note, that those who make confession to His name continually, will be finding out what being His representative means. The world wants to salve its conscience with "religion," but the world hated and crucified the Christ of God, and that is its attitude still. We beg you, believe it, and keep making confession to His name! This should describe your constant occupation perhaps more simply and understandably than any other verse in this great book of exhortation.

Heb 13:16, the verse that follows: To keep doing good, and communicating (to others) of your substance forget not, comes naturally with a life of continual praise. See Romans 12:13, and Galatians 6:6. God says He is "not unrighteous to forget your work and the love which ye showed toward His Name, in that ye ministered unto the saints" (Heb 6:10). Nothing is easier for us to forget! How blessed to read that with such sacrifices God is well pleased! We have known, even we ourselves, a few such praisers and givers. Aunt Sarah Cooke was one of the two sainted women who fasted and prayed for D.L. Moody till he received a mighty anointing of the Holy Ghost. Clad in a quiet dress and little black bonnet she would come into my Bible classes in Chicago, and I always thanked God for her presence. She sat well to the front. Her face was heavenly. When she quietly raised her right hand with her eyes closed (for I watched her), I knew that her soul was full of rapture. She was always praying and praising, and often I knew God was answering her prayer just then with power in the meeting.

God had such a handmaiden also in St. Louis. In an afternoon Bible reading on prayer in the old Dr. Brookes church there, I said, "If one person in this audience today yields his or her life up to praying, God will not only transform such a one, but will reach hundreds, perhaps thousands, through those prayers." I saw to my left in the back, a woman bow upon the pew in front of her, for she was doing the very thing I spoke of. She was a widow whose son, a doctor, had an office downtown, and she, alone at home, had hours which she gave over daily to prayer and praise. Soon requests began to come for her to remember, not only in St. Louis, but from hundreds, then thousands of miles away. She became known as "Mother" Hopkins. After some years she went to Heaven, but what a funeral! There was such consciousness of her entering victoriously into the presence of the Lord, that it was a triumph, melting everyone with very joy.

John S. Inskip, whose life was spent praying and praising God, shouted as his last words, "Victory! triumph! triumph!" Susanna Wesley, John Wesley's mother, was the mother of oldtime Methodism. Her last uttered request was, "Children, as soon as I am released, sing a psalm of praise to God." "Who offereth the sacrifice of thanksgiving glorifieth Me," saith our God (Ps. 50:23).

Heb 13:17: Obey them that are leaders over you, and be submissive: for they watch in behalf of your souls, as they that shall give account; that they may do this with joy and not with grief: for this were unprofitable for you: Paul having urged upon these Hebrew believers (Heb 13:7) loving remembrance of "them that had the rule over you" (now passed away), urges next, Listen to those leading you (at present) and do not be resisting them (literal rendering). Let us at once lay to heart that no matter how marvelously the Spirit of God may be operating in our midst, "God is not a God of confusion, but of peace" (1 Cor. 14:33). So that we are to be, guided both by this passage in Corinthians, which tells each believer to be subject to the Spirit in the way of order in the Assembly, and also by Hebrews 13:17, which commands obedience, rather than rebellion and strife, to those God-appointed leaders among us; and this because they are watching in behalf of our souls, as they that shall give account.

We see here the work of one truly leading God's saints, whether elder, deacon, or bishop. They are such as are watching over others' souls in view of Christ's coming. We are not claiming that all elders--those today leading the saints--are here described; but such is the pattern. As Paul told the Ephesian elders, "After my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock; ... Wherefore watch ye." So it is now. It is not a sign of spirituality to be stubborn and resisting, brother (1 Sam. 15:23). Help these leaders to give an account of their leadership (as they shortly must) with joy, and not with grief (literally, the word is, groaning), both in prayer here, and in loving regret at the judgment seat of Christ.

Heb 13:18 Pray for us: for we are persuaded that we have a good conscience, desiring to live honorably in all things.

19 And I exhort you the more exceedingly to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.

In Heb 13:18 we have Paul's common plea, Pray for us, with his reasons therefor, in Heb 13:18, 19. And then the next words, Hebrews 13:20, are, Now the God of peace.

* "Praying at all seasons ... and on my behalf" (Eph. 6:18, 19); "Brethren, pray for us" (1 Thess. 5:25); "Finally, brethren, pray for us" (2 Thess. 3:1); "Now I beseech you, brethren ...strive together with me in your prayers to God for me" (Ro 15:30); "Ye also helping together on our behalf by your supplication" (2 Cor. 1:11); "I hope that through your prayers I shall be granted unto you" (Philemon 22).

Heb 13:20 Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead the Great Shepherd of the sheep with the blood of an eternal covenant, even our Lord Jesus,

21 make you perfect in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is wellpleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Here we have a Christian address (using the word Christian to set forth the whole company of the saved, Hebrew and Gentile). First, the Name of God, the God of Peace, used only by Paul, is before our eyes here:

* Six other occurrences of this precious name of God are: Phil. 4:9: "The God of peace shall be with you." 2 Cor. 13:11: "Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfected; be comforted; be of the same mind; live in peace: and the God of love and peace shall be with you."

1 Cor. 14:33: "For God is not a God of confusion, but of peace."

1 Thess. 5:23: "And the God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly,; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Rom. 15:33: "Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen."

Rom. 16:20: "And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly."

(We have sought to place these Scriptures in their spiritual order.)

Second the Name given to Christ--Our Lord Jesus. He is called "Lord Jesus" nearly forty times, and "Our Lord Jesus" here and in the following passages, all in Paul's epistles: 1Corinthians 5:4 (twice); 2 Corinthians 1:14; 1 Thessalonians 2:19; 3:11, 13; 2 Thessalonians 1:8.

* Paul only uses the words Our Lord Jesus. And of the nearly 30 times the Name "Lord Jesus Christ" is used, Peter uses it twice (Acts 10:37; 2 Pet. 2:20); James once 1:1; and Paul all the other times.

Then the Name, The Great Shepherd of the sheep, takes us to John 10, the "sheep chapter," when among the "poor of the flock" who believed on Him when He was on earth, we hear our Lord speak of "My sheep," and say they were "given Him of the Father," and that "they shall never perish," and that "none shall pluck them out of His hand." Further, "Other sheep I have, not of this (Jewish) fold: them also must I bring ... and they shall become one flock, one Shepherd." (The fold was Jewish, but the "other sheep" are here included--all the saved.)

* As has been so often said, as the Good Shepherd, Christ "lays down His life for the sheep"; as the Great Shepherd, He is brought again from the dead; and as the Chief Shepherd He will shortly be manifested, and reward those who have cared for the sheep and lambs in His absence (1 Pet. 5:4).

Dear friend, do you have a sheep's attitude towards your Lord? David, the shepherd, said it so well: "The Lord is my Shepherd." Did you ever notice the last verse of Psalm 119: "I have gone astray like a lost sheep: seek Thy servant; for I do not forget Thy commandments"? He prays, "Seek Thy servant," not, I will seek Thee. Remember the two things the sheep is without: first, it has no wisdom: if it starts wandering, it must be recovered by the shepherd. Second, it has no weapons. It cannot defend itself, but must be protected by the shepherd. So with you and me!

Next in Hebrews 13:20 we have the word "covenant" (which we saw so frequently in Chs. 8, 9, 10, 12) and an eternal covenant; and its character and meaning unfold before our wondering eyes like the opening of a great rose--yea, and our beings are filled with the fragrance thereof! For here we find The God of peace bringing again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the Great Shepherd of the sheep--how? with the blood of an eternal covenant. That is, in accordance with the terms of an agreement between the Father and the Son, which terms are seen to be a promise from the Father that if the Son would become "a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death," shedding His blood for us, the Father would bring Him again from among the dead. (Here is the only assertion of the resurrection of Christ in the book of Hebrews.)

The Son came to earth, and became "obedient even unto death," and the Father indeed brought Him again from among the dead. The eternal covenant was kept.

Before we go farther, it will be well to look back over Scripture teaching as to covenants. To make a covenant effective, the parties thereto must be able to fulfill the conditions undertaken. But with fallen man, such fulfillment is unthinkable, impossible. For,

(a) Man is a creature, and all the ability must be supplied by God.

(b) Man is a fallen creature, and unable to put away his guilt.

Therefore the legal covenant of Sinai was, as 2 Corinthians 3:7, 9 says, a "ministration of death ... of condemnation." It revealed to man his helplessness, but it supplied no strength. We are removed, then, in our consideration of Hebrews 13:20, both from the legal covenant of Hebrews 8-9, and from the future "new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah" (Heb 8:8) because:

(a) "The Law (with its covenant) made nothing perfect" (Heb 7:19), and was "disannulled" "because of its weakness and unprofitableness" (Heb 7:18-19). (b) The "new covenant" to be made with Israel and Judah at our Lord's return to that nation, we have seen is all grace--God's operation instead of their response (Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 37:12-14, 21-23, 25-28). Therefore the "new covenant" which the Hebrew believers to whom Paul was writing had had explained to them, was not yet on, nor will be till Christ's return; and then it will apply to "the house of Israel and the house of Judah," as God says, in the land of Palestine, with the peculiar blessings described in Scripture.

But--there is yet an eternal covenant, detailed in Hebrews 13:20, in which and according to which Paul knows that all believers may be made perfect in every good work. This eternal covenant, in which the God of Peace and our Lord Jesus are the actors, and

the sheep are the beneficiaries--this covenant, I say, is the only covenant which believers, whether Hebrews or Gentiles, should keep in mind as already and eternally fulfilled in its conditions, and available to all.

* To sum up, for we must repeat these great truths till they are clearly in mind:

1. There was the old covenant with Israel, called in Heb. 9:1 "The first covenant"; THIS IS OFF.

2. There is to be made "a New Covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah" (Hebrews 8:8-12). THIS IS NOT YET ON.

Therefore Israel and Judah are out of all covenant relationship with Jehovah at present. (And remember God was never in covenant with Gentiles.)

3. There is the everlasting covenant of Hebrews 13:20. THIS IS ON FOREVER. The parties in this covenant are: (a) The God of Peace, and (b) The Great Shepherd of the sheep ... our Lord Jesus.

The terms of the covenant were: (a) God--The God of Peace (for all things are of God), requested the Son to come to earth to "give His life a ransom for many." (b) The Divine promise--as made to Him that, He having done so, God would bring Him again from among the dead.

See comment also on Hebrews 8:9.

Remember, God never made a covenant with the human race: they are not under any covenant. He made, as we have seen, a covenant with His Son, that if He would bear sin unto death, He would raise Him up. So, The God of Peace brought (Him) again from the dead ... in the blood of an eternal covenant. If the word were dia, through, instead of en, in, it would mean that it was through the blood that God brought Christ again from the dead. He did not do that. Christ had committed no sin. The word is en, in--in agreement with, in accordance with the terms of the covenant. This is the eternal covenant of which the Lord Jesus is said (Heb 9:15) to be the Mediator, and which is celebrated in the Lord's Supper, in view of His death, by those benefited forever thereby!

* Alford well says "The expression itself (in the blood of an eternal covenant), can hardly but be a reminiscence of Zech. 9:11: and if so, the import of the preposition here will be at least indicated by its import there. And there, it is, 'by virtue of (in the power of) the blood of the covenant' entered into with Thee. By virtue of that blood also He was raised up as The Great Shepherd, out of the dead, and to God's right hand."

This was revealed to Paul: "The Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread ... in like manner also the cup, after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in My blood: this do, as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me." And 2 Corinthians 3:6: (God) "Who made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant; not of the letter, but of the spirit." Note also Luke 22:20: "And the cup in like manner after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in My blood, even that which is poured out for you." This is the covenant of Hebrews 13:20.

* This eternal covenant did not have an external mediator (as Moses). Gal. 3:20 must be fulfilled: "Now a mediator is not a mediator of one; but God is One." No external mediator is needed here. The covenant of Heb. 13:20 has, indeed, Christ as "Mediator." But this covenant being between two Persons of the Godhead; and all conditions fulfilled (Christ's death and God's raising Him from the dead), the term "Mediator" must no longer demand conditions to be fulfilled. There is peculiar blessing in seeing clearly that an eternal covenant or agreement exists between God the Father and God the Son--one God.

Let us meditate yet a little farther on this wonderful eternal covenant. We repeat, the parties to it are not man, nor any creature! It is an agreement between God and His Son. It antedated creation, for we read in Eph. 1:4 that we were chosen in Christ "before the foundation of the world," that is, before anything was created. And further, Paul writes that God "saved us ... according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before times of ages" (2 Tim. 1:9).

In fulfillment of this covenant, the Son, the Lord Jesus, came to earth subject to all the arrangements directed by God (Heb. 10:5-7), and became obedient even unto ... the "death of the Cross" (Phil. 2:8). He went to death in the unwavering attitude of faith. "When the days were well nigh come that He should be received up, He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem" (Luke 9:51). From the time His journey to Jerusalem began we read, as in Matthew 16:20-21: "From that time began Jesus to show unto His disciples, that He must go unto Jerusalem, and ... be killed, and the third day be raised up."

Compare Luke 9:20-22; Mark 8:31; "the third day rise again," Luke 18:33. Read "with hearing" all these verses, and you will marvel anew at Christ's perfect confidence in God's raising Him up according to the eternal covenant--which He trusted!

God the Father, accordingly, faithful to the terms of the covenant, brought Him again from the dead. For we read, "He was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father" (Rom. 6:4). "But God raised Him from the dead" (Acts 13:30). We are giving in a footnote some of the O.T. Scriptures which were fulfilled. * See the psalms and the prophets: Ps. 16:10-11:

"Thou wilt not leave My soul to Sheol. (Gr., Hades; see Acts 2:27)

Neither wilt Thou suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption.

Thou wilt show Me (even though My body lie in the tomb, and My spirit descend into the heart of the earth) the path of life (resurrection life):"

And further:

"In Thy presence (whither Thou wilt receive Me) is fullness of joy; in Thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore." Peter at Pentecost, and later Paul, call this wondrous psalm of trust to remembrance (Acts 2:25-28; 13:35).

Abundant also are the prophecies that the Son would "give His back to the smiters, and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair." That He would "hide not His face from shame and spitting" (Isa. 50:6).

So it was done!

"Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, and against the Man that is My Fellow, saith Jehovah of hosts; smite the Shepherd" (Zech. 13:7).

And Christ returned answer to God,

Thou, Who hast showed me many and sore troubles, wilt quicken me again, and wilt bring Me up again from the depths" (Ps. 71:20, R.V., margin).

We have another wonderful view of the blood of the eternal covenant in Zechariah 9. The ninth verse, with which everyone is familiar, identifies Christ:

"Thy King cometh unto thee; He is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, even upon a colt, the foal of an ass" (this is the Triumphal Entry).

Then follows verse 10, in which, passing over the time of Christ's rejection, God declares that Christ

"... shall speak peace unto the nations: and His dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the River (the Euphrates) to the ends of the earth."

Then comes the further reach of this covenant, which evidently here covers all those God ever gave to Christ:

"As for Thee also, because of the blood of Thy covenant I have set free Thy prisoners from the pit wherein is no water" (vs. 11).

Note the word "also": Not only will Christ ride into

Jerusalem, as we see in verse 9, but at His future coming "His dominion shall be from sea to sea" (vs. 10). "Also" speaks of something more and different.

It is "because of the blood of His covenant" that what God here says He will do, has to be done. Prisoners were not "set free" through the Mosaic covenant. Indeed, we saw in Hebrews 8:9 that Israel continued not in God's covenant, and God "regarded them not." But because of the eternal covenant in Christ's blood, God can do anything for His dear Son. That is, it was wholly and solely because of Christ's shedding His blood, and not for their own goodness, that God, in the Old Testament days, delivered Christ's prisoners from going to the compartment of Sheol (Gr., Hades), where lost spirits go, the place of torment into which the rich man of Luke 16 went: "In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torments." This place was separated by "a great gulf fixed" from the place where the "prisoners of hope," the Old Testament saints, were at rest with Abraham, which is called "the stronghold" (vs. 12), the place of security and rest they were in until Christ visited them during the three days when He was "in the heart of the earth" (Matt. 12:40).

Not only are Christ's "prisoners"--His dear saints whom His blood has bought--set free" from the pit of torment, but the additional word is spoken, "Turn you to the stronghold, ye prisoners of hope."

Now, while these disembodied spirits were still prisoners, they were "Prisoners of hope." (Dives was hope-less!) The blood of the covenant which would free them and open Heaven to them had not yet been shed, but they were "comforted," as Abraham said of Lazarus, upon his bosom, while those "in the pit wherein is no water," were in anguish. It was because of simple faith in the Word of God on the ground of sacrifice, that they had their place of protection.

The prophetic Word, after addressing Christ's "prisoners of hope," turns again to Christ:

"Even today do I declare that I will render double unto Thee" (vs. 12). "Rendering double" signifies first, God's delivering the "prisoners of hope" from the pit, on account of the blood not then shed; and second, Christ's going down into "the lower parts of the earth" (Ps. 68:18 as opened to us in Eph. 4:8-10), when the blood had been shed, and bringing up those prisoners from the stronghold--"leading captivity captive," upon His ascension.

Finally turn to Zechariah 9:14-17, and read of the wondrous triumph He gives the Jews over their enemies in establishing them in the land He promised Abraham: "For how great is His goodness, and how great is His beauty!" (vs. 17).

Heb 13:21: Now the apostle's benedictive prayer that the God of peace will make them perfect in every good thing to do His will, working in them that which is wellpleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to Whom be the glory unto the ages of the ages. Amen. Now this is Christian language: this is Pauline. Here, as we said above, we step out into Christian truth. Not that the words of Peter, John, James, and Jude are not Christian. But God now has, in this marvelous Hebrews epistle, brought out from their former religion these Hebrew believers, these "other sheep," to where they can forget former legal things, have their hope set on Christ in glory, call their God the God of peace, and speak of the Son of God as our Lord Jesus!

We know that "the Lord gave" Paul "authority for building up" the saints (2 Cor. 10:8); let us regard, then, as authoritative and effectual, this confident, apostolic committal of the saints to God. Let us receive to our very hearts, if we are of the sheep, this great and blessed word of comfort, for it is the God of peace Who undertakes a work within believers, those sheep. This working within us is nowhere else found in Hebrews. It is, we repeat, Christian truth in Christian terms as direct and simple as any epistle of Paul, involving the indwelling and operation of the Holy Spirit, and His undertaking to perfect us in the Divine will.

* It is to be noted, and with awe, that the Lord Jesus is so set before us in Hebrews that the Holy Spirit's working in us is not described unless it be in Hebrews 9:8, 10:15. where He is opening the written Word. The reason for this is readily seen from the

contents of Hebrews: it is all CHRIST. Not, as we have said, Christ speaking, but God speaking in the Person, work, and present position of the Son, Who was to fulfill all O.T. Scriptures concerning Himself.

Today "modernism" (which is the name of Satan-deluded man for the last days), walks with blinded eyes right past the whole book of Hebrews, on down to the Apocalypse, the book of judgment. "Modernism" does not hear God speaking in this Son "Whom He appointed Heir of all things," the Great High Priest Who shed His blood for all sinners, and entered Heaven through that blood.

We remind you again that He is the Great High Priest there only for those who have believed on Him! "I pray not for the world," He said (John 17:9). If you are not a believer, Christ is not your Priest, but He will be your judge! (John 5:22). Hasten to find Him, "while it is called Today."

The blessed Spirit Who inspired this epistle does not here name His own inworking in us. All attention is drawn to Him Whom, one with and equal to God, both the Father and the Spirit delight to honor, He of Whom "Moses in the Law, and the prophets wrote," as He Himself, to the two walking to Emmaus, opened out "in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself."

At the close of this epistle, from Hebrews 13:20 on, these Hebrews addressed are simply believers, as the word is, on "Christian" ground. Their intelligent consent to the teaching of the preceding chapters of the epistle is presumed. How different from the Judaism under which they did the working, is the God of peace ... working in us that which is wellpleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ! To have entered into a spiritual state in which they consented to these words--how different from that state of even earnest Jews described by Paul to Agrippa: "Our twelve tribes, earnestly serving God night and day, hope to attain!" (Acts 26:6). It is Hebrews who are "partakers of a heavenly calling," and in Christ are "holy" and "beloved" (3:1, 6:9), whom we joyfully meet here at the end of Hebrews. Along with them, all believers join in ascription of praise to our blessed God of peace.

Heb 13:22 But, I exhort you, brethren, bear with the word of exhortation; for I have written unto you in few words.

23 Know ye that our brother Timothy hath been set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you.

24 Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you.

25 Grace be with you all. Amen.

Heb 13:22: Word of exhortation--Exhortation is not doctrine; these believers knew Christian doctrine, even concerning the "heavenly calling" (Heb 3:1). Doctrine is received, believed; exhortation is to be followed, obeyed. In Hebrews, since "God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in His Son" (Heb 1:1), exhortation will concern our attitude toward His Son. Since He "became unto all that obey Him the Author of eternal salvation" (Heb 5:9), exhortation will persuade to obedience to Him. This obedience will not in Hebrews be so much to Christ as Lord, or as Head of the Body, as to Him as Great High Priest, appearing "before the face of God for us" (Heb 9:24), leading our worship and praises, as well as taking care of our needs. (Priesthood has to do with maintaining before God the position, privileges, worship, warfare, and progress through temptations and trials, of God's saints; just as Christ's sacrifice had to do with putting away forever of their sins, and the bringing them into God's presence in resurrection, and in the full value of His blood.) The chief disobedience in Hebrews will be to stay out of that worship, whether through neglect, unbelief, slothfulness of spirit, or (deadly danger!) shrinking from bearing Christ's reproach, and so living in compromise with the religion of earth, with its "great" divisions, and "established" institutions, carried on not in the Holy Spirit, but by human means, measures and movements--in short, to stay in "the camp."

Thus the great exhortation which this book of Hebrews is, becomes the supreme safeguard to the believer against that religionism which was found in Israel, which crucified the Lord of glory.

* it is, in view of other Scriptures, astonishing to read the book of Hebrews through and not find in it any accusation such as those which fill the mouths of Peter, Stephen and Paul in the book of Acts:

"Ye by the hands of lawless men did crucify and slay" (Acts 2:23). "Ye denied the Holy and righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted unto you" (Acts 3:14). "In the Name of Jesus of Nazareth, Whom ye crucified, Whom God raised from the dead, even in Him doth this man stand here before you whole" (Acts 4:10).

And Paul in Thessalonians: "--the Jews, who both killed the Lord Jesus, and the prophets and drove out us" (1 Thess. 2:15).

You ask, Why was not this fearful fact emphasized in the Epistle to the Hebrews? Because, first, the Word of God is one: all preceding utterances are taken for granted. The great national crime of Calvary is not stated, though all knew it had been the nation's act, as it is their attitude today.

But consider further that each book has its special Object, and the object in Hebrews is to call believers away from earth and its religion "the camp," to Heaven, to the throne of grace, where alone true worship of God is being carried on. The epistle is addressed to Hebrews who had professed faith in this rejected Christ; who had been "enlightened" (Heb 6:3); and knew that God had raised Jesus from the dead. Lovingly, therefore, the Holy Spirit in this epistle will woo such believers, presenting Christ as Deity, as well as man, crowned now with glory and honor as our Great High Priest, having entered Heaven "through His own blood," and interceding there for all that come to God by Him.

Of course He will also warn. But it will be the danger of neglecting "so great salvation," of hardness of heart, of unbelief; of refusing God's speaking "in His Son," so marvelously set forth in Hebrews.

Man, uneasy in conscience, desires relief from that uneasiness, but he does not desire to draw near to God now. But this the book of Hebrews proposes: for we are exhorted to "come boldly to the throne of grace." And where is that throne? In Heaven, where Christ is our Great High Priest, and where we are to offer up sacrifices of praise continually, as we saw in verse 15. Such a life is a heavenly life. It is not the mere apprehension of the doctrines of justification or of "Church truth"--of our position, by God's infinite grace: created in Christ and seated with Him in the heavenlies: but it is the actual realization through faith of this heavenly place with all its privileges, and the obedient entering on a life of heavenly worship "by the blood of Jesus, by the freshly-slain and living way, through the veil ... His (pierced) flesh;--and having Him as our "Great High Priest over the house of God" (Heb 10:19-21), drawing near "with a true heart in full assurance of faith," because our hearts are fully delivered--"sprinkled from an evil conscience."

* We might here summarize what Hebrews does not teach:

1. Church truth: The Risen Christ, the Head of the Body; saints heavenly, raised with Him . Believers are not in Hebrews seen as seated with Christ in the heavenlies, but as making their pilgrimage through this world. Christ is seen as coming, but not definitely as the Bridegroom of the Church as in Ephesians 5, or even as Lord of the service of individual believers. True and wonderful as these things are, they are not the lines of truth brought out in Hebrews.

The second coming of Christ, and the "good things to come" therewith, constantly in view; but not the Rapture, or the catching up of the Church as in 1 Thess. 4:16, 17; 1 Cor. 15:52, etc., although these Hebrew believers are "partakers of a heavenly calling."

2. In Hebrews, Christ is the High Priest in Heaven. Worship is being carried on there, "within the veil." The whole Levitical economy, and all man-made forms and ceremonies, done away. No "holy place" left on earth, no tabernacle, temple, or "continuing city." "Christianity" as a "religion" unknown; instead, the living confession of a heavenly hope. Believers not to "forsake their peculiar assembling together" (Heb 10:25), but the Church as seen in Ephesians, Colossians, and other epistles, not found in Hebrews.

3. Neither God the Father as such (nor the indwelling Holy Spirit, the Comforter, evoking the "Abba, Father," cry) is revealed, except in Hebrews 12:5-11, where the Father is spoken of in Connection with chastening.

My brother, Church "membership" and "Christian service" will not do in Hebrews. WITHIN THE VEIL ... WITHOUT THE CAMP, describes, almost defines God's saints here. Does it describe you? Hebrews constantly exhorts believers to come in, to draw nigh to God with boldness, which of course means to come boldly into the presence of God Himself. The sacrifice has been made; our Great High Priest has gone in through His blood and sat down, and God waits for those who have heard and believe to press in boldly. Our Great High Priest is there, filled with sympathy, for He passed through this world, and tasted to the full its trials, temptations, and sufferings. Our welcome to Heaven is as great and actual as the gift of God of His Son for us, and as intimate and blessed as He upon Whose breast John laid his head at the supper, can make it.

Oh, let us take heed that we are not deceived into a "Christian" life which yet makes excuse, which does not "press on unto full growth" (Heb 6:1); which does not "draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace" (Heb 4:16); which pursues not "the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb 12:14), and finally avoids the great exhortation of Hebrews 13:15, to continual praise. Of course, the world and worldliness will shun you, if you press on "within the veil ... without the camp." Are you afraid of that? What a state for one professing to be redeemed by the shed blood of the Son of God!

Is our High Priest living? Is He "the same yesterday, and today, yea and forever"? Has His sacrifice availed to put away sin? Are you invited? Yea, indeed! And note again Paul's words, I exhort you brethren, bear with the word of exhortation.

And oh, how simple the path! Bear with the word of exhortation: Why? For I have written unto you in few words--roughly estimated, less than ten thousand words! Compare "the ten thousand things" of the Law (Hos. 8:12): days, seasons, months, years; daily offerings unceasing; watchings against many, many forbidden things; repeated cleansings against defilement--as Peter called it all (and thus it was meant to be), "a Yoke ... which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear." Compare, I say, the manifold directions for conduct from Exodus 19 on, with the great word of Hebrews 11: FAITH. Christ has finished the work that opens Heaven! We have only to come, "Come for all things are now ready." Are you the Spirit-filled, constantly praying person in your Christian company? Are you?

It is not easy to the flesh--this life of constant access to God in Heaven:

"The way of faith is hard to flesh;
It is not hard to love;
If thou wert sick for want of God,
How quickly wouldst thou move!"

Heb 13:24: Salute all them that have the leadership over you, and all the saints: All the saints are equal, certainly; but recognizing the established order, he mentions leaders first. As to the rest of the verse, a word farther on.

Now why should Paul urge upon the Hebrew believers three times over (Heb 13:7, 17, 24), that they remember, obey, and salute, those who were, by Divine appointment, leaders among them? We beg you, consider how different from that of the Gentile believer, the Hebrew believer's position would be. The Gentiles would come into the faith from raw paganism; the Hebrew believer had known

and worshiped the true God according to His revealed oracles, in His temple at Jerusalem. He had known nothing from his babyhood but a Levitically descended priesthood; ordinances, days, feasts, abstainings. He had indeed known a "religious" leadership which belonged to his religious system.

But now the Hebrew believers were in an assembly where the Holy Spirit controlled, where He engifted whom He would, independently of any religious system. Therefore the temptation would be strong to ignore such leadership, or to fear it as not connected with what they and their fathers had known in Judaism.

Heb 13:23-25: It is agreed among commentators that this very unusual epistle, TO THE HEBREWS, called by many a treatise, seems to end (Heb 13:18-25), in Paul's usual epistolary manner, both in the reference to Timothy, and in the author's expectation of traveling again with Timothy: with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you. (See Appendix G. "Authorship of Hebrews.") It includes, as we have seen, the great prayer of benediction (Heb 13:20-21); and the final urging to bear with the word of exhortation (the whole epistle).

Then come the last salutations. Do you not recognize the hand that writes, Our brother Timothy hath been set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you (vs. 23)? And, They of Italy salute you (Heb 13:24)?

And finally comes "the token in every epistle" (2 Thess. 3:17), Grace be with you all. Amen. Only Paul ends thus.

* "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you" (Rom. 16:20).

"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you" (1 Cor. 16:23).

"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all" (2 Cor. 13:14).

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit" (Gal. 6:18).

"Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ with a love incorruptible" (Eph. 6:24).

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit" (Phil. 4:23).

"Grace be with you" (Col. 4:18).

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you" (1 Thess. 5:28).

"The salutation of Me Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all" (2 Thess. 3:17-18).

"Grace be with you" (1 Tim. 6:21).

"The Lord be with thy Spirit. Grace be with you" (2 Tim. 4:22).

"Grace be with you all" (Tit. 3:15).

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit" (Philemon 1:25).

"He closes every epistle by praying for GRACE to those whom he addresses ... Paul's characteristic salutation, known to be his badge, not used by others in his lifetime."--Fausset.

No more veil! God bids me enter
By the new and living way--
Not in trembling hope I venture,
Boldly I His call obey;
There, with Him, My God, I meet
God upon the mercy-seat!

One with Him, O Lord, before Thee,
There I live, and yet not I;
Christ it is Who there adores Thee
Who more dear, or who more nigh?
All the Father's heart mine own--
Mine--and yet His Son's alone.

All the worth I have before Him
Is the value of His Blood;
I present, when I adore Him,
Christ, the First-fruits, unto God!
Him with joy doth God behold,
Thus is my acceptance told.

--Ter Steegen

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APPENDIX A WHY "TO HEBREWS"?

This book is addressed to HEBREWS.

What had the Hebrews that others had not, and that rendered it necessary to address an epistle in particular to them?

God had revealed Himself to that people. Over 2,000 years before Christ, God having called Abraham in Mesopotamia, brought him to the land of Canaan, and covenanted with him to give it to him and his seed. His son Isaac followed, bestowing upon Jacob his son the blessing of Jehovah.

Twelve sons of Jacob (then Israel), headed the twelve tribes of Israel, whom Moses led forth from Egypt through the wilderness: Jehovah their God revealing Himself to the nation in a marvelous way at Mount Sinai, and there announcing a Law-Covenant with the nation. God gave Moses specific directions concerning the construction of the tabernacle in the wilderness, in the Holy of Holies of which, when completed, Jehovah manifested His presence.

By a pillar of cloud by day and fire by night He led them on, Joshua, Moses' minister, finally bringing them into Canaan. Their history under the judges and the kings has been referred to in the main body of this commentary on Hebrews.

After their being captives for seventy years on account of disobedience, God restored them from Babylon, more than five hundred years before Christ, when they rebuilt, humbly, their temple.

Mark this: To no other nation did God ever give a religion. Romans 9:4-5 is literally true:--"Israelites, whose is the adoption (as God's earthly nation), and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the Law, and the (religious) service, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh, Who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen."

Of course, God's coming to them brought about the religion, with its sacrifices, laws, feasts, and directions for everyday life, as to worship, meats, and the many ordinances which ruled the Hebrew's life.

Now we find the book of Hebrews taking these things away and setting before them the Melchizedek priesthood (not at all after Aaron's order), which involved the disannulling of the Law and of the whole manner of life of the Hebrew, setting before them CHRIST, Risen from the dead, the Great High Priest at the right hand of God, in whom all his hopes are. It is no longer religion, but simple faith in the accomplished work of Christ the Son of God.

You ask, What about "Church truth"? What about the glorious revelations of the believer's place in Christ, members of His Body, seated with Him in the heavenlies, having died with Him and been raised in identification with Him? Also, what about the glorious privileges of the believer (sealed by and indwelt with the Spirit of God, as he is), the privileges of being filled with that Spirit and being able to say with Paul, "To me to live is Christ"?

Well, you will find in the book of Hebrews but one hint of the glorious truth God gave to Paul to unfold concerning the Church of God.*

That hint, as we shall see, is in Hebrews 3:1: "partakers of the heavenly calling." But not a word as to union with Christ, unless indeed it be at the very end:

"The God of peace, Who brought again from the dead the Great Shepherd of the sheep with the blood of an eternal covenant, even our Lord Jesus, make you perfect in every good thing to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ!"

This is of course not because Hebrew believers had no share in this glorious heavenly truth: by no means! They certainly had that share. But they had already a God-given religion, This would ever be coming between them and the blessed, glorious finished work of Christ.

So the book of Hebrews takes that religion from the Hebrews, leaving them only Christ.

* Distinguish in Hebrews things which concern:

1. CHRIST.
2. The saints.
3. Apostates.
4. The world.
5. Unbelieving national Israel in the past.
6. Believing national Israel of the future.
7. The author of the exhortation and those with him, especially in Hebrews 13.

APPENDIX B - THE TEACHING OF BAPTISMS (HEBREWS 6:2)

The Greek word is *baptismos*, meaning baptisms, or washings. The Jews had many of these. It is to deliver saints from such religious performances, evidently, that Paul refers to the "one baptism" of Ephesians 4:5, although the Spirit Of God looked forward, as always, foreseeing such heresies as horrid Bullingerism, which in England denies both the Lord's Supper and baptism, and in America denies baptism, saying that only the baptism with the Spirit is meant. This is Presumptuous ignorance, and confuses many saints. For they twist the meaning of Paul's saying to the Corinthians, "For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel" (1 Cor. 1:17), ignoring verse 14, where Paul says he baptized Crispus. Now who Was Crispus? We read in Acts 18:8 concerning him, "And Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing, believed,

and were baptized."

Any believer in those happy, tradition-less days, could baptize another who desired it. But Paul evidently said of Crispus, I will myself baptize this synagogue ruler in water, that all may connect water baptism with faith and confession of Christ, as the Risen One commanded:

"Go Ye therefore and disciple all the nations, baptizing them into the name Of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19).

And again "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mk. 16:16). Note two things in this verse: first, baptism connected with faith as the first step in the confession of faith; second, no mention of baptism when the opposite of salvation is described: "He that disbelieveth shall be condemned"; for salvation is by faith, not by baptism. The thief on the Cross was not baptized!

Nonetheless, the Lord prescribed water baptism, as the whole Church has confessed, however much they have differed as to its meaning and mode.

Note again in 1 Corinthians 1:14, 16: "Gaius ... also the household of Stephanas," were baptized in water by Paul himself, for Gaius was known everywhere: he was the host "of the whole Church" (Rom. 16:23); and of the household of Stephanas, the first converts in Greece (1 Cor. 16:15), Paul evidently said, "Let me baptize them by my own hands, for they are the first converts in Greece, and I wish everyone to connect confession by water baptism with identification with Christ by faith in Him."

Thus Paul sets before the Roman believers in Romans 6:3 the real teaching of that water baptism which they had all taken: namely, that it involved association with Christ both in His death to sin (Ro 6:10), and in His burial (Ro 6:4), and life unto God in resurrection (Ro 6:10, 11). Compare with Colossians 2:12, where burial with Christ as pictured in the ordinance of water baptism is so vividly set forth. No reasonable person can connect the word "burial" with the work of the Holy Spirit. The Bullingerites have no answer to this! Our burial with Christ is wonderfully set forth in Romans 6 and remarkably illustrated in water baptism.

Water baptism, then, is commanded by our Lord; is connected always with present faith; was practiced as a matter of course by the early believers; and was administered in special cases by Paul himself to emphasize these facts, and also that, although he did not himself often baptize, he left that work to others.

So did Peter (Acts 10:37) with Cornelius' household, when he said, after the hearers had believed and been baptized by the Holy Ghost into the Body of Christ, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?"

Peter adds his solemn testimony here in the remarkable passage in his first epistle, which is simple, if we remember that water is a symbol of judgment:

"God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water: which also after a true likeness doth now save You, even baptism, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the interrogation of a good conscience toward God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 3:20-21).

Water was ruin and death, and they were saved through it. The ark is a type of Christ; eight is the resurrection number; the waters that judged the earth, the ark passed safely through. (Note the word "likeness," 1Pe 3:21. Baptism in itself is nothing. It is a figure of Christ's passing through the judgment of death, bringing us safely through.)

APPENDIX C -- THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH

Concerning the nature, character, calling, and walk of the Church, the Ekklesia of God, the epistles of Paul, and (especially to the circumcision) those of James and Peter, constitute a complete revelation. And the book of Acts sets forth the example of assembly life.

Two things may be said about our position now: First, the Gentiles as such will be cut off from the place of blessing now enjoyed, when the real Church is raptured to Heaven, and Israel received again as "life from the dead." Second, we cannot change the state of things we see about us--all kinds of divisions, and those even gloried in. But we need not be conformed thereto. Mr. Moody used to say, "if I thought there was a drop of sectarian blood in my body, I'd open my veins and let it run out before night!"

Let us search our hearts, or ask God to do so. Here and there on earth even now are saints who can say with Paul, "To me to live is Christ"--Christ alone: saints who have no sectarian consciousness whatever: for Christ has none.

We trust we love our brethren, whatever their position, and we purpose by God's permission and grace to keep on ministering wherever the Lord opens the door.

Here is a paragraph from Mr. Turner's biography of J.N. Darby which refreshed me:

"His largeness of heart, for one of strong convictions and of practical consistency, showed itself in many ways. After he left the Anglican Establishment he preached occasionally at the call of godly clergymen who urged it; but he only appeared for the discourse and was not present at the previous service. So in France afterwards he preached for pious ministers of the Reformed Church; nor did he refuse the black gown as an academical dress; but when they brought the bands, 'Oh, no,' said he: 'I Put on no more.'

Again, he did not spare but warmly rebuked the zealots among half-fledged brothers, who were so ignorantly bitter as to apply what

the Apostle said of heathen tables to those of the various denominations. It was only fundamental error which roused his deepest grief and indignation. Then, as one of these (a heterodox teacher) said to me, 'J.N.D. writes with a pen in one hand and a thunderbolt in the other.'

Our beloved and honored brother, A.C. Gaebelien, followed a like path. In his *Half a Century* (pp. 84-85), he says:

"Through these brethren beloved I had become acquainted with the works of those able and godly men who were used in the great spiritual movement of the Brethren in the early part of the nineteenth century, John Nelson Darby and others. I found in his writings, in the works of William Kelly, F.W. Grant, Bellett and others, the soul-food I needed. I esteem these men next to the Apostles in their sound and spiritual teaching. But as for an actual affiliation with any of the numerous parties of Brethrenism I could not consent to this, for I found that the party spirit among these different divisions was even more sectarian than the sectarianism of the larger denominations. Nor did I feel that it was my commission to denounce denominations, as is so often done. Denominationalism exists, and there is nothing that will change it. But my commission was to go and minister the truth wherever the Lord would open a door for His servant. Invitations to hold Bible Conferences came from many states, in increasing numbers, and with the year 1900 began that nation-wide ministry which it has been my privilege to follow these many years."

APPENDIX D - THREE GREEK WORDS FOR "PLACE"

We have in John 14:2 three words to be distinguished and remembered. The first is *oikia*, dwelling, used here to indicate the abode of God's throne, as He says: "I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite" (Isa. 57:15). And as Paul says (1 Tim. 6:15-16), "The blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; Who only hath immortality, dwelling in light unapproachable."

The fundamental thought in *oikia* (a dwelling) and its cognates is a fixed dwelling place in the sense of a house. The second word is *monai* (pl, *monai*). The Revised Version margin, "abiding places," is quite good if we admit the sense of permanency of "abiding," and read further into the words, appointed abiding places. Of what "abiding places" is our Lord speaking? He cannot be referring to the home of the Bride, the Church, the New Jerusalem, for this clearly is indicated by the third word, *topos*: "I go to prepare a place (*topos*) for you." This *topos* was evidently not then prepared.

(By the way, this, John 14:2, is the first hint by our Lord that His Church will be in Heaven. He had already shown in Matthew 16:18 that the saints of the Assembly of God, the church, would not, as were the old Testament saints, be required to go down to the stronghold in Hades and await the death and resurrection of our Lord. See Zechariah 9:12, "stronghold"; and Luke 16.)

To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord for the saints now, we know. But this *topos*, this abiding place, might be translated special place, that is, one designed and appointed.

The "many abiding places" are evidently for other orders of heavenly beings. Concerning only the four living ones of Revelation 4:6-8 is it said that "they have no rest day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God, the Almighty, Who was and Who is and Who is to come." That is their constant and evidently their eternal occupation, and that is their bliss, in which the infinite power of God sustains them. The twenty-four elders also (which belong to Heaven by creation, as do the four living ones) join perpetually in the worship of which the four living ones are the perpetual leaders (Rev. 4:3, 9-11: for "and when" of verse 9 read *whenever*). As to other heavenly beings, whether angels, principalities, or powers, known or unknown to us, the "many abiding places," we believe, are theirs. Their service unto and delight in God is nonetheless real and perpetual in that they are not the leaders of Heaven's adoration as are the four living ones and the elders. Those certain angels, as Gabriel, who stands "in the presence of God," (Lk. 1:19) and the seven angels that "stand before God" (Rev. 8:2) are always at God's command to "fly swiftly" on His errands (Da 9:21).

APPENDIX E --THREE ELEMENTS OF DIVINE FORGIVENESS

The three differing elements of Divine forgiveness should be taught to every believer. These are, (1) The once-for-all pardon of the judge, (2) the daily renewed forgiveness of the Father, (3) the governmental action of God toward His children.

1. In Romans we see the whole world brought in guilty before God, not one righteous, all mouths stopped. Then, God setting forth Christ as a Propitiation "through faith in His blood," and those believing, written down righteous in Heaven. All the atoning work of Christ is reckoned to them; yea, they are even "the righteousness of God in Christ" (2 Cor. 5:21). David celebrates this in Psalm 32, quoted in Romans 4:7-8. It was after his great sin of adultery, murder, and prolonged "keeping silence" impenitently. The prophet Nathan was sent to him with the story of the rich man who took the one ewe lamb of a poor man, instead of from his own flocks and herds, and made a feast from it for a visitor (2 Sam. 11, 12).

David was very angry. (It is remarkable how indignant we can get over other people's sin!) He said, "The man that hath done this is a son of death (margin); he shall restore the lamb fourfold." Then the long finger of the prophet points to the guilty king, fixing the parable upon him: "Thou art the man!" David breaks down, saying, "I have sinned against Jehovah!" Instantly Nathan says, "Jehovah also bath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die." It was not David's penitence, but God's purpose, that Nathan here

announced, for in the quotation concerning this scene from Psalm 32 we have not only "iniquities forgiven" and "sins covered," but the words, "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not reckon sin." This is the once-for-all pardon of the judge.

You remember that Balaam, at the request of Balak, king of Moab, tried four times to curse Israel (Nu 22 to 24), but blessed them each time, because the Spirit of God took hold on this prophet, wicked as he was, and made him utter these words:

"He hath blessed, and I cannot reverse it. He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob; Neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel: Jehovah his God is with him."

God has told us that there had been both iniquity and perverseness in that nation; how they had murmured from Egypt on, how the bones of the first generation fell in the wilderness. But when it came to the enemy and his accusation, the word was, "He hath not seen perverseness in Israel."

Nor does this wonderful fact of an eternal pardon, truly received in faith, make for a life of looseness; but rather one of devotion to such a God of grace!

2. The daily renewed forgiveness of the Father: Turn to 1 John 1: we are told that this epistle has to do with fellowship: "That ye also may have fellowship with us: yea, and our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ: and these things we write, that your joy may be made full" (1Jn 1:3-4). Then our walking in the light, not in darkness, is seen as a condition of this fellowship, in which "the blood of Jesus His Son cleanseth us from all sin"; and the warnings to be tender of conscience concerning sin, neither saying that we have no sin, nor that we have no sins, in any Particular matter. Then the blessed 1Jn 1:9: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." That this is the forgiveness of the Father rather than of the Judge at the first, we see from Hebrews 2:1-2: "If any man (a believer) sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world."

Now, only those who distinguish between the once-for-all pardon of the Judge, and this forgiveness by the Father in the matter of fellowship, escape confusion. As to the first, God's judicial action was based wholly upon the shed blood of Christ at the Cross. Sin had been judged there fully and forever--put away. Those who believed entered into the benefit of this.

As to the second, the forgiveness of the Father to His confessing children, there is the double fact: first, that God "is faithful (to His Word) and righteous (to Christ Who bore our sins) to forgive us our sins"; and second, if a believer sin, "We have an advocate with the Father--not to make the Father willing to forgive us, for that willingness is shown (1Jn 1:9): but who is this Advocate? "Jesus Christ the righteous," Who put away our sin forever, so that it cannot come in before God judicially again. Moreover, Christ is called the Propitiation for our sins.

3. The governmental action of God toward His children: This also is wonderfully set forth in the story of David's sin, for Nathan, after saying, "Jehovah also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die," proceeds: "Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of Jehovah to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die." It died, and David bowed, and worshiped Jehovah. But the very next chapter (2 Sam. 13) shows a second son, the eldest, Amnon, killed by Absalom, for David had said to Nathan of the rich man, "He shall restore the lamb fourfold." Then Absalom becomes the third; and Adonijah, 1 Kings 2:25, the fourth to die. You ask, If God had forgiven David, and held nothing against him judicially, why should four of his sons die in the sight of Israel, three under such public dishonor? Because David had "given great occasion to the enemies of Jehovah to blaspheme," and God must deal with him publicly, for His own glory in the sight of Israel, that His holiness and justice be not beclouded, nor David regarded as a favorite to whose failures and sins Jehovah paid no attention.

All God's saints should walk softly: it is "whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth."

We quote from Owen on Hebrews 10:12:

"Howbeit in these words, thus transiently mentioned, He judgeth and condemneth the two grand oppositions that at this day are made against that one sacrifice of Christ, and efficacy of it. The first is that of the Papists, who in the Mass pretend to multiply the sacrifices of Him every day, whereas He offered but "once"; so as that the repetition of it is destructive unto it. The other is that of the Socinians, who would have the offering and sacrifice Of Christ to be only His appearance before God to receive power to keep us from the punishment of sin, upon His doing of the will of God in the world. But the words are express as unto the order of these things, namely, that He offered His sacrifice for sins before His exaltation in glory, or His sitting down on the right hand of God. And herein doth the apostle give glory unto that offering of Christ for sins, in that it Perfectly accomplished what all legal sacrifices could not effect. This, therefore, is the only repose of troubled souls."

APPENDIX F -- DELAYERS OF OUR LORD'S COMING -HEBREWS 10:37

The delayers of our Lord's coming continually quote our Lord's words, "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world (inhabited earth) for a testimony unto all the nations; and then shall the end come" (Matt. 24:14). This verse, they say, must be fulfilled by an ever-failing Church whose earnest ones are always pleading for revival of it. Their argument is that there yet remains a work to be done by such a Church, the horrors of whose history stain its pages red with blood, black with heresy, and green with jealousy. So they say, While we wait for Him, we must not expect Him! that is, must not watch for Him, as He commanded!

The answer to all their claims is: 1. According to the Scriptures quoted above, the gospel had been already in the apostolic age, preached to all the world; witnesses had gone with the message of Christ to every part of the inhabited earth.

2. The gospel of the kingdom, spoken of in Matthew 24:14, is "THIS gospel of the kingdom." So we turn back, in this very book of Matthew, to find the messiah, the virgin-born King of the Jews (Chs. 1, 2), "teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness among the people, speaking of the "kingdom of the heavens" (the Greek is plural), directly from Daniel 4:26, where Nebuchadnezzar found that "the heavens do rule," and that "the Most High ... doeth according to His will in the army of Heaven." In the "blesseds" of what we call "the Sermon on the Mount," note Matthew 5:3, 10; 7:21; 10:3, 7 ff, in the commission of the Twelve (heavens, each time); and Matthew 15:24, to the Canaanitish woman.

Now what does the context of Matthew 24 teach us? The Lord is answering the three questions in verse 3 concerning (1) the overthrow of Jerusalem and the temple; and (2) what would be the sign of His coming; and together with these two, as to (3) the sign of the consummation of the age. Now we all know that Titus took Jerusalem and burned the Temple in A.D. 70; but how about this word, "sign"? "The Jews ask signs"--this was just what these apostles were doing. It was a Jewish question, and will have a Jewish answer. See Matthew 24:29:

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from Heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken"--as in the trumpets and vials of Revelation 8, 9, 16, and in Joel 2:31, 3:15. And note:

"And then shall appear the SIGN of the Son of man in Heaven" (vs. 30). Now what possible reference to the Church of God could the "SIGN of the Son of man in Heaven," preceding the Rapture of the Church, have? None whatever, none possible. At the Rapture of the Church it will be

"In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump": for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed"---we living souls---and caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. But what do we read further in Matthew 24?

"And then shall all the tribes of the land (or earth) mourn" (vs. 30). Does this describe the Rapture? Nay, verily, but it describes what Zechariah tells us concerning the Remnant of Israel, the elect, those "written in the book" (Dan. 12:1):

"And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication; and they shall look unto Him Whom they have pierced; and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son" (Zech. 12:10).

As when Joseph, revealing himself unto his brethren who had delivered him to death and sold him into the hands of the Midianites so many years before, said, "I am Joseph," thus it will be in that day. The mourning in Jerusalem will be great:

"And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart and their wives apart; ... all the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart" (Zech. 12:12).

What a weeping that will be! And then the blessed next verse:

"In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness" (Zech 13:1).

The Jews will be beleaguered by the nations, ready to be cut off by their enemies, with sun and moon darkened, the stars falling from Heaven, the powers of the heavens shaken (Ps. 46, and the upheavals under the vials of Rev. 16). Then suddenly the SIGN is seen!

I am inclined to believe that "the sign of the Son of man in Heaven" may be a luminous cross! On earth is blackness of darkness, sun, moon, stars, gone; Rome, the harlot (Roman Catholicism), which had abused, even to idolatry, the mark of the Cross, having now been completely wiped out by the Antichrist and his ten kings (Rev. 17:16-18) several years before, so that both Rome's "religion" and her misuse of the sign of the Cross have

been forgotten; it might well be that God would set in the heavens the sign of that Tree upon which the nation of Israel had nailed their Messiah! At all events, it is some "sign of the Son of man" readily interpreted and understood by the godly Remnant of Israel who see it. John says,

"Behold He cometh with the clouds; and every eye shall see Him and they that pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn over Him" (Rev. 1:7; Dan. 7:13).

The human mind cannot conceive the awful collapse of the Jews in that day. A remnant will be spared; the unbelieving will be done away in slaughter. There will be a mourning such as this world has never seen. Their Messiah! Their King! They have slain Him! And what is there for them? Nothing but mercy, sovereign mercy, what Zacharias called "the heart of mercy of our God" (Lk. 1:78).

Wherefore be blind to that blessed parenthesis which God has revealed by Paul and the other apostles, hid in God from both the ages and the generations--the Church of God--which is being "taken out from the nations" (Acts 15:14) now? Why confuse the blessed counsels of Divine grace which will catch this completed company up to meet the Lord in the air, with the things of Matthew 24, in which this great mystery of the Church is not revealed at all? Note our Lord in Matthew 24:15 says,

"When therefore ye see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy

place" ("where he ought not," Mark adds; that is, in the restored Jewish temple), "then let them that are IN JUDEA flee unto the mountains: ... And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on a sabbath." Does that sound like Paul:

"Let no man judge you in meat, or in drink or in respect of a feast day or a new moon or a sabbath day"? Nay, verily, but it sounds exactly like Israel when the Church has been caught away, yea, THE CHURCH, ALL of it, brother: not "overcomers" only, but "they that are Christ's." Why confound the blessed grace shown unto us, with God's ways with Israel, who must Pass through "the time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30:7, Matt. 24:21, the Great Tribulation)?

So then this "gospel of the kingdom," which must be "preached in the Whole world" before "the end" can come, has nothing to do with the Church and its blessed gospel. The Church is not of this age or world. Nor has the Church to do with the time of the end, or with the end, as does Israel. For the end cannot come till the Tribulation is over; and "God appointed us," the saints of the Church, in His infinite grace, "NOT UNTO WRATH" (1 Thess. 5:9), as said our Lord:

"Because thou didst keep the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of trial, that hour which is to come upon the whole world (oikoumene, inhabited earth), to try them that dwell upon the earth" (Rev. 3:10).

No, none of God's counsels are left to depend upon the fulfillment of conditions by man! At a moment known to the Father only, He will send our blessed Lord, first for the Church; and afterwards, with the Church and angels, to come and establish the Millennium. But remember, He has said the gospel has been preached (even if that were, which it is not, a condition of Christ's coming) to the whole creation, and "spoken of by the whole world," so that the whole inhabited world (oikoumene) was "turned upside down." Of course the gospel has been proclaimed! Brother, in your town, no matter how small, only a few understand and have received the gospel. But tell me, how is it that under the sixth seal they cry,

"Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, AND from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of their wrath is come; and who is able to stand?" (Rev. 6:16-17). Where did they find out about this? Again, in Revelation 14, the Church will at that time have been raptured, as Revelation 4:1 proves; but earth's multitudes know God sitteth on the throne, and they have heard about the Lamb.

It is intensely interesting, and should be finally significant, that in the very last chapter of the Bible our blessed Lord repeats thrice. His familiar word to His own, "Behold I come, quickly." The word translated "quickly" means without delay, and is intended to arouse expectancy. When John says to the Lord, "Amen: come, Lord Jesus"; it is in answer to our Lord's third and final form of "Behold I come quickly," in which He exchanges the word *idou*, behold, for the word *nai*, which is the most emphatic Greek form of assurance, as, truly, assuredly, for a fact, I am coming quickly! May the response of the beloved John, "Amen: come!" be the expression of our own hearts, yea, of our expectation.

While believers delight in and urge the evangelization of all men, our expectation of Christ's coming is not governed or limited by the completion of any of our own or human conditions. Our expectation is of 'Christ Himself. "And what I say unto you," He said, "I say unto all, Watch."

There must come into our hearts a faith that holds fast the words, "In such an hour as ye think not," "Of that day knoweth not the Son." Is it not said that a crown of righteousness, like Paul's, awaits those that love Christ's appearing? Let those who point to this and that, rather than to His actual coming beware! "Lest coming suddenly He find you sleeping" (Mk. 13:36). Of our Great High Priest, the Holy Spirit saith, He "sat down on the right hand of God; henceforth expecting till His enemies be made the footstool of His feet" (10:12-13). Whatever you are expecting, you who call yourself a Christian, Christ your Lord is expecting to return to this earth as King! If you are not expecting what He is expecting, you are out of line with His plans and thoughts!

Why do you call yourself a Christian and yet reject Christian revelation? Our Lord was constantly speaking of His own return, and all the epistles hold it before us. One of the great tragedies of all history, if not the greatest, is the casting away by the Church of the great and mighty sustaining hope which first the Lord Himself, and then His apostles in the Acts and epistles, urged upon the Church as not only the great path of separation from the world—"Every one that hath this hope set on Him"—when He appears—"purifieth himself, even as He is pure" (1 John 3:3) but the thought sustaining the Christian soul through every adversity and trial:

"If I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto Myself, (John 14:3).

"For the Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven, with a Shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thess. 4:16-17).

Indeed, Paul's description of the Thessalonians to whom he wrote the above is,

"ye turned unto God from idols, to serve a Living and true God, and to wait for His Son from Heaven, Whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, Who delivereth us from the wrath to come."

Mr. Moody used to say there were less than twenty passages on baptism, and over three hundred on the second coming, in the New Testament! But, behold, here is a Christendom filled with "Postmillennialists," holders of a heresy invented in the eighteenth century. And here is "Amillennialism," which means no Millennium! Which of the two is a greater insult to the Word of God, it would be hard to say. The first would have Christ stay away while one thousand years of "world uplift" go on, which idea of course, is contrary to all the Bible's account of man; and the second would have no Millennium at all, though the Word of God in one chapter alone (Rev. 20), uses the term "thousand years" Six times, not to mention many passages, and whole chapters and psalms, describing it. And then there are the indifferentists, who say, "What does it matter?"

Well, sir, it matters just this: You take away the key of knowledge when you reject prophecy. You enter not in yourself, and those entering, you prevent.

I again press home upon you, Why do You call Yourself a Christian and reject Christian revelation?

APPENDIX G --AUTHORSHIP OF HEBREWS

From Hebrews 13:18 to the end of the chapter, Paul, plainly, is speaking, as Peter testifies in 2 Peter 3:15: "Even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him, wrote unto you." Who are the "you" to whom Peter says Paul wrote? 1 Peter 1:1, Peter's salutation as he begins his epistles, tells us: "To the elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion (Gr., Diaspora)"--the dispersed Israelites; and, "This is now, beloved, the second epistle that I write unto you" (2 Pet. 3:1ff).

This ("Our beloved brother Paul according to the wisdom given unto him wrote unto You," "the elect [Israelites] who are sojourners of the Dispersion"--putting the above texts together), this, I say, gives Paul an authority from Peter, the apostle to the circumcision.*

* See Acts 15:25, where "The apostles and (certainly including Peter, who had been speaking at the conference) the elders, with the whole church, chose men" and sent them "to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas ... and wrote thus by them ... It seemed good unto us ... to choose out men and send them unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul" (Acts 15:22-25).

See also Galatians 2:7-9.:

"When they saw that I had been intrusted with the gospel of the uncircumcision, even as Peter with the gospel of the circumcision (for He that wrought for Peter unto the apostleship of the circumcision wrought for me also unto the Gentiles); and when they perceived the grace that was given unto me, James and Cephas and John, they who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, that we should go unto the Gentiles, and they unto the circumcision."

Remember Hebrews 5:11: "of whom (Melchizedek) we have many things to say and hard of interpretation, seeing ye are become dull of hearing," and compare with this, 2 Peter 3:15-16:

"Even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given to him, wrote unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; wherein are some things hard to be understood, which the ignorant and unstedfast wrest, as they do also the OTHER SCRIPTURES, unto their own destruction."

(See Paul's words in 1 Cor. 3:10, Eph. 3:3: "According to the grace of God which was given unto me"; "By revelation was made known unto me the mystery.")

We see in this Peter's remarkable testimony to the book of HEBREWS, not only that Paul wrote unto the Hebrews; and that in this writing there were "things hard to be understood"; but also that Peter calls this letter of Paul's to the dispersed among believing Hebrews of Asia Minor, "Scripture." Now the only book of Scripture of which the author is not designated directly is the book of Hebrews, which, therefore, Paul wrote. ("He who wrote the letter desires they should know that Timothy had been set at liberty; he himself was so already; he was in Italy; circumstances which tend to confirm the idea that it was Paul who wrote this letter--a very interesting point, although in nowise affecting its authority." J.N.D., Synopsis, p. 349.)

How beautiful that Peter, whom Paul had "withstood to his face" when Peter "feared them that were of the circumcision" (Gal. 2:12), should so lovingly commend to these Hebrews of Asia Minor Paul's letter to them! The "Dispersion" was in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, the very field where most of Paul's labors had been.

APPENDIX H -- THE BOOKS WHICH FOLLOW HEBREWS

It is remarkable that the books which follow Hebrews are those of "James and Cephas and John," who in Galatians 2:9 are seen in that order giving Paul and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship to go to the Gentiles, Peter and others going to the circumcision.

1. James begins his epistle, "To the twelve tribes which are of the Dispersion" (that is, to the dispersed believers coming from the twelve tribes) "greeting" (Gr., wisheth joy--R.V., margin). James was a brother of Jesus (Gal. 1:19), and although we find in Romans that there was "no difference between Jew and Greek," no one having righteousness, yet here we find a brother in the flesh of the Lord having charge of the Jerusalem assembly, and writing to "the twelve tribes" as recognizing that they were remembered by God, though now scattered. (Paul before Agrippa referred to "our twelve tribes earnestly serving God day and night" under Law: Acts 26:7.)

2. Next we have the two epistles of Peter (Cephas), addressed "to the elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia" (that is, the provinces making up Asia Minor, a relatively small but important province of the Roman Empire, of which Ephesus was the capital, on the western end of Asia Minor).

"He that wrought for Peter unto the apostleship of the circumcision" (Galatians 2:8), shows that Peter was regarded as the chief apostle to the circumcision, although James was set as leader over the assembly at Jerusalem (Acts 21:18).

3. Then we have the epistles of John, the beloved disciple, of whom the Lord Jesus said (John 21:22) "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" Tarry till the Lord comes, John in the Spirit indeed does, speaking first of "fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ" (1 John 1:3); and a warning of the coming Antichrist--and indeed of many antichrists (1Jn 2:18, 22); and

finally, in the Book of the Revelation, presenting the Lord as Priest-judge over the seven churches; and seeing the coming believing Remnant of Israel as in Revelation 7:3-8, 11 to 14.

As a FINAL WORD, Remember the last verse of Hebrews:

"Grace Be With You ALL. Amen."