

NOTES ON
The Epistle to the
Hebrews.



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PREFACE.

THE Epistle to the Hebrews may be regarded as completing the arguments in the epistles to the Romans and to the Galatians. One passage of Scripture occurs in all three—"The just shall live by Faith" (Rom. 1. 17; Gal. 3. 11; Heb. 10. 38), thus forming a link of connection between them.

In Galatians Paul endeavoured to restore those who were falling away to Jewish ordinances, circumcision, etc., as if these were necessary to salvation or binding on Christians as a rule of life. In Romans he taught that Jew and Gentile alike were under the judgment of God, and all alike needed a common salvation, and that upon equal terms, which salvation had been designed by God in a past eternity, pre-announced by the law and the prophets, and received by faith in Christ, and not by keeping of the law (Rom. 8. 29).

In the Epistle to the Hebrews he completes the work, although the temple was still standing, and the services were being carried on daily, Paul knew the impending doom of both, and, like the angels sent to Sodom (Gen. 18.), he writes to preserve believers from going back to the temple ritual, and partaking of its approaching overthrow.

The increasing persecutions, the shame of being followers of the rejected Christ, and the reproach of

worshipping a dead man (as He was spoken of by their enemies) who had been put to death by hanging (crucifixion) which their law pronounced accursed, for the law said—"Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Gal. 3. 13); these things tempted them to give it all up (Heb. 10. 25), even to renounce their Baptism and to return to Judaism (Heb. 6. 2-6); and in addition, tended to draw them back to the temple services with its fascinating gorgeous ritual, stately pomp, and dazzling splendour. The law had been given by angels amid the awful thunderings and lightnings of Sinai, also the priesthood by Moses, and to crown all, was the continuous line of priests, patriarchs and prophets on a background of nearly two thousand years.

Here at such a time and in such circumstances the apostle comes forth and shows that the gospel is really the fulfilment of the hope fondly cherished by the nation. "And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made by God unto our fathers. Unto which promise our twelve tribes instantly serving God day and night hope to come. For which hope's sake, King Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews" (Acts 26. 6-7). "Saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: How that the Christ must suffer and how that He first by the resurrection of the dead should proclaim light both to the people and to the Gentiles" (Acts 26. 22-23 R.V.). And now he reminds them that the same God who spake in times past in divers portions and in divers manners to the fathers by the prophets hath in the last of these days spoken in His Son, Whom He appointed Heir of all things, by Whom also

He made the worlds, Who being the brightness of His glory, and the very image of His substance, and upholding all things by the word of His power, after He had made purification of sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high (Heb. 1. 1-3). That this is He Whom I had preached unto them in the gospel,—One far higher than the highest archangel, far greater than Moses who was His servant, and that disobedience to the gospel would be visited with far greater punishment than any breach of the law (Heb. 2. 1-3).

He thus shows that the gospel is not at variance with the law, rather is it the consummation of all that had gone before and which was preparatory to it. He shows that the gospel of Christ is far better than the law of Moses, also Christ's Priesthood is much more excellent than that of Aaron, which was only a figure of that which was to come. "Wherefore then are you going back to the Mosaic ritual with all its weakness and bondage."

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Notes on the Epistle to the Hebrews.

CHAPTER I.

THE DEITY OF THE SON AND SUPERIORITY OVER ANGELS.

“GOD who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets hath in the last of these days spoken unto us in (His) Son, Whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; Who being the effulgence of His glory, and the very image of His substance, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.”†

One is struck by the absence of any introduction to the epistle. The writer, whom we take to have been the Apostle Paul, enters upon his subject immediately, and having for his subject, the unfolding of the Person, Sacrifice and Priesthood of Christ, as the only and all-sufficient provision for the putting away of sin, and the bringing of those thus redeemed, into His own presence for ever. He at once proceeds to reveal something of the “Deity” of God the Father, and God the Son, and afterwards unfolds how He condescended to take to Himself a body, or perhaps better, “The Word became flesh” (John 1. 14). For

† The Revised Version is used chiefly in making quotations.

He who undertakes the redemption of fallen man, must himself be both God and man—He must be *God* to fulfil the eternal purpose, viz., to raise man up, bring him into the presence of God, fill him of the fulness of Christ (Eph. 1. 23), and later, unto all the fulness of God (Eph. 3. 19). He must be *man* to enable Him to put sin away, which He did by the sacrifice of Himself (Heb. 9. 26). He was *God* manifest in the *Flesh* (1 Tim. 3. 16).

Now to undertake the destined object it *became* Him (God) in bringing many sons to Glory to make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering, and it *behoved* the Son to be made like unto His brethren, that He might become a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God and to make propitiation for the sins of the people (Heb. 2. 10-17).

Now to achieve this wondrous purpose there must needs be a lengthened preparation, and so we read that, "God spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets." He spake by divers portions and in divers manners to the fathers, but largely to no purpose; the greater part of them simply rejected the messages, and in the last of these times, in hope that they would listen to His Son, He sent Him into the world, He also was rejected, and at their hands suffered a more awful death than any of the prophets. (Crucifixion was a method of capital punishment used not by the Jews, but only by the Romans, and then only in the case of slaves and robbers. But the Christ must be crucified as foretold, John 3. 14, so as the time drew near for the fulfilment of God's purpose, Judæa was brought under the Romans B.C. 65, and ultimately

made a Roman Province, ruled by governors sent from Rome—Pilate was the fifth—and accordingly our Lord was crucified).

Thus was the way prepared politically for the fulfilment of God's purpose in the death of His Son—"When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son" (Gal. 4. 4).

In the structure of the language in verses 2 to 5 there is a kind of parallelism which might be regarded as a form of what is called in Greek grammar "Chiasmos" or inverted parallelism. The simplest way to point this out will be to place the parallels side by side, thus—

Ver. 2. His Son	Ver. 5. Thou art my Son
„ 2. Heir of all things	„ 4. Inherited a more excellent name
„ 2. Made the Worlds	„ 3. Upholding all things
„ 3. The effulgence of His Glory	„ 3. The very image of His substance.

Now if we connect together the members of each side of the parallel, we get a very excellent unfolding of the Deity, or Godhead of both Father and Son. In the first four we have the Son appointed *heir* of all things, and that too before ever the creation was made. Then the worlds were made *through* Him—He was the efficient agency through whom everything in heaven and earth was made. In Him were all things created in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and invisible. All things were created by Him and *for* Him (Col. 1. 16). A wealth of prepositions are used showing "Him" as the source of all archetypal creation, that is, that in Himself is the design of every form of creation both in heaven and in the

earth. Then *by or through* Him as the efficient agent, giving effect to all the designs in Himself as reflected in the innumerable forms of creation, and finally "*for Him*" as the object and ultimate *destiny* for which creation was created. (Compare with this Col. 1. 16; Rev. 4. 10 and 11). The four and twenty elders fall down before Him that sitteth on the throne, and worship Him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying—"Worthy art Thou our Lord and our God to receive the glory, and the honour, and the power, for Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will, they were, and were created." Only then will *the whole creation*, heaven and earth, fulfil the destiny for which they were created and give pleasure to Him who did it.

Now to give an idea of the vastness of part of the creation, let me give a partial quotation from an article contained in a current magazine on the heavens by an astronomer. The Sun has 8 planets accompanying it in its orbit, they all travel in their orbit and in the same direction—their names are as follows : Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter (the largest), Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune the last and farthest away from the sun. There are 1200 minor planets and all revolve round the sun between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter and all in the same direction. Also there are 26 moons which revolve around their several controlling planets. Our moon revolves round the earth, two round Mars, nine round Jupiter, nine round Saturn, four round Uranus, and one round Neptune. The earth takes a year to go round the sun, Mercury 3000 miles in diameter, requires only three months to go round its orbit. There are billions of stars in

the Stellar System, and all are moving. Jupiter, 88,000 miles in diameter takes 11 or 12 years, Neptune, the farthest away, takes 165 years to go round the sun. Jupiter is so big it could hold 1000 earth balls, the Sun more than a million earths, and the inter-spaces be left unoccupied. 99-6/7ths of all substance in the Solar System is contained in the Sun, and only 1/7 of 1 per cent. goes to the 8 big planets and 26 moons, all of which is beyond finite comprehension. And consider how He *upholds* all these things by the spoken word of His power. What a great Creator and upholder He must be.

We read in Job 38. 4-7, "when He laid the foundations of the earth, the morning stars sang together, and all the Sons of God shouted for joy." What a sight creation must have been for the angelic hosts to look upon, in that morning. No wonder they shouted and sang for very joy.

The fourth member of the parallelism is "Who being the effulgence of his glory." We can at once see how this wondrous work of creation, and the upholding of it all by his spoken word, reflects in such a manner the splendour of His glory, and yet after all "His glory" is but an attribute of Deity, as the simple participle "Who being" shows. The "being" one is none other than the "I am" of many scriptures. "Before Abraham was born I am" (John 8. 58, R.V.). Also the Jehovah of Exodus 3. 14. Now if, for example, all this glory revealed through the creation is simply an attribute of "Deity," what must "the Essential Being, the 'Godhead' be?" And if all this majesty and supernal glory are revealed in creation, what will the glory of redemption be, and that is what the cor-

responding members of the parallelism go to show.

The Son is not only the effulgence of His glory, which as we have seen is merely attributive and having reference to the creation, but He is also the very image of His substance (R.V.)—which is the expression of DEITY or GODHEAD—and stands connected immediately with his making purification of sins, and taking his seat at the right hand of the majesty on high, which in the Hebrews Epistle are regarded as two parts of one offering (See chap. 9. 23-24). Here in the Son is *the very image* of His substance. So that in the life, death, and entrance of the Lord Jesus, and the taking of His seat, at the right hand of the Majesty on high, we have the very image of God, reflected. Thus we see that the express image is—the very heart of God; His purposes, His love, His eternal counsels—thoughts to fallen man, and all this love before ever the creation came into being. He who saw the end from the eternal past framed His counsels accordingly, far away back in eternity. He entered into counsel with His only begotten Son, that in being His only Son, He would prepare and give Him a body (chap. 10. 5), that He might offer himself a Sacrifice for Sin, and thus make purification of sins for ever. The participle “Being” affirms His divine essence, but can only be represented to men under figures which they can understand; hence in the showing forth of His glory in creation, and the very image of His substance in redemption, the parallelism is easily seen, but how far the latter transcends the former can be conceived when we remember He created all things by the word of His power: through faith we understand the worlds were framed by *the word of*

God (Heb. 11. 3), but before He could find redemption, He *had* to take to Himself a body and offer Himself a sacrifice for sin, hence the view of Him seen as the express image, infinitely transcends the effulgence of His glory as seen in creation. And as we have seen, this effulgence is only an outshining of His glory connected with the creation, but the express image of His substance, is His Godhead. Then followed His upholding all things by the word of His power, which as we saw is parallel to the words of verse 2—He made the worlds. And when we consider the heavenly bodies moving with such lightning speed, and all in their orbit going thousands of years without even one second of deviation in their movements, so much so, that astronomers can foretell to a second of time, an eclipse of the Sun, and Moon—may we not well say, He upholdeth all things by the word of His power. Then follows the “making purification of sins,” which, fully expressed, would be purification from the guilt of sins, and having done so, by the offering of Himself on the cross, He sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high. The upholding of all things and making purification of sins are so closely linked together, they may be regarded as one conception in God’s eternal purpose. And now we see Him as the Heir of all things, verse 2, entering upon the inheritance of all, in virtue of His Sonship—“He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than the angels”—“Thou art my Son,” verse 5. All He has, He has obtained by inheritance, even to His name “Son,” but inheritance is regarded in two senses in Scripture—He is Son as begotten of God, “Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee”

(John 1. 18; Heb. 5. 5), and He is named Son by inheritance, verse 4, which may be regarded as a reward, as He hath by inheritance *obtained* a more excellent name than they, the Name that is above every name, that in the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, etc. (See also Phil. 2. 9-11).

Now in the making purification of sins, we have Him revealed as the very image of the substance of Deity, yea; herein we are carried away back into the infinitude of all past eternity in which we see the counsels and purposes of God being framed that He should first create the heavens and the earth by His Son, but the real issue of the whole thing was to obtain a people for Himself, as the word "purchased" in Acts 20. 28 (acquired Marg. r.v.), signifies in the original, "purchased or acquired for Himself" (See 1 Pet. 2. 9). A people for God's own possession, the object of which was to have a people made absolutely like Himself, to whom He could reveal Himself for ever and ever. Here in reality we have the very image of God shown us. In elucidating the matter, many have taken in hand to tell us what the image is, and have used illustrations to this end—as for example; the impress or image on a coin, which has been stamped on it to give the image of the person represented—The Revised Version renders it, "the very image," following Tyndale.

But what further are we nearer to the meaning the word conveys. If the view taken above as to the parallelism in the passage be accepted, then to proceed along the same line of interpretation with the second four members as that adopted in the former four, the meaning becomes not only plain and clear,

but guides us into a very clear apprehension of what the Spirit of God conveys, viz., the purpose of God entered into in council with His Son for the putting away of Sin. Christ on the cross making purification of sins is the reflection of the very heart of God. Therein lies the very image of God—His love for fallen man. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son" (John 3. 16). The idea seems to have been familiar to the Apostle Paul for in Col. 1. 15 we have Christ as the image of God in His creating all things that are in heaven and in earth. . . . "And He is the head of the body, the church, Who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in all things He should have the pre-eminence, for it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell, and having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things to Himself" in heaven and on earth, with the ultimate end in view of presenting to Himself His redeemed people (Col. 1. 15, 22). It will be noted that God the Father is the subject of the context from verse 19, and with what object in view is this complete reconciliation and presentation of His people to Himself; but to have a people to whom He can reveal Himself for ever. The fourth member of the parallel finishes up with His obtaining the more excellent name "Son," corresponding to the same title in verse 2—God hath spoken in His Son. Only it will be observed, He received the title by inheritance in verse 4, whereas in verse 2 it is His Name as having been begotten of the Father, as in chapter 5. 5, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee," *i.e.*, from all eternity. On taking a retrospective survey of the passage, we

think it becomes very clear what is meant by the *effulgence* of the Father's glory as seen in creation, and the *very image of His substance* as seen in His making purification of sins, in other words finding redemption by His death on the cross.

Now in chap. 1. 5-14 the apostle enters into a detailed account of the superiority of the Son to angels, and supports it by seven quotations from the Old Testament—The first from Psa. 2. 7, "Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee," and again from 2 Sam. 7. 14, "I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to me a Son," and, "when He again bringeth in the first begotten into the world, He (God) saith, and let all the angels of God worship Him," from the Septuagint (Deut. 32. 43). So far it is the excellency of the Son that is the main point in the quotations. The next point is the angels as the *ministers* of God who maketh His angels spirits, His ministers a flaming fire from Psa. 104. 4, "But of THE SON He (God) saith *Thy throne* 'O God' is for ever and ever," etc. From Psa. 45. 6. 7 The application of the quotation is to the Son addressed as, "O God." Angels are His creatures—He makes them sit (Jud. 6. 11), stand (Isa. 6. 2), resemble women (Zech. 5. 9), and men (Gen. 18. 2)—they are but creatures, but the Son is their Creator. In the next quotation verse 10, "And Thou, Lord in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, etc." (Psa. 102. 25), the Son is still the subject of address, and here to Him is ascribed the laying of the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of His hands; He created them, He made them, and He will fold them up as a mantle. And finally, "to which of the angels said He at any time,

Sit Thou on my right hand; are *they* not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them **who** shall be heirs of salvation" (verses 13-14).

In following up the superiority of the Son from step to step, so as to give a connected outline of the train of thought, we passed over for the time being the comparative degree of honour that is conferred upon the Son at verse 4, "by so much," etc. The R.V. as we think greatly enhances the reading by using the words "having *become by so much better* than the angels, as He hath inherited a more excellent name than they." This word "better" occurs 13 times in Hebrews. (See below).† Its chief use being to reflect the superiority of the new as compared with the old régime, and "having become" stands in relationship to the angels, as part of the inheritance acquired in His manhood by His obedience unto death. And is parallel to the more excellent name, He has obtained by inheritance in resurrection. (Compare Phil. 2. 9-11). The difference is both in kind and degree. It will also be observed that the "having become" refers to Him in His glorified humanity. The words "more excellent" stand for one word in Greek which occurs again at Chap. 8. 6. "A more excellent ministry"—and there also it is a case of comparison and superiority. It will be noted that this great excellency accrues to the Son because of His making purification of Sins, and taking His seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high. It is the official act of taking His seat as expressly commanded by the Lord in Psalm 110—"The LORD said to my Lord, sit Thou at my right

† Chapters 1. 4; 6. 9; 7. 7, 19, 22; 8. 6, twice; 9. 23; 10. 34; 11. 16, 35, 40; 12. 24. Eleven of the thirteen refer to the better portion of the saints.

hand." Four times over in Hebrews it is referred to (chap. 1. 3; chap. 8. 1). "Who sat on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens"; (chap. 10. 12), "having offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, He sat down on the right hand of God"; and chap. 12. 2. "He hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." The first three references are all the same word precisely, and refer to the official act of His taking His seat at the right hand of God, the fourth reference implies the continuance of His sitting there, and thus obviously waiting till His enemies are made His footstool—by the right hand is implied dignity, not place. The Son sits as Lord; the angels stand around for ministry. Under the Old Covenant David only sat down before the Lord (2 Sam. 7. 18). The priests stood.

CHAPTER II.

THE SON MADE LOWER THAN ANGELS, AND BECOMING
MAN TO MAKE PROPITIATION FOR SIN.

CHAPTER 2 begins with a solemn warning to attend to the things spoken by the Son. "For if the word spoken by angels," who are so much inferior, "was stedfast, so that every transgression, and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how much more will neglect of so great salvation be punished, which was spoken first by the Lord, and confirmed to us by them who heard it; *God also* bearing witness with them, both by signs, and wonders and manifold powers and gifts of the Holy Spirit." The neglect not merely of the message, but the salvation which it brings, under such circumstances must be dreadfully punished, seeing that Father, Son and Holy Spirit all three bear testimony in regard to it. The recompense here is exact requital of the deeds done. (Compare Col. 3. 24). Verses 5 to 18 form the next paragraph, and begin with the word "For," which marks a clear connection with the preceding verses—"For not to angels hath He put in subjection the world to come whereof we speak." In chapter 1. as we have seen, Jesus is appointed heir of all things, but His great design from the very first was to associate *man* with Him in the

government,—that was frustrated by Adam's disobedience, hence the warning verses 1-3 to take heed to what was spoken from heaven. Now that Christ the second Adam has come, and in the language of the eighth Psalm, became a little lower than angels, that is for the suffering of death (Heb. 2. 9). "For it became Him (*i.e.*, God, v. 10) for Whom are all things, and through Whom are all things in bringing many sons unto Glory, to make the Captain of their salvation, perfect through sufferings," the object being to share the rule of the world to come, with the many sons He brings to glory, who by the sufferings and death of Christ, are being sanctified, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren (verse 11). The force of the warning in verses 1-3, will easily be seen here, for if they should refuse to hear Him speaking from heaven now, how would they ever be associated with Him in the government of the coming world? The word "salvation" binds together Chap. 1. 14, and Chap. 2. 3. The end is to be achieved by the death of Christ, and by uniting us with Him in His death and resurrection, and sharing the fruit of His suffering with us (verses 9-11). The immediate result of His death, is His being crowned with glory and honour (verse 9, R.V.), but this is a partial fulfilling of the promise that man shall be set over the work of His hands, and all things to be put under Him. Paul sees in the words of the Psalm, a future subjugation of all things to man, but all things are not yet subjected to Him (verse 8), and from verses 9-18, it is the unfolding of the means by which this sovereignty is to be secured, which forms the theme of the whole passage, and all is ours by virtue of our

union with Christ. That the same words are the background of 1 Cor. 15. 24-28, is one of the most interesting coincidences *between this epistle and Paul*. The chiefest word in the section, is the word "subject" for the most part in the past tense. "Thou didst subject all things to Him." In thus subjecting all things, He left nothing unsubjected to Him, but now we see not yet all things subjected to Him. But it is in the divine purpose, *i.e.*, it is regarded as already accomplished, as in Romans 8. 29, "Whom He foreknew, He also fore-ordained. Whom He called, He also justified, and whom He justified, He also glorified"—All is as good as already done. Now in John 12. 34, the Jews say they heard out of the law, that the Christ abideth for ever, hence their difficulty as to His death. In Acts 26. 8, they thought it incredible that Christ should die and be raised again, and in verses 22 and 23, Paul declares that he said nothing different from Moses and the Prophets, how that the Christ must suffer (marg. R.V.—is subject to suffering), and how that (or whether) He first, by the resurrection of the dead, should proclaim light to the people. It is obvious from these scriptures, that the Jews looked not for a suffering Messiah. So that there seems to be in Hebrews 2. 7-9, a tacit reference to these objections of the Jews, to show that it was needful He should die, "for by the Grace of God, He tasted death for every man," individually, in order that every man who believes in Him, might *not* taste death. They alleged He would never die, but abide forever; but as we know, *He died, and is now raised from the dead to an endless life* (Heb. 7. 16), and so stumbling at His humiliation and death, they perished

and are scattered as a nation, and His word to them was—"If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins." What they protested so vehemently against, *that* He did by grace of God, *viz.*, taste death for every man, and in His sinlessness, He perfectly realized its awfulness. Herein lies the immeasurable distance between His death, and that of the holiest martyr—Chrysostom.

Verse 9, we behold Him who hath been made lower than the angels, because of the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour, that (the purpose) He would taste death for every man; be made lower than the angels; for the suffering of death, and be crowned with glory and honour, are to be regarded as one conception in three stages. He is made lower than the angels, because of the suffering of death, and the crowning is the immediate consequence. And the object of the whole is that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man. "For," *v.* 10, "it became Him" (God). What language for mortal man to use of the living God! but it arises out of the circumstances. He undertook to bring many sons to glory. The R.V. margin gives "having brought"—it is already done in the purpose of God, but to accomplish it, He had to make the Captain, or Prince-Leader of their salvation, perfect through sufferings. If he is to become Prince-Leader, it must be by suffering. What a valuable and practical lesson arises out of this for us who are being taken to glory! If He, in order to become our leader, must suffer, then it follows that we, too, who are to be with Him, must also suffer. By the way, do we use the sufferings to deepen our submission and obedience as did He? Chap. 5. 8 says, He learned

obedience by the things which He suffered. The word "Captain" occurs in three other places besides: The Prince of life (Acts 3. 15); a Prince and a Saviour (5. 31); looking unto Jesus, the *Author* and Finisher of our faith (Heb. 12. 2).

It will be observed in verse 10, that the final issue of all this has reference to God the Father, so also in Romans 11. 36, "Of Him, through Him, and unto Him are all things, to whom be glory for ever"; also 1 Cor. 8. 6, "To us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto Him (R.V.), and our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through Him"; but in Col. 1. 16, the same is said of Christ. "In Him were all things created—ALL things were created by Him and for Him." In the first three references, God the Father is the One for whom all things were created. In the Colossians reference it is the Son, thus showing that Father and Son have equal glory in the end, in the final issue of creation. See also Rev. 4. 11, where it seems both are united. "Worthy art *Thou*, our Lord and our God to receive glory, honour, and power, for *Thou* (both Lord and God) didst create all things, and because of Thy will, they are and were created." Father and Son are here seen acting in unison in creating all things, and yet the Son retaining His subjection to God, that in the end, God may be all in all (1 Cor. 15. 28). This I conceive to be the final issue and end, or object of creation and redemption, and that it is the full development of the truth in John 14. 9-10, in other words, that the Deity or Godhead ultimately clothes itself in the humanity of the Son, and this will be the culminating climax of

the object in the *Incarnation*, that God in His Essential Being may be all in all. See by way of illustration, Judges 6. 34, margin. "The Spirit of the Lord clothed itself with Gideon"; also 1 Chron. 12. 18; 2 Chron. 24. 20.

"It became Him (God) to make the Captain of our salvation perfect through sufferings." He being crowned and made perfect, are parallel, and in each case it arises out of His sufferings, and again the reason is given for the perfecting. For both He that sanctifieth, and they who are being sanctified, are all of one. For those who are being sanctified are sharers of flesh and blood, so that to become Captain of their salvation, He took part of the same, hence arises His sufferings, and He is not ashamed of us to call us brethren, as in chap. 2. 16, God is not ashamed to be called their God, *i.e.*, the saints of the Old Testament, for He hath prepared for them a city. He is not ashamed to call us brethren, for we are all, that is, He and we are all of one (verse 11). He and we spring from the same source, though in different ways. His sonship is by eternal generation (John 3. 16); ours, by adoption (Rom. 8. 15; Gal. 4. 3, 5). See 1 Cor. 1. 30. The idea is foreshadowed in the Old Testament, as seen by the quotations used in support of it (verse 14). Seeing then that the sons are sharers in blood and flesh, He also, Himself, likewise took part of the same; He and they have one Father, even God; and on the human side, they had blood and flesh in common. He partook of these, sinless of course, that through death, He might destroy him that had the power of death, even the Devil, and deliver them, who through fear of death, were all their lifetime

subject to bondage. The word destroy is literally, "render powerless." It occurs some twenty-eight times in Paul's writings, and only in Luke 13. 7 besides, in New Testament. In 2 Tim. 1. 10, it is "render death powerless," here it is, render him powerless who had the power of death, and with his being rendered powerless, comes the deliverance of those who were all their lifetime subject to bondage, who in the following verse are the seed of Abraham, for verily not of angels doth He take hold, but He taketh hold of the seed of Abraham, margin. It is noteworthy that it is the present tense that is used, "taketh hold," which shows it is a continuous process. The word occurs again in chap. 8. 9. "I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt"; the idea is, taking hold of with a view to help; and the present continuative tense seems to imply a past, present, and future helping. Compare chap. 9. 15, "For this cause, He is the mediator of a New Covenant, that by means of death for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, they which have been called, may receive the promise of the 'eternal inheritance'," thus we see how the Old Testament saints were helped, their sins put away, and the promise of the eternal inheritance made good. And next we see their spirits made perfect in chap. 12. 23, but awaiting the fulness of the inheritance till we are ready to be perfected with them (chap. 11. 40). The next to be helped are His brethren of the present, the Church period. To them He becomes a merciful and faithful High Priest in the things of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. To this end, it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren

(verse 17). Now in looking back over the 9th, 14th, and 17th verses, we see three distinct references to the incarnation: "made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death"; "made a partaker of blood and flesh" (verse 14); "made like unto His brethren" (verse 17), all with a view to prepare and fit the seed of Abraham for the government and rule of the world to come (verse 5), to which as "Son," He is the appointed heir (chap. 1. 2), and for the future, He will continue to help as the Great High Priest of His People, until all is fulfilled, and all subjected to Him at the last, to which all even now is leading up (verse 8)—glorious finish of His mediatorial work! Then we shall reign with Him for ever and ever, in His Kingdom which is everlasting.

CHAPTER III.

THE SUPERIORITY OF THE SON TO MOSES IN GOD'S HOUSE AND AN EXHORTATION TO HOLD FAST OUR CONFESSION.

CHAPTER 3. 1; to 4. 13. Wherefore is an argument from the foregoing on which an appeal is based to consider Jesus as the Apostle and High Priest of our confession : holy brethren, a title carried on from chap. 2. 17, with the word "holy" added; we are called upon to consider Him attentively (for such is the meaning of the word), as our Apostle and High Priest. As Apostle, He is God's messenger to His Church; as High Priest, He represents us before God (chap. 2. 17), advocating our cause when we sin (1 John 2. 1), making intercession, etc. (Rom. 8. 34). In the title of verse 1, "Christ" is omitted, "Jesus" His human name only is used. It occurs eight times alone (see below)† in the Epistle, and always last in the sentence in the Greek Testament, attaching emphasis to its use. In the combined offices of Apostle and High Priest, He represents both Moses and Aaron, which supplies the key to the further development of the Epistle.

† Chaps. 2. 9; 4. 14; 6. 20; 7. 22; 10. 19; 12. 2, 24; 13. 12.

In the New Testament, Messiah is superior to Moses and Aaron, because He is Son over the house of God; whereas Moses is only a servant in the house. He was merely a leader and lawgiver: Christ is the propitiation for our sins. It may be the simplest way to set it out in tabular form to give the sense.

The Son and angels (chap. 1.).	The Son and Moses (chap. 3.).
The Son of God, of Himself is higher than ministering spirits (chap. 1. 5-14).	The Son over the house is higher than Moses who was a servant in the house (chap. 3. 2-6).
Chap. 2. 1-5 is a hortatory passage.	Chap. 3. 7-19, a hortatory passage.
In Christ, man is raised above angels (chap. 2. 6-16), and destined to share the rule of the world to come, and this rests on His propitiatory work for us.	Moses and Joshua both failed to bring Israel into rest (chap. 4. 1-13), being as servants in the house and under the law, sin could never be put away.

Verse 2, "Who was faithful." In Psalm 89, faithfulness or covenant keeping, and loving-kindness or mercy, are found seven times together, when speaking of Messiah. One might say, a little foretaste of these graces in our Great High Priest (chap. 2. 17). He is (being, *i.e.*, always) faithful to Him that made (appointed) Him, *i.e.*, to the Priesthood, as He made or appointed Samuel to the office of prophet (1 Sam. 12. 6, margin); and Paul to the apostleship, because He accounted him faithful (1 Tim. 1. 12); also the twelve apostles (Mark 3. 14). Moses also was faithful in all His, *i.e.*, God's house, but as a servant; whereas Jesus is Son over the house, hence His superiority (verse 3). And this superiority is shown by a double

comparison : It is said (R.V., v. 3) that by so much as He that builded the house, *i.e.*, in which Moses was a servant, has more honour than the house, therefore, how much greater must be His glory than that of Moses, for in verse 3, Christ is represented as the builder of the house. And it is added "He that built all things is God," thus showing Jesus in verse 1 is God in verse 4. Also as a second point of comparison, He is said to be "Son over the house," and therefore, how much greater than Moses again who was a household servant in it. The word "Therapon" occurs only here in New Testament, and signifies a voluntary performer of service entrusted to one, and the phrase which marks his inferiority to the Son, marks his superiority to all other prophets (compare Num. 12. 6, 7, 8). A difference of degree is here distinctly expressed in the gifts of divinely inspired prophets, Moses having been set over all God's house. Repeatedly when Israel murmured and grieved the Lord through their unbelief, he proved faithful; and even now, when murmuring began in his own family by Aaron and Miriam, he proved faithful again, and obeyed the Lord, even to putting Miriam out of the Congregation of the Lord. Accordingly he is privileged beyond all others, and as a reward of his faithfulness, "with him," says the Lord, "will I speak mouth to mouth, even manifestly, and the form (R.V.) of the Lord shall he behold." (Numbers 12. 7, 8); whereas Israel saw no form when the Lord spake unto them in Horeb, (Deut. 4. 15).

Now Moses' faithfulness in God's house was for a testimony of the things which should be spoken hereafter. The Mosaic economy was a preparatory institution

leading up to something better, which finds fulfilment in the "better things" spoken of in the Hebrews Epistle (see chap. 8. 8-13 and chap. 9. 11). It is well to note in verses 2-6 of chapter 3 that it is one house all the way through. Moses was faithful in all God's house, vv. 2 and 5. Christ is Son over His (God's) house—the word "own" is omitted in R.V.—and it goes on to say "Whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." Israel was the house in Moses' day and after; the Church is the house in this day. "Whose house are we" (Heb. 3. 6); see also 1 Tim. 3. 15; Eph. 2. 20-22, which finds expression in the local assembly scripturally gathered, and where godly order is maintained.

Verses 6-19, "Whose house are we if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end" (v. 6), we are made partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end (v. 14), obviously the "ifs" here are evidential, holding fast our confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope are regarded as proof that we are of the house in v. 6, and a partaker of Christ, (v. 14); and a very important evidence it is, for many draw back and walk no more with Him, but continuance indicates faith unto the salvation of the soul (chap. 10. 39). Very many make profession of faith in Christ, and afterwards fall away, who never showed signs of true repentance and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, wherefore v. 7, the exhortation is interrupted by the parenthetical confirmation from Psalm 95, and is completed at v. 12, "Take heed lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in falling away from the

living God," such shall not enter into his rest (v. 11). To-day—at length—*i.e.*, in David's day, the Lord repeats the warning vv. 13 and 15, because He had sworn such shall not enter, and wherefore so? because of unbelief (v. 19).

What a fearful ending will it be to all such is shewn in chaps. 6. 7-8; 10. 28-31. It is well to note the varied uses the Apostle makes of the 95th Psalm in his quotations in this passage, the first from v. 7 to 11. The point in the warning is to take heed lest there should be an evil heart of unbelief in any of them, in apostatising from the living God, and to exhort one another. The second quotation is in v. 15 and is repeated from vv. 7 and 8, which, taken with the verses before, is a warning not to harden their hearts. In each case it is the heart that is the important thing—an evil heart of unbelief and its getting hardened, vv. 12-15. In the Proverbs chap. 4. 23, it is written "Keep thy heart with all diligence for out of it are the issues of life."

There are three questions asked in vv. 16-18; First, who (was it) when they heard, did provoke, nay did not all they that came out of Egypt by Moses? The few exceptions as Caleb and Joshua are not here considered in regard to the entire community. Second, with whom was He grieved forty years? With those whose carcasses fell in the wilderness. And thirdly, to whom did He swear that they should not enter into His rest? but to those that believed not. The three questions point to the three degrees of divine displeasure; so we see they could not enter in because of unbelief.

CHAPTER IV.

CONTINUES THE EXHORTATION TO ENTER INTO HIS REST.

(vv. 1-13; 14-16).

JESUS THE SON OF GOD BECOMES OUR HELPER.

CHAPTER 4 continues the exhortation to us to fear lest any one should seem to have come short, and fail to enter into rest, for we have had the gospel preached unto us as well as they. Only a few of them received the word of hearing. They were not united by faith with them that heard, but rebelled against Moses and were ready to stone him (Exod. 17. 4; also Caleb and Joshua, Num. 14. 10). No more will the gospel message profit you now unless it is received by faith. Take heed how ye hear (Luke 8. 18), and "he that believeth not is condemned already" (John 3. 18); and again, "he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16. 16). On the other hand we who have believed do enter into rest—the *entrance* is the prominent point in this third quotation from Psalm 95, which is also repeated from chap. 3. 11; even as He hath said: "As I swear in my wrath, they shall not enter into my rest," a positive proof that we who have believed do enter into that rest, proved by a negative statement, that they who believe not, shall not enter into my rest, *even* though the works were finished from the foundation of the world; the "rest" is the pleasure God had

in His own work (Gen. 1. 31; Psalms. 104. 24; Rev. 4. 11), and into which the believer enters through faith. "Being justified by faith we have *peace* with God." (Rom. 5. 1). Moreover the Rest is one and the same Rest in chaps. 3 and 4; we enter into it at conversion (Matt. 11. 28). "Come unto me . . . and I will give you rest." We enter more fully into it as we go along, by taking His yoke, v. 29, in other words, walking obediently to His word; in this instance we find rest to our souls, and finally at the end of the journey we enter upon the Rest that remains for the people of God, a Sabbath-rest Israel failed to enter into, in Joshua's time (chap. 3. 11); and again, in David's time as shewn by the 95th Psalm and Heb. 4. 7. This is the fourth point made from the quotation, Enter to-day, as it hath been said, "*To-day* if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart." It is we who believe who enter in, and to all such there remains a Sabbath-rest (v. 9).

It is interesting to note the four points made from the one quotation of the Psalm: *First*: chap. 3. 6: Hold fast the boldness and glorifying of our hope firm unto the end, lest haply any one should develop *an evil heart of unbelief* and fall away (v. 12); *Second*: v. 15, is, *harden not your hearts*; *Third*: chap. 4. 4-5, is *not entering the rest*; and *Fourth*: *enter now*, as it is said, to-day if ye will hear his voice. The general exhortation drawn by the apostle from the warning is: to give most careful diligence to enter into the rest, and see that no man fall by disobedience to the gospel message; for the Word of God, the written Word with the Living Word behind it, is quick and powerful. He is four times over called the

living God in this Epistle (Chaps. 3. 12; 9. 14; 10. 31; 12. 22, and compare 1 Pet. 1. 23). "The word of God that liveth and abideth for ever." Evidently it is not merely the bare written word of God that is meant, because it is said to be quick (living) and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrows and is quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart (v. 12). It is the sword of the Spirit (Eph. 6. 17; Rev. 1. 16). The Word of God is thus personified—joints and marrows, are used metaphorically and are explanatory of what goes before; exposing to his view the feelings and thoughts distinguishing what is spiritual from what is carnal. How dreadfully searching for all of us, as those who have to appear before God and give the account to Him, as the following words (with whom we have to do, or have the account) shew : but on the other hand, the consolation and comfort that are derived from the GREAT HIGH PRIEST of our confession who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, therefore let us take courage and not be disheartened because of the keen edge of the sword of the living *Word*, to whom we must render the account.

He is called High Priest seven times in the Epistle (see below)† once The Great High Priest (chap. 4. 14), as also He is called that GREAT Shepherd of the sheep (chap. 13. 20). His ability for both priestly and shepherd work lies in the fact that He suffered, and as it is beautifully expressed, "We have not an high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like

† Chap. 2. 17; 3. 1; 4. 14; 5. 10; 6. 20; 7. 26; 8. 1, 9-11.

as we are, yet *without sin*." He was tempted in everything as we are with one exception—He had no sin. The Prince of this world might come to Him, but he found nothing in Him on which to work, as he too often finds in us (John 14. 30); and the sufferings from these temptations fitted Him to sympathise with us in our temptations. The exhortation, therefore, is to come (which coming occurs seven times in the epistle, chapters 4. 16; 7. 25; 10. 1-22; 11. 6; 12. 22 compare especially 7. 25; 10. 22) boldly to the *Throne*† of Grace to obtain mercy which we so much need, and find grace for seasonable help. He sympathises with us in the temptation up to yielding point, but when we yield to the temptation and fall into sin, He cannot and does not sympathise—(then He cannot), but so gracious and merciful, He, so to speak, turns round, and becomes our Advocate when we sin (1 John 2.). "If any man sin we have an advocate with the Father Jesus Christ the righteous"; and as such He pleads our cause. We sometimes sing :

Great are the offices He bears,
And bright His character appears
Exalted on the throne.
In songs of sweet, untiring praise,
We would to everlasting days,
Make all His glories known.

And so we may well sing and praise Him for all that is past, and trust Him for all that's to come; even for the help He gives to us in His Great High Priestly capacity, extending mercy, succouring and helping us till we reach our destined home, even His own presence.

†We have also the Throne of Glory, Matt. 19. 28; and the Throne of the Majesty in the Heavens, chapter 8. 1.

CHAPTER V.

GIVES US THE QUALIFICATIONS FOR A PRIEST, AND
SHOWS HOW CHRIST POSSESSES THEM, FOLLOWED BY
A SOLEMN WARNING FOR THEIR DULLNESS
OF HEARING.

NOW after picking up the thread in chap. 4. 14, which was dropped at the end of chap. 2, He proceeds to unfold the qualifications necessary for one to be a priest (ch. 5. 1-10). First he is taken from among men, and is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, the same expression as in chap. 2. 17, so as to offer both gifts and sacrifices, and can have compassion on the ignorant and them that are out of the way, for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity. Gifts usually refer in the Old Testament to unbloody offerings such as the meal offering; sacrifices is uniformly the animals slain (chap. 8. 3; 9. 9), and offered for sin, etc. The word "offer" occurs nineteen times in the Epistle, and approach to God is the common idea involved. It was needful therefore, that he should be a man from among men, so as to be able to bear gently with the ignorant, for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity, and because of this be able to offer for sins; also he must be called of God, for no man takes this honour unto himself, but when he is called of God, even as was Aaron, (v. 4).

So also the Christ glorified not Himself to be made a High Priest, but He that *spake* unto Him said "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee"; and again "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." And in order to fulfil the needful requirements, Christ took humanity unto Himself, so that He having been touched with the feeling of our infirmities, can feel gently and sympathise with us; yet He cannot, as we have already seen have any sympathy with our sins; and when in the days of His flesh, He offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, He was heard for His godly fear. Such sacred language and dealing with such tender themes in the life of our blessed Lord makes it very difficult to speak of them, but think of such *an offering*, "prayers and supplications," accompanied with strong crying and tears; one may well stand back, hush, and attentively listen almost to those cryings, if perchance, one may enter somewhat into His sufferings as He cried, "O my Father if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." Yet stop and consider the profound submission even under such circumstances, that is revealed by the next breathing: "Nevertheless not my will but thine be done," (Luke 22. 41, 42). Who can enter into the depth of those agonizing cries? and although no answer came, none could come, except the angel who was present and witnessed the awful scene, and who strengthened Him in His agonies. Reader, pause for a moment and see the creature of His handiwork in His creative power, the angel, strengthening Him from God in this dread hour, in anticipation of the more appalling tragedy of the next day (the Pilate-Herod trial

so-called, and then) the Cross. The words in the original are three—*lupēisthai*, *ekthambeisthai* and *adēmonein*. The first is the ordinary word for grief, but it is in its intensest form as shewn by the words that follow in Matt. 26. 38. "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death," literally compassed with grief; the second word used by Mark alone signifies a high degree of amazement, to be surprised with horror, even unto stupefaction; the third word is grief and anguish in excess, borne down with a load of sorrow, overwhelmed with grief (Pearson).

Now in His prayer it is not stated in so many words what was the burden of it beyond this, that the cup might, if possible, pass from Him; but there can be little doubt, it was the feeling of sin being laid upon Him and the hiding of God's face in the agonies of death on the Cross that were the cause for such untold sufferings, and in this connection in Hebrews 5 it is said He learned obedience by the things which He suffered; and we can now the more easily understand how He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and therefore have compassion on us, a sinful people. It is added that He was heard in that He feared; or for His godly fear (R.V.), or as others, His reverential fear, a fear of great caution and not that of terror (Alf.). And though He were the Son, He learnt *obedience* by the things which He *suffered*, and having been made perfect He became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey Him, *i.e.*, perfect as touching His obedience. He became the Author or cause of Eternal Salvation to all them that *obey* Him.

At v. 4 it is honour that is connected with the

Priesthood of Aaron, but with Christ it is glory (v. 5); and now He is addressed or accosted of God as "*High Priest*" after the order of Melchisedec. In Psa. 110 it is simply "Priest," but now, it is not only accosted of God, but accosted as High Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec of whom Paul has much to say afterwards. It is noteworthy that Christ fulfils the type of Aaron's priesthood, in sacrifice for sin, and entrance into the presence of God, and far supersedes the type in that He not only enters into the presence of God Himself, *but He brings us in also*. Moreover, when He entered He sat down at the right hand of God. Aaron never sat—by so much better is His priesthood than Aaron's. Then He also becomes High Priest after the order of Melchisedec, which the Apostle unfolds later on in chap. 7. For the perfecting of Christ connect together chapter 2. 10—the Captain of Salvation made perfect through sufferings; 5. 9—the Author of Salvation made perfect as to His obedience by the things He suffered; and chapter 7. 28—the word of the oath makes the Son, High Priest, who is perfected (marg.) for evermore. He becomes the Captain of Salvation, the Author of Salvation and High Priest all because of His perfected obedience. These offices are part of the honour with which God has crowned His own beloved Son, all because of His incarnation and perfect submission to do all the will of God; and it is of the utmost importance to remember that all these offices He has, in His glorified humanity at the right hand of the Majesty on high (chap. 1. 4).

We now come to another, a second break in the argument. At chap. 2. 18, he dropped the subject of the

Priesthood to take up the warning to the Hebrews for their neglect of so great salvation (chap. 2. 3). He then resumes the subject of Priesthood at chap. 4. 14 and continues to chap. 5. 10, where he again enters upon the discussion of the Melchisedec Priesthood of Christ. In chapter 5. 11 to chapter 6. 8 there is another parenthesis intervening in which he warns his readers in a more solemn manner as to the consequences of their going back to apostacy from Christ (chap. 6. 4-6). This digression is a complaint for their slow progress (chap. 5. 11-14), and an exhortation to leave the first principles and go on to fulness of growth, with a warning of the peril of their falling back (chap. 6. 1-8), and at the same time, encouraging them by reminding them of their early labour of love to persevere in hope and patience for the fulfilment of the promises (chap. 6. 9-20).

In chap. 5. 11 the apostle had much to say of Melchisedec, but he found it difficult owing to the unspiritual state of the Hebrews; they were still babes when they ought to have been full-grown men. How often godly men have found it very difficult to minister the Word of God because of the carnal condition of their hearers. In chapter 2. 1-3 the exhortation isto give more earnest heed to the things that were heard, lest haply, we drift away from them. Obviously, the word spoken had but little hold on them, and at chapter 4. 2 we have had good tidings preached even as also they; but the word of hearing did not profit them because they were not *united by faith* (R.V.) with them that heard. And lastly, in chapter 5. 11 they have become dull of hearing, and dangerously near to so many of the hearers in the

parable of "the Sower," (Matt. 13. 18-23), who bore no fruit to perfection: some of the seed sown never *sprang* up at all; some *sprang* up, but having no root, although they received it with gladness, yet bore no fruit; in others it *sprang* up, but became unfruitful; and lastly, some *sprang* up and increased and brought forth fruit from thirty to an hundredfold because they *heard* and accepted the word in their hearts—only one in four of all those who heard, received the message into their hearts and were saved. Is it not to be feared that some in our day are the same: they profess faith in Christ, get baptized, and are received into assembly fellowship, but show no signs of life in Christ, and in time turn aside altogether. What will be the end of such? The Hebrews bore fruit for a while, they wrought and ministered to the saints (chap. 6. 10), in earlier years, but now as the apostle writes many have become mere babes, and the trend of things is backward and not forward; hence the extremely solemn warnings which he holds out to them. The evidence of their dullness of hearing is shown by their slow progress, when for the time they ought to have been teachers, they were mere babes and had need to be taught the very first principles of the oracles of God. The oracles of God are the Scriptures of truth regarded as the voice of God *speaking* to us (through His own Word); Moses received the living oracles to give unto us (Acts 7. 38). The chiefest advantage of the Jew over the Gentile was that unto them were committed the oracles of God (Rom. 3. 2-3), but their want of faith made of none effect the faithfulness of God to them, thus closely resembling the Hebrews; and finally the Apostle Peter exhorts the

believers of Asia Minor to use hospitality one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God with the view of ministering the gift God had given to each one for edification. If any one speaks it is to be as *the oracles* of God, if any one minister it is as of the strength which God supplieth that God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. Alas! in many believers' meetings has it not been the talk of the lip that tendeth only to penury and not mutual edification, or speaking as oracles—the oracular voice of God that reaches the heart and edifies the soul. In like manner the Corinthians were as babes and carnal too, because of their schisms and divisions; they also had made little progress, and in view of these things, Paul calls them carnal, notwithstanding their pre-eminent gifts.

CHAPTER VI.

A MOST SOLEMN WARNING AGAINST APOSTACY 1-8
FOLLOWED BY AN ENCOURAGEMENT TO LAY HOLD ON THE
HOPES SET BEFORE US.

WHEREFORE, because of their dwarfed growth, and the apostacy of others, Paul says, leaving the elementary truths adapted to the earlier days of spiritual life in Christ, let us press on to full growth—literally the word is the teaching of the first principles—compare chapter 5. 12, not going back to lay a foundation over again, but rather to go forward to full growth. The various doctrines which Paul speaks of as laying a foundation again, are stated as follows: repentance from dead works (ever repenting but never turning away from such). Now writing as he is to Jews the works would be works of law, which could not give life, which works were to establish their own righteousness (see Rom. 3. 27; 4. 2; 10. 3). Apparently they were mixing up the idea of repentance from dead works (Judaism) and faith toward God, seeing the two are classed together in the same category; whereas in the Romans Epistle the works are set forth as vain and useless, but faith by way of opposition is God's way of salvation (Rom. 4. 2-5;

10. 5, 9-12). These Hebrews never seem to have got beyond these primary truths. Then come the doctrine of baptisms, not believers' baptism, but Jewish washings, as *e.g.*, the washings before *meals*—keeping up the tradition of the elders, at the same time setting aside the word of God (Mark 7. 3-9; Heb. 9. 10). Coupled with these washings is the doctrine of the laying on of hands, which is repeatedly mentioned in the Old and New Testaments. For example: Israel laying his hands on the sons of Joseph (Gen. 48. 14; also Matt. 19. 13); Jesus laying His hands on the little children; also works of healing (2 Kings 5. 11; Mark 8. 23); and with the imparting of a gift to Timothy, Paul and the elders laid hands on him: in every case the incident was accompanied with blessing; see also Acts 19. 6. Then of the resurrection of the dead and of eternal judgment. The Pharisees held to the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead; the Sadducees denied such a thing should be (Acts 23. 8), and for eternal judgment it also was discussed, for Paul declares to the Athenians on Mars Hill that "God has appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained, whereof He hath given assurance to all men in that He hath raised Him from the dead" (Acts 17. 31; 24. 25). See also chapter 9. 27, "after death the judgment."

These matters engrossed their attention so much that they remained there, whereas *Paul* says, "leave them," they are only the elementary rudiments of the doctrine of Christ; and this will we do if God permit. It is just the same to-day: very many Christians profess great consecration, as they call it, and wondrous

piety and zeal in service and other such like things, and yet, if "believers' baptism" is set before them, they simply scoff at it; and for obedience to the Truth of God in gathering His people into assemblies after the pattern of the New Testament, they have absolutely no use for it: and among those who *are* thus gathered, but have no use for the Scriptures equally authoritative and binding on us to observe, viz., scriptural order in the assembly, they ignore all such and feel free to run here and there—missions, sects and such like—and are found on platforms with clergy of the denominations from whence they profess to have come out, and speak disparagingly of those who walk orderly in the Truth and call them "tight" and with such epithets they disdain godly servants of Christ whose lives have left their godly testimony behind them in the many assemblies that exist to-day. And these good brothers who speak disdainfully of such men have no hesitation to visit these assemblies, and sometimes undermine the work the others have done, and reap material benefit thereby. A number of such have been known to the writer, who have large families and hardly if any in some cases, have any one of their children to sit at the Lord's table with them in the assemblies, most have gone back to the churches so called. Some even to the Roman Catholics. Such is the outcome of their example to their families and to the Church. How can such guides command the respect of young believers and others. It pays to keep right with God and walk in rank (1 Thess. 5. 14; 2 Thess. 3. 6), and hold a straight course in the word of Truth (2 Tim. 2. 15). What existed in New Testament and subsequent times

exists to-day. These things I say after 54 years of unbroken association with these assemblies, and the Word of God, not in part but the whole, was given for our profit (2 Tim. 3. 16, 17); and in keeping of His commandments there is great reward (Psa. 19. 7-11, see also Deut. 8. 11). And, says the apostle, uniting himself with those to whom he is writing: "This will *we* do if God permit"—"For it is impossible," etc., the "for" assigns the reason for the earnestness of the appeal. It is impossible to renew to repentance, those who were once enlightened, and had tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost and the powers of the world to come, and then fell away (a deliberate turning away—an open apostasy) hence it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance seeing they *crucify* to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame continuously (vv. 4-6). Note carefully the tenses of the verbs: in vv. 4 and 5 they are all in the past tense, and refer to acts that took place at a given point of time. Under the ministry of the Gospel when God wrought, souls were awakened; evidently many made profession of faith in Christ, some of whom had borne fruit unto God, proving they had been really saved; others were receding, and had become apostates: but all, in the general awakening, had shared alike the privileges of the Gospel preached, and all made profession of faith in Christ. But time generally tests such, and so in this case some had fallen away already (v. 6), and now were crucifying to themselves afresh, the Son of God, thus showing they were mere professors at the beginning (compare chap. 10. 26), now *sinning* wilfully and continuing therein, full fledged

apostates. Now the question arises, how were they partakers of all these privileges, and yet had become apostate so utterly? They were all sharers alike in the movement by the Spirit of God, but, as in the parable of "the Sower," some never opened their heart to receive Christ; they were convicted by the Holy Spirit, thus made partakers or sharers thereof, they tasted the good word of God preached, and rejoiced in it, and the powers of the world to come, the fear of death and judgment took hold of them, and they professed faith in Christ, but were never united by faith with the true children of God, and are now turned away back, and are crucifying Christ afresh.

Note again the tenses : present continuance, the habit of their life now is to sin wilfully; and so long as they continue thus, it is quite impossible to renew them again. The illustration Paul uses makes it all clear. The land that *drinks* (present tense) in the rain, and *brings* forth fruit, receives blessing from God, but that which *beareth* thorns and briars, is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned. It is the same ground, it received the same seed, the same tillage, everything the same, but one part brought forth good fruit, and the other thorns and briars, whose end—*i.e.*, the ground, not the thorns merely are to be burned, as was the land of Sodom (Deut. 29. 23), just as the fruitful part receives blessing from God. The two results indicate the two classes of persons involved : the first are true Christians, although not making progress to go on to perfect manhood in Christ; the other, mere professors at first, who have turned back to their evil ways, whose end is to be burned (Matt. 3. 10-12; 7. 19; 13. 30), like the sow

that went back to her wallowing in the mire (2 Pet. 2. 22).

It is significant that amongst the gifts enumerated, and of which they were sharers, love is not mentioned; and without it, says Paul, I am nothing (1 Cor. 13. 2, 3), and those to whom he said, "we are persuaded better things of you," are said to have shewn their love to His Name, in that they ministered to the saints, and do minister (v. 10). We have no doubt this is the true interpretation of this difficult portion, but careful attention to the tenses, makes it simple and clear, and especially when the illustration used is applied.

Verse 9. Turning now from the apostates to the Hebrew believers, he says: "Beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things which accompany salvation, though we thus speak, for God is not unrighteous to forget your work of love, which ye showed toward His Name"; not so much to the Lord's people as to God Himself, they showed their love in ministering unto His saints. The Apostle expresses his strong desire that each one of them may shew the same fulness of the hope, firm even to the end; their hope was diminishing—we have fulness of faith (chap. 10. 22); fulness of understanding (Col. 2. 2); the idea seems to be full up of the object in each case, and in this case to the end, as in chap. 3. 6-14. It is, hold fast the beginning of the confidence, and the glorifying of the hope *firm* unto the end. The Apostle keeps pointing on to the end (v. 11) all the time. The object in so encouraging them, is, lest they should become dull or sluggish. In chap. 5. 11 they had become dull of hearing, which was followed

by dulness as to the hope; hence the exhortation to become imitators of them, who through faith and patience, inherit the promises. It requires a constant holding on to God in faith, to be able to endure to the end with freshness of soul, and the inheritance is sure; those who already have entered on the inheritance, it is only in part yet, for in Heb. 11. 39, the worthies of the Old Testament, received not the promises, that is, in full, God did not perfect them; He waits until He has made us ready, then all shall go together (Heb. 11. 39-40), and all enter on the promises *in full* (Heb. 12. 22-24) which implies no partial rapture as some say.

To show God's faithfulness in fulfilling His promises, the Apostle refers to the promise made to Abraham (Gen. 12. 3-7), and which was renewed and enlarged from time to time (13. 14; 15. 5 ff; 17. 5, ff; also 22. 16-18), but many years elapsed from the time that the first promise in Gen. 12. was given, before it was fulfilled (compare chap. 12. 4 with chap. 17. 24), and from Abram left Haran until Isaac was born, was twenty-five years (see chap. 21. 5), and he dwelt in Haran about five years, which, in all, would be thirty years till the promise was fulfilled; so that he required patience surely, but, at the time appointed, the promise was made good, and in order to assure Abraham, Jehovah not only promised, but sware by an oath, not for his sake only, but for the heirs of the promise, that *WE* might have strong encouragement to lay hold on the hope set before *US* (Heb. 6. 18); so that in the promise made to Abraham we have a share, and are included in it. To Abraham at the first, it was the land, and the seed to inherit it; to us it is

THE HOPE to be realized in the coming of the Lord, and "which hope we have as an anchor of the soul—a hope both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil, whither the forerunner for us has entered, Jesus, made High Priest after the order of Melchisedec." In the Levitical Priesthood, the High Priest never brought anyone in, but our Great High Priest has entered as forerunner, now to appear in the presence of God *for us*, and He will finally come again, and bring us right in, in glorified bodies, and present us to Himself (Eph. 5. 27; Col. 1. 22 to God,; also Jude 24).

CHAPTER VII.

CHAPTER 7 ENTERS INTO A FULL DISCUSSION OF THE
SUPERIORITY OF THE MELCHISEDEC PRIESTHOOD IN
CONTRAST TO THAT OF AARON.

WE come now to the full development of the Melchisedec priesthood and its dignity from which the Apostle digressed at chap. 5. 11. There is at least a five-fold superiority over that of Aaron in chap. 7, and the Priesthood of Christ is more than that of Melchisedec: he had no successors, he is alone; and Christ is not only the Prince-Leader or cause of our salvation (chap. 5. 9), but also as High Priest, He is the forerunner leading the way into the immediate presence of God, whither we shall follow, having entrance even now by faith. It is said He was King of Salem; now this Salem is identified as Jerusalem in Psa. 76. 2, but this was before it was named Jerusalem, and Melchisedec is "King of Righteousness" by interpretation and Salem means "peace." He was thus King of righteousness, and King of peace, reminding us of the word in Rom. 5. 1, "Being justified (counted righteous) by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," and he is introduced as meeting Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and he blessed Abraham, and Abraham paid him tithes—gave him a tenth of

the spoils of his victory over the four allied kings in Genesis 14. It is as the King-Priest he is set forth, without father, mother, or even pedigree, having no beginning of days or end of life, that is as to his priesthood—no mention is made in Genesis of either his beginning or his end, which the Apostle interprets as to his priesthood, and is made like unto the Son of God, in the unbroken continuity of that priesthood, *i.e.*, he abides a priest continually, and the Son of God is a priest after the order of Melchisedec, the sense in which he is likened unto the Son of God, is given in the next sentence, in that He abides a priest *continuously*.

Now that Christ has entered upon His priesthood in His glorified humanity, and that Paul tells us He is a priest for ever, it follows that His priesthood is unbroken, not as was the Aaronic priesthood by death of the priests, but Christ liveth *for ever*, accordingly His priesthood is perpetual, and Melchisedec's priesthood being of the same order, it follows that he has been made as to his priesthood like unto the Son of God, as He (Christ) is presented to us.

Verse 4 begins the detailed superiority of Christ's Melchisedec Priesthood. Now consider *attentively* (the word implies) how great this man was (there are four different Greek words used in Hebrews, all of which are rendered by the word "consider," chap. 3. 1; 7. 4; 12. 3; 13. 7, which fact shews the many sided views we have for careful consideration of Christ) unto whom the Patriarch Abraham gave a tenth out of the chief spoils. The gift from Abraham represents the greatness of Melchisedec; this is the *first* mark of the superiority of his priesthood which is sub-divided

into three: the first sub-division is Abraham paying tithes (v. 6), the second, no perfection by Aaron's priesthood (v. 11), and third, the change of law and priesthood (vv. 12-15). That the Levites who had the Priesthood in Israel, had a commandment by law to receive tithes from their brethren, paid tithes to Melchisedec, having come out of the loins of Abram, that is, they who received tithes from the people by law, paid tithes in Abram their father to Melchisedec (Gen. 14). Therefore, how great is this man, who blessed Abram, even him who had the promises, and without any controversy, the less is blessed of the better. And further, here men who die (v. 8), the Levitical priests, receive tithes; but there, one of whom it is witnessed that he liveth, that is, so far as the narrative concerning his priesthood goes, he having neither beginning of days, nor end of life (v. 3); the Scriptures present him simply as to his priesthood, and from the words of verse 3, Paul advances further in his application, and says, it is witnessed that he liveth (v. 8). Therefore, how infinitely great must the Son of God be of whom Melchisedec is a mere foreshadowing, because of Christ alone it is true that HE LIVETH. He is alive for evermore (Rev. 1. 18), yea, and consecrated for evermore (chap. 7. 28). Compare Christ blessing His disciples (Luke 24. 50), and Israel (Acts 3. 26), with Melchisedec blessing Abram. It may be observed that the word "elattion" (less) is neuter—that is in office of rank—whereas "better" is masculine, thus again, even by the gender of a word, the Spirit of God would mark the superiority of Melchisedec's priesthood, to that of Aaron.

Verses 11-15. We come now to the second and

third sub-divisions of the superiority, *viz.*, Perfection, the bringing of man to his destined state. If perfection were by the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people hath received the law), what further need was there that another priest should arise? None. If the first covenant had been faultless, there had no place been found for the second (chap. 8. 7); but finding fault with it, He proceeds to enact a second covenant (chap. 8. 8-12), and in so doing, there arises the need for a change of law and priesthood (chap. 7. 12, 13), which is not after the order of Aaron, but after the order of Melchisedec, "for He of whom these things are spoken belongeth to a different tribe from which no man gave attendance at the altar, for it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah, of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priests."

The *Second* point (vv. 16-19) of superiority of the Melchisedec priesthood, follows by way of argument from vv. 14-15. Paul had said, it is evident that our Lord hath sprung out of Judah, and again what we say, *i.e.*, as to the change of law, is yet more abundantly evident, if after the likeness of Melchisedec, there ariseth a different priest who hath been made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life, for it is witnessed of Him "Thou art a priest *for ever* after the order of Melchisedec." The words "for ever," quoted from Psa. 110, proved the endlessness of his life, in contrast to the Aaronic priests who died. And there is a disannulling of a foregoing commandment, because of its weakness and unprofitableness, for the law made nothing perfect; and there is a bringing in thereupon of a better hope, through which we draw nigh unto

God. Under the Levitical priesthood the people received the law, but it made nothing perfect: now it is said, there is a disannulling of it, and instead, there is the bringing in thereupon of the better hope, by which we draw nigh to God. (Compare the "drawing near" of chap. 4. 16 and 10. 19). What a privilege for sinful man to draw near to the Living God, and unburden his heart before Him! (chap. 4. 15, 16).

The *Third* point of superiority (vv. 20-22) lies in His appointment to the priesthood, by the taking of an oath by Him that saith of Him, "The Lord *sware*, and will not repent himself, Thou art a priest for ever," by so much, that is the *oath-taking* in contrast to the law that made nothing perfect, by so much has Jesus become surety of a better covenant.

The *Fourth* point of superiority (vv. 23-25), is that whereas His priesthood is "for ever" theirs passed from one generation to another; they were not suffered to continue by reason of death; and being *priest* for ever, He is *able to save to the uttermost*, them that draw near unto God through Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.

The *Fifth* and last point (vv. 26-28) made mention of as to His superiority, is that the law appointeth men as high priests who have infirmity, but the word of the oath appointeth the Son who is perfected for evermore (v. 28). The law, which was in itself weak and unprofitable, and could make nothing perfect, could only appoint men who had infirmity; therefore how failing was the whole thing! but in contrast, see the marvellous difference there is by way of excellency and superiority in the appointment of the Son, whose appointment is by Jehovah, that *sware* unto Him,

"Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec" (Psa. 110). And His priesthood is in the power of an endless life, and He is able to bring right into the immediate presence of God, all who come unto God through Him. Blessed be His name! Glorious Priesthood and to continue for ever!

It might, perhaps, be profitable to put some of the points together as to Christ's priesthood in order to give a concise epitome of the argument:

First. In v. 11 the law was superinduced upon the Aaronic Priesthood but there was no perfection with it, (v. 19); the same argument as in Gal. 3. 16-17, the law came in after the promises had been made to Abraham, but it could not give life (v. 21). Then Christ came.

Second. The priesthood was changed so the law must be changed too, seeing it came by the priesthood which brought no perfection; as in Gal. 3. 21, it followed the promises to Abraham but it brought no life, hence the need that another Priest should arise and not be reckoned after the order of Aaron.

Third. Christ came not from Levi, but out of the tribe of Judah, from which no one ever gave attendance at the altar, v. 13. and chap. 8. 4.

Fourth. What is said, is more evident, because Christ came after the order of Melchisedec (v. 15).

Fifth. And He is made (appointed) after the power of an endless life, and not after a carnal commandment (v. 16).

Sixth. He is made Priest by an oath: The Lord sware and will not repent "Thou art a priest for ever"; hence He is surety of a better covenant, and will continue for ever (v. 24).

Seventh. He is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by Him (v. 25).

Eighth. Such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens (v. 26).

Ninth. The word of the oath which was after the law, has appointed the Son, High Priest who is perfected for evermore. So that we may well say, how much more excellent is the priesthood of Christ than that of Aaron! He never brought anyone into the presence of God and could only enter once a year himself: whereas Christ entered as our forerunner and sat down at the right hand of God, and brings us right in, and will finally set us down before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy (John 17. 24; Jude 24; Eph. 5. 27).

CHAPTER VIII.

THE LEVITICAL PRIESTHOOD IS ABOLISHED AND A NEW COVENANT INAUGURATED BY WHICH OUR SINS ARE PUT AWAY.

CHAPTER 8. 1 to 10. 18. The chief characteristics of His priesthood having been given in chap. 7, Paul now passes on to the fulfilment of His office; and in this is contained the final answer to the doubts of the Hebrews as to "the Christ." His qualifications for the priesthood have been shewn in chap. 5. 1-10; His appointment to the priesthood (chap. 6. 13-20); and His superiority as a priest over the priesthood of Aaron in chapter 7: we now come in chapters 8 to 10. 19 to the functions of His priesthood which involve the abrogation of the Mosaic ritual, and the institution of His priesthood after the order of Melchisedec. Verse 1. "In the things which we are saying, the chief point is we have such a high priest, who sat down on the right hand of the Throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister of the Sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, not man." The sanctuary where He ministers corresponds to the holy of holies of the tabernacle into which the high priest entered once a year; but *He* entered once for all and sat down at the right hand of God. Chapter 9. 12 says, He entered in once for all into the holy place having obtained eternal redemption. See also v. 24, Christ entered into heaven itself, now to appear in

the presence of God for us. He first found eternal redemption 9. 12, and on that basis He entered upon His ministry in the holy place appearing in the presence of God for us, and will finally come again and receive us to Himself (chap. 9. 28; John 14. 3). This, the priests under the first covenant never could do, hence we see again the superlative excellency of His priesthood as compared with Aaron's. And consider His mighty dignity, *sitting* on the *right hand* of the *throne* of the *majesty* in the heavens, as compared with Aaron who only stood before the Lord and burnt incense, and that once in a year : whereas *He* is being manifested before the face of God all the time, and for us (chap. 9. 24); but of this manifestation we shall have occasion to speak later on. He "sat down" is the official act of taking His seat on the throne, and is referred to four times in Hebrews. It is the fulfilment of Psa. 110. 1; yea moreover, He sat down; a minister of the Sanctuary—His office is fulfilled in royal dignity, as seated on the throne, and it extends to all parts of the true tabernacle, the dwelling place of God. He enters, takes His seat, and ministers there in His glorified humanity. The word rendered "true" denotes the contrast to what is imperfect or typical; it is that which is genuine or real. It occurs 23 times in John's writings, *and only 5 times elsewhere in the New Testament*, and these in Hebrews, viz. :—chaps. 1. 3, 13; 8. 1; 10. 12; 12. 2.

Verses 3-5 assign the reason for His ministry. Every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices, wherefore it is necessary that this also have somewhat to offer, even Himself (7. 27), and this *ministry* is in Heaven for if He were on earth He

would not be a priest, since there are priests **who** offer according to the law, who only serve, that **which** is a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, for, "See," saith He to Moses, "that thou make all things according to *the pattern* that was shewed to thee in the mount"; so that the earthly sanctuary and priesthood are only a mere shadow of the heavenly. And Paul proceeds to shew how much more excellent is this ministry than that which preceded it—the more excellent in proportion as He is also the mediator of a better covenant: the argument seems to turn on the Words "*how much more,*" as at chapters 1. 4; 3. 3; 7. 19-22; 9. 11, 14, 23; 10. 29, always pointing to the excellency and superiority of the present régime, the Priesthood of Christ† The ministry upon which He is presently engaged will be considered later on, when we come to His coming forward as our High Priest in chap. 9.

Verses 7-13. There is a threefold superiority of the New Covenant to the old, a proof that the promises of the new covenant are better. In chapter 7. 11 perfection did not come by the Levitical Priesthood; the first covenant is not without fault, for finding fault with *them*, the law in itself is not blamed, but the people who observed it not (v. 9). The reasoning in both passages is the same—neither the priesthood nor the law were effectual to give life and were withdrawn to make room for another priesthood and another covenant of greater excellency; quoting Jeremiah 31. 31-34, He says, "This is the covenant that

†The word "better" applied to the new covenant in verse 6 occurs 13 times in Hebrews. Some as follows: Christ better than angels (1. 4), better hope (chap 7. 19), better testament (7. 22), better covenant (8. 6), better sacrifices (9. 23), better substance (10. 34), better country (11. 16), better resurrection (v. 35), better thing (v. 40).

I will covenant with the house of Israel, after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind and on their heart will I write them, and I will be to them a God and they shall be to me a people, and *they* shall not teach every man his neighbour (fellow-citizen) and every man his brother, saying, know (*gnothi* experimentally) the Lord: for all shall know (*eidēsousi* by perception) me from the least to the greatest of them, for I will be merciful (propitious, as in chap. 2. 17) to their iniquities, and their sins will I, by no means, remember any more at all." *The first part* of the covenant is Jehovah putting His laws into their mind and heart, He becoming their God, and they becoming His people: *the second* is the knowledge of God, for all shall know Him from the least to the greatest. Verse 11, *the third part* is, He will be propitious to their iniquities, and their sins He will remember no more. This is the NEW COVENANT, and Paul quoting it again in chapter 10. 14-17, in proof of the one offering of Christ perfecting for ever all who are sanctified, makes application of it to us now; accordingly, we who have believed the gospel message have the first benefit of the new covenant, which the Holy Spirit is witness to (chap. 10. 15-17). Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more; henceforth we enter into the presence of God by the blood of Jesus (chap. 10. 19, and in Rom. 5. 2) "Being justified by faith we have *peace* with God through our Lord Jesus Christ—by Whom also we have access.

In connection with this promise of the forgiveness of sins in the new covenant, stands the decay of the old—the unprofitableness of which is first seen

in 1 Sam. 15. 22, "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord; behold to obey is better than sacrifice and to hearken, than the fat of rams." Soon after, it was revealed to David that sacrifice and offering, He (the Lord) desired not, . . . burnt offering and sin offering He did not require (Psa. 40. 6. See also Psa. 50. 8-10; Micah 6. 6, 7, etc.); until in New Testament times, the whole thing waxing old is nigh unto vanishing away (chap. 8. 13), and finally, is wiped out altogether (chap. 13. 13). It may be of interest to point out that on the eve of Israel's being carried away to Babylon (just as on the eve of their being carried away by the Romans) after the destruction of Jerusalem, God gave to Jeremiah these precious promises of their return from captivity. Jeremiah, chapters 21 to 23 is the book against the shepherds of Israel; chapters 26 to 29 relate to Jeremiah's conflict against the false prophets; and chapters 30 to 33, the promises of restoration which will have their literal fulfilment, and Israel again be re-instated, the beginnings of which are visible even now, to those who have eyes to see. "Behold the days come," saith the Lord (v. 8), and they are now nigh at hand, when all will be literally fulfilled—glorious prospect! Bless the Lord!

Verse 13 forms the transition now to the antithetic parallel between the earthly ceremonial, and the heavenly and true tabernacle. The former, the old had waxed old and decrepit, and was nigh unto vanishing away. A very few years after this was written, the Romans came and carried away the place and nation (John 11. 48)—the very thing Caiaphas advised to put Jesus to death in order to avoid.

CHAPTER IX.

CHAPTER 9, vv. 1-10 IS A CONTINUATION OF THE TABERNACLE SERVICES. vv. 11-28 THE PERFECTION OF THE WORK OF CHRIST.

CHAPTER 9. The chief train of thought which was broken off by the long citation from Jeremiah, is now resumed from chapter 8. 5, and Paul goes on to consider it in detail in contrast to the Levitical system. Christ is the High Priest of a heavenly tabernacle, the Mediator of a better covenant, established on better promises, of which the old is only a pattern (ch. 8. 5). It had ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary. The sanctuary is briefly described (vv. 2-5), also the service (vv. 6 and 7). The Epistle always refers to the Tabernacle, not once to Solomon's Temple, reminding us that we are still strangers and sojourners in the world, waiting for our house which is from heaven, of which Solomon's Temple was a type. There were in the Holy Place, the candlestick, and the table, and the shew-bread, or loaves of presentation, before the face of God; then apparently in the Most Holy Place was the golden censer, not the incense altar, which is not mentioned, but simply the golden censer. The view presented here is that, on the great day of atonement, which is the background on which all

imagery in this chapter rests, and the particular feature in regard to this golden censer is with the veil drawn aside; the High Priest takes it and goes to the incense altar, and takes fire, enters the Holy Place with the censer full of consecrated fire, and incense in his hands, and there burns it on the fire before the Lord, the cloud from which burning went up and filled the whole place with a sweet perfume; a type of the offering of Jesus giving Himself for us; an offering and a sacrifice to God for an odour of a sweet smell (Eph. 5. 2). This is the divine side of the offering of Jesus, and it was offered wholly to God, and in which He alone had any part; and thus it has remained, and will for ever be God's peculiar portion of the offering of Christ, and in which He will ever and ever have ineffable delight and perfect satisfaction. Then the High Priest brought in the blood of the sin-offering, and sprinkled it on the mercy-seat, and before the mercy-seat, seven times (Lev. 16. 14), first for Himself and then for the people. This is our side of the offering of Jesus in the type. It would appear that when this part of the service was completed, the High Priest left the golden censer there (but this point is not clearly stated) and came out and closed the veil again, the Holy Ghost thus signifying that the way into the Holiest was not yet made manifest (v. 8). Then mention is made of the Ark and its contents, and over it was the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy-seat, of which things the Apostle says, he cannot now speak particularly (v. 5).

Then at verse 6 we have the ordinary priests going in and out all the time accomplishing the services,

but into the second the High Priest went in alone once a year with blood, which He offered for Himself, and for the errors of the people; and it is obvious they were going on when the Epistle was written: "the first is yet standing" (v. 8), and it is regarded as a parable for the time now present (R.V.) according to which are offered boths gifts and sacrifices that cannot as touching the conscience, make the worshipper perfect, being only (with meats, and drinks, and divers washings) carnal ordinances imposed until a time of reformation (vv. 9, 10. Compare Acts 3. 21).

We have already seen that the tabernacle was a *shadow* and *copy* of the heavenly things (chap. 8. 5). It had a worldly sanctuary with ordinances of divine service, which sanctified unto the cleanness of the flesh those who had been defiled (v. 13), and had no authority for their existence and use—only the law of a carnal commandment (chap. 7. 16), which stood only in meats, drinks, and divers washings. What a poor thing was the ceremonial law! We can easily see how a covenant that could do no more for mankind, might easily be dispensed with, to give place to the NEW Covenant, which puts God's law into our hearts, and puts away all our sins; and gives us the right of entrance into the very presence of God (see chap. 8. 8-12, and chap. 10. 19-22).

Verse 11. We now come to what may be regarded as the most interesting part of the Epistle to us, *viz.*, Christ coming forward as our Great High Priest, to accomplish what the priesthood of Aaron never could do. "But Christ having come a high priest of the good things to come, through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, He entered in through His own blood

into the Holy Place, having obtained eternal redemption" (v. 11-12). "Having come" reminds us of Psalm 40. 6-8. The offerings of the Levitical system having failed, Christ said: "Lo, I am come. In the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God." This has reference to His incarnation, and having accomplished the object in view, *viz.*, finding redemption, now He comes, our Great High Priest. The same word is used of John the Baptist, "In those days cometh John," etc. (Matt. 3. 1), also Jesus entering on His public ministry on earth (v. 13), "Then cometh Jesus to John to be baptized of him." Thus it becomes clear that the words "Christ having come" refer to His entrance upon the functions of His priestly ministry at the right hand of God (see vv. 12, 14, 24, 28).

It is of deep interest to trace through the epistle, the thought of Christ's two offices in one person: (a) His making purification of sins (chap. 1. 3); the fulfilment of the type of Aaron's priesthood in offering sacrifice for sin, then His sitting down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, the fulfilment of the prophetic announcement of Psalm 110, and the type of the Melchisedec King Priesthood, hence He becomes our Great High Priest that is passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God (chap. 4. 14). And now He waits seated upon the throne for the completion of the promise, that His enemies be made His footstool, *for by one offering* He hath perfected for ever, them that are sanctified (chap. 10. 13-14). See how the double priesthood is fulfilled in Christ, His offering Himself for sin is that of Aaron; His session at the right hand of God, that of Melchisedec.

Through the Eternal Spirit, He offered Himself without spot, to God to purge the conscience (9. 14). He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself (9. 26), and through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all, we are sanctified (10. 10). Then follows *the entrance*. He passed through the heavens (4. 14). He entered as our forerunner into that within the veil (6. 20). Again He entered into the holy place through His own blood (9. 12); and finally, He entered into Heaven itself now to appear in the presence of God for us (9. 24). *The offering and the entrance* are regarded as two parts of one sacrifice, fulfilling the type in Leviticus 16. 11-14. Resurrection is not mentioned in Hebrews till chapter 13, but the entrance is substituted as being a part of the sacrifice in the type. Thereupon the Lord entered upon *His office* as King-Priest, after the order of Melchisedec. As Jehovah said unto Him, "Sit Thou at my right hand—Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec" (Psa. 110. 1, 4). In His glorified humanity, He is God-man, fulfilling the office of King-Priest; and He has made us to be the same, as it is written: "Unto Him that loveth us and washed us from our sins in His blood, and made us a kingdom, priests unto His God and Father" (Rev. 1. 5-6), a Kingly Priesthood, of which He is Head and Chief. We have seen His work for us as the Aaronic Priest, in offering Himself unto God, a sacrifice for sin. And now the Melchisedec Priest sitting at the right hand of God.

Now as to His present work, He makes intercession for us, and to this end He ever liveth (7. 25); yea, more, He is gone into Heaven itself, now to appear

before the face of God for us (9. 24). And through Him we offer up the sacrifice of praise to God continually, as we give thanks to His Name (chap. 13. 15). Moreover, He secures access for us into the holy place by His blood by the newly slain (Gk.) and living way which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; and having a great priest over the House of God let us draw near with a true heart in fulness of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our body washed with pure water (chap. 10. 19-22). And we may add to these, the references in Romans 8. 34, where it is said He is at the right hand of God making intercession for us, and in Romans 5. 9, much more (than His death for us, v. 8) being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him, and again we shall be saved through His life (v. 10), that is His life at the right hand of God; also in 1 Thessalonians 1. 10, we wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which *delivereth* us from the wrath to come. Someone will say: "I thought we were saved." Yes, surely, Ephesians 2. 8, "by grace are ye saved," but what of the sins committed since then? for sin must ever incur God's wrath, but to save us from it, He appears before the face of God for us; and we may add the testimony of the Apostle John in his first Epistle (chap. 2. 1) "If any man sin we have an advocate with the Father Jesus Christ the righteous." Evidently manifesting Himself before the Father to save us, as the High Priest in Israel bore the names of the twelve tribes before Jehovah, bearing them on his shoulders and breast for a memorial before the

Lord continually (Exod. 28. 12, 29). How much we owe to the present life of our Lord Jesus in the presence of God for us we do not know, and in all this He is fulfilling the types of the Melchisedec and Aaronic priesthoods.

THE NEW COVENANT.

Verse 15. In carrying on the trend of thought from verse 14, the comparison is with the sanctifying of the flesh by the Old Testament sacrifices, and the blood of Christ cleansing our conscience from dead works, to serve the living God; and for this cause, He is the Mediator of a new covenant, that the death of Christ having taken place for the redemption from the penalty of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. It will be observed from verse 16 that it was only after the death of Christ that the sins of the Old Testament believers were put away before God (see also Rom. 3. 25, 26), and then they entered on a fuller instalment of the promised inheritance, and are now regarded as "the spirits of just men made perfect" (chap. 12. 23). The sins of the Old Testament heirs of the promise were passed over for the time being, in the forbearance of God (Rom. 3. 25), until the promised seed should come, *the Christ*, when as we have seen they were put away by His death, and consequently they entered on the first instalment of the promised inheritance. Then follows in verses 16 and 17, a further argument that where a covenant is, there must be the death of the covenant victim, before it takes effect, for doth it ever avail while the victim liveth? Wherefore even the first covenant (not testament) was not dedicated

without blood. There exists great diversity of opinion about the word "testament" in verses 16 and 17, but it is difficult to see how the apostle meant a testament or will seeing that in verse 18 he contrasts the first (covenant) with the second, and if the first was a covenant, how can the second be anything else but a covenant, and not a statement or will? besides, these are the only two occurrences where the word "diathēkē" is translated by the word "testament" in the New Testament Scriptures (R.V.), so that from both internal and external evidence, the one meaning holds good. Some regard the two verses as parenthetical, to evade the difficulty, but it is one argument right straight throughout, and that being so, it is difficult to see how the apostle meant two different things, by the use of the one word in the same argument; and more especially so seeing that the uniform meaning of the word throughout the New Testament is "covenant," and as we have seen, is so rendered by the revisers, except in these two verses, 16 and 17, and they give "covenant" in the margin. Besides, the word "Bērith" in the Old Testament is "covenant," and *never* "testament." Making a will as we understand it was very rare in Israel, but was common amongst the Greeks and Romans; and "covenant" is the word used more than two hundred times as the equivalent of the Hebrew. "Bērith" in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, though in classical writers the word "diathēkē" commonly denotes a "*testament.*" Therefore we conclude that the word is better represented by the equivalent "covenant" than by "testament," and the testator will thus be the covenanter; and it would not be a Biblical idea to speak of

the Lord Jesus making a will. One shrinks from such a thought, and it doesn't improve the situation to say "it is only an illustration." Moreover, Paul's designation of the Old Testament Scriptures is the Old covenant (2 Cor. 3. 14); the common use of the word "testament" as applied to the Old and New Testaments came from the old Latin translation, but "covenant" is better as it is also applied to the Lord's Supper. "This is the new covenant in my blood," etc. (Luke 22. 20), and at verse 29, I appoint unto you a Kingdom (certainly not by a will) as My Father appointed unto Me by covenant. The basic passage on which the use of "diathēkē" is used in this Epistle, is Jeremiah 31. 31-34, and its chief points are the forgiveness of sins, and the word of the Lord, written in the heart. This would not coincide with the idea of a testament, but is in closest relationship to the idea contained in the word "covenant." We think therefore from the above considerations, that it is the proper translation to adopt; yet there are other considerations, but we think the above is sufficient. The covenant becomes of force over the sacrificial death of Christ; and the very greatest point of all is for the reader to see that he has been brought into, and is in covenant relationship with Christ, and his sins forgiven, and thus a sharer of the promise of the everlasting inheritance (v. 15).

We come now (vv. 12-13) to the illustrative references taken from the Old Testament. The first is from Exodus 24. 5, 6, 8, but oxen only being mentioned there, it follows that the reference has a wider application; and for the goats we must go to Leviticus 16. 15 and 22, to

the ceremonies of the great day of atonement; and for the water, scarlet wood and hyssop, we must revert to Numbers 19. 6, 8, 9; and finally for the people, to Exodus 24. 8. The blood of sacrifice was sprinkled on all these, and on the book of the law besides; so exhaustive was the application of the blood, that the apostle says in verse 22, "And according to the law I may almost say (R.V.) all things are cleansed with blood, and apart from shedding of blood, there is no remission." The only exceptions to the general application of the blood under the law, were Numbers 31. 21-23, the spoil taken from the Midianites in battle; everything that abides fire, was put through the fire and then purified with the water of Separation, but the water of Separation had in it the ashes of the burnt heifer in Numbers 19, and could not be said absolutely to be apart from blood. The second exception is in the law of the Trespass offering; the man who was so poor, and could not provide two young pigeons for his offering, might bring fine flour, but here again a memorial of it was burnt on the altar, where blood was sprinkled every morning; thus again there was contact with blood, and we can easily understand the reason, for it is written "apart from the shedding of blood there is no remission" (v. 22). Thus we recognize the force of the apostle's word, "I may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood," according to the law. We see by the very brief reference to the various Scriptures referred to, that it is a comprehensive survey of the whole field of the law, that the apostle has before him, and this is confirmed by the summing up of verse 22 just referred to, but as we go onward, we shall see this is

the apostle's way toward the close of the epistle, and at the close He says, "I have written unto you in few words," *i.e.*, as compared with what might have been written (chap. 13. 22).

We now come to the application of the foregoing types. "It was necessary therefore that the copies of the things in the heavens should be cleansed with these sacrifices, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy place made with hands like in pattern to the true, but into Heaven itself, now to appear (be manifested) before the face of God for us" (vv. 23 and 24). These verses connect with verses 11 and 12, and take up the line of thought there suggested, while the use of the blood for cleansing, under the law in the intervening verses, throws light upon the application of the blood of Christ in cleansing the heavenly places, the sphere of His ministry for us. But the question may be asked, "in what sense did the heavenly things need cleansing?" By the Fall of Adam, everything in relation to *man* required cleansing; so closely linked up with man's future destiny is the necessity for it, that even *heavenly things themselves* need to be *purified* by Christ's blood, for He has entered *into Heaven itself* now to be manifested before the face of God *for us*. The heavenly things themselves and Heaven itself are parallel terms. Dean Alford, as we think, expresses the sense well: "we must therefore rest in the plain and literal sense; *that Heaven itself needed and obtained purification* by the atoning blood of Christ." The peculiar link of mystical union between man and all creation, which we cannot understand, requires that everything

in Heaven and on earth required reconciliation, so that all may rest on the ground of "*Redemption*" (see Col. 1. 20). And in this connection it is that He appears before the face of God for us.

One other point deserves attention before we pass on. It is the *entrance* into the holy place, which the apostle speaks of in verse 24; now in carrying on the thought from verse 24, we should have expected in verse 25, nor yet that He should *enter* often, but rather instead He falls back on *the offering* oft repeated, and then afterward as the high priest *entereth* into the holy place every year. There is first the offering, and then the entrance. The background on which he rests his argument is the offering for sin for the priest on the great day of atonement, which is divided into two parts: first, the slaying of the sin-offering for himself; then he enters into the Holy Place and burns the incense before the Lord, this finished, he goes out, takes the blood and enters again, and sprinkles it before the Lord on the mercy-seat eastward, and before the mercy-seat seven times. The offering is one, but consists of two parts, the killing of the bullock, and then the entrance to burn the incense, afterward going in with the blood, which makes clear the point in Hebrews 9. 24-25, Christ offering Himself for sin and entering into the holy place even into Heaven itself are one offering. There is but one offering of which the entrance is a part as in the type in Lev. 16., and it is not as the High Priest entering into an earthly sanctuary for then He must often have suffered since the foundation of the world, but now once at the end of the world or consummation of the ages.

The expression in Heb. 9. 26, His being *manifested* at the consummation of the ages is very expressive. Ages is in the plural form. The history of all preceding ages was a preparation for the manifestation of Christ Who had been fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, but was *manifest* in these last times (at the end of the times) for you (1 Peter 1. 20). And again He *now* appears before the face of God for us. The word appear in this reference is found mostly in Luke and principally in the sense of making manifest; in John it is used of Jesus manifesting Himself to His people (chap. 14. 21-22); but the clearest usage of it occurs in the LXX Exodus 33. 13 where Moses says, "Show me thyself." Another word was commonly used for divine appearances but Moses goes beyond it here and prayed "Make thyself manifest unto me." This open sight of God as v. 20 shows it implied might not be granted to any man, for, says the Lord "no man can see Me and live." It is reserved for the Son only to appear before the face of God—and that too for us. The idea is the open evident appearance of Christ before God in His glorified humanity as representing us there, "for us." It presents a very vivid contrast to the high priest in the sanctuary, veiled by the cloud of incense. The "face of God" suggests the idea of direct immediate vision, incomparably beyond even the attribute of "Glory," (see Rev. 22. 4). The final issue seems to be the perfect satisfaction and good pleasure GOD has in HIS SON and that in His appearing there before His face for US. Compare Gal. 4. 9, "Known of God"; 1 Cor. 13. 12, "Then shall I know as I am known" (fully) and 1 Cor. 8. 2-3, "If

any one love God the same is known of Him." Therefore what infinite worth is the Son's appearing before the face of God for us. It seems to rise above Advocacy, Intercession and all else besides; just *His Own very Self*.

Verse 25, nor yet that He should offer Himself often (so as to enter afresh), carrying on the thought of the previous verse, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with the blood of others, for then must He often have suffered since the foundation of the world; from sin was first committed, but *now once* in the end of the ages hath He been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. All the previous ages to the end of which the writer now brings us were a preparation for the end when He was manifested to put away sin, or for the setting aside or the cancellation of sin, rendered "disannulling," (chap. 7. 18), the only twice it occurs in New Testament. Verse 26, the expression "at the end" (consummation) of the ages may be compared with that at chap. 1. 2, "the end of these days," that is when God spoke to us through His prophets, and then by His Son, and again "when the fulness of the time came God sent forth His Son," (Gal. 4. 4). The time for His manifestation was come, and that was at the consummation of all the previous ages, this taken with the almost identical expression in Matt. 13. 39-40, the end (completion) of the age where the harvest is reaped and His Kingdom established; in other words the one expression is connected with His manifestation as Saviour, Matt. 28. 20; Heb. 9. 26, and that in Matt. 13. 39-40 stands associated with Judgment, the harvest season and the coming Kingdom; thus

leading us to view the situation as one, with the church period of 2000 years as not reckoned. It comes in as a sort of parenthesis of which no account is taken here. This perhaps may be accounted for by the calling of the church as being an heavenly one (chap. 3. 1). The end or consummation of the ages witnesses the manifestation of Christ for Salvation to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. The end or consummation of the age in Matt. 28. 20 is different, Christ having commissioned the disciples to go and preach the Gospel He promises to be with them until the end or consummation of the age, and side by side is the promise in chapter 13. 39, 49 of the harvest-reaping at the end of the age with judgment following and the establishing of the kingdom and the removal of all that offend who are burned up with unquenchable fire. This is the final result of the work of the commission given to the disciples. "And inasmuch as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment, so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

The two verses taken together are connected with the preceding argument by the word "once." Once has He been manifested for the cancellation of sin v. 26, and it is appointed (laid up) for men to die, so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many. There is clearly a parallelism between the two verses; men die once in v. 27; in v. 28 Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. He bore up His people's sins in order to expiate them by suffering death, taken from Isaiah 53. 12 and compare 1 Peter

2. 24. To men it is judgment; not merely the sentence passed, but the execution of the same; and parallel to this is, Christ will appear a second time apart from sin unto salvation to them that wait for Him. It is Judgment to one; Salvation to the other. The first member "having been once offered to bear the sin of many" is parallel to "He shall appear" apart from sin unto salvation in the second, and "of many" is paralleled to "them that wait for Him." Of the nature of the judgment following on the death of the unbeliever He does not speak, but to those who wait for Him it is salvation.

CHAPTER X.

CHAPTER 10. 1-4. THE WEAKNESS OF SACRIFICE BY LAW 5-18. THE TAKING AWAY OF THESE SACRIFICES, AND CHRIST OFFERING HIMSELF 19-39. OUR ENTRANCE. SUMMARY VENGEANCE ON THE CHRIST REJECTER.

CHAPTER 10. The latter part of chapter 9. vv. 23-28 is an expansion of vv. 11 and 12. Christ entered once for all into the holy place, having found redemption. The repeated offerings under the law were contrasted with His offering which never needed repetition. The opening verses of chap. 10 continue the argument showing the inefficiency of those sacrifices offered under the law, for they could never perfect the comers; they only brought back the remembrance of sins every year, "for it is not possible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins." But the offering of Christ perfected the worshipper so that he had no more conscience of sins, having been cleansed by His blood. The law had only *a shadow* of the good things to come; but Christ is the substance, *the very image* of these things so that His offering never needs to be repeated. Shadow and image are here contrasted, the latter perhaps best explained by Substance. In Colossians 2. 17, the ceremonial ordinances, Sabbaths, new moons and such like things are regarded as a shadow in contrast to the body

which is of *Christ*, i.e., not merely was Christ, but belonged to, was derived from Him and can only be enjoyed by union with Him (Ellicot). So in Heb. 10. God had no pleasure in the sacrifices under the law, but Christ came to do the will of God by which will we are sanctified through the offering of Himself (v. 10). This is the realization of the good things to come and for which He came as High Priest (chap. 9. 11).

Verses 5-10, "Wherefore when He cometh into the world He saith, Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body Thou didst prepare for me," much is condensed into few words in this verse. First of all the "wherefore" carries on the thought from the previous verse, the inability of animal blood to put away sin; when *He* cometh into the world *He saith*—the time is marked by His entering into the world; wherefore He saith, Sacrifice and offering Thou didst not desire but a body didst Thou prepare for me—better, fit to me. Note first of all: no other babe on coming into the world ever spake thus; this marks Him off from all others, the born Son of Man. Secondly note His words, in addressing His heavenly Father (v. 7) He says: "a body hast Thou fitted to me"; His pre-existence is here declared and a body Thou hast given me in which to do Thy will, that will, as expressed in the volume of the book that is written of Me. "I come" is present perfect tense—I am come; it is His actual arrival in the world. "Thou wouldest not" and "Thou didst prepare" are past tenses, and the latter refers to God's purposes in eternity and now so far fulfilled—"I *am* come." "I am here" (John 8. 42). The verb "prepare" or "fitted to" is derived

from a Greek word meaning the fitting as of a joint, or many joints, as example, of the human body. Any one who has seen and examined these joints cannot but admire their perfect inter-adaptability to perform the necessary functions allotted to each of them and as applied to the many members of the body of Christ (1 Cor. 1. 10; 2 Cor. 13. 11; Eph. 2. 21, etc.). They illustrate the perfect harmony that will obtain when it is completed; would that it were so now! The point under consideration is the fitness, the suitability, the appropriateness of the body given to Him. "The Word became flesh and tabernacled among us." (John 1. 14). "I am come to do thy will"—to fulfil the law (Matt. 5. 17); "to preach" (Mark 1. 38); "to call sinners to repentance" (Luke 5. 32); "to do the will of Him that sent me" (John 6. 38-39); "to save that which was lost" (Matt. 18. 11); "to minister" (Matt. 20. 28); "to bear witness unto the truth" (John 18. 37); and many more such things.

The words in v. 5, "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not," show the worthlessness of ceremonial observances and sacrifices for sin under the law. To Samuel first was this revealed: "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold to obey is better than sacrifices, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (1 Sam. 15. 22). Then David follows with "sacrifice and offering Thou didst not desire, mine ears hast Thou opened, burnt offering and sin offering hast Thou not required; then said I, lo, I am come—to do Thy will, O my God" (Psa. 40. 6-8). Now seeing the sacrifices were unavailing for the putting away of sin, the thought arises wherefore were they instituted?

The law was added because of transgression (Gal. 3. 19), it became our tutor to bring us to Christ (v. 24), which usage the apostle illustrates from his own case in Rom. 7. 7, "I had not known sin but by the law"; I had not known coveting or lust, except the law had said, thou shalt not covet; and when sin was discovered under the law the sacrifices were instituted for such, and to the offerer it was forgiven, but only put away before God when Christ came and offered Himself for sin (see Rom. 3. 25 margin). In a word the law and its sacrifices were preparatory, leading up to the coming of Christ (see also Psa. 51. 16-17). Then follows the words in Psalm 40. 6, "Mine ears hast Thou opened" or as in marg. (R.V.) ears hast Thou digged (or pierced) for me paraphrased by the apostle: "a body didst Thou prepare for me," (R.V.). Various solutions of the difficulty have been proposed none of which are quite satisfactory. The quotation is made from the Sept. verbatim, who evidently understood from the Psalm vv. 7-10, that the one of whom the Psalmist was writing would *come*, and *do* the will of God, having the law in his *heart*, *preach* righteousness and *declare* his faithfulness, and that to do this, he must have a body not only to hear but to do; hence they paraphrased the words, "Mine ears hast Thou opened," by the words, "A body hast Thou prepared me," which paraphrase the Holy Spirit confirms in Heb. 10. 5. Now taking the context of the Psalm into consideration this view meets the difficulty and gives a simple and good sense.

Verses 5, 6 and 8. It may be observed that the sacrifice and offering of v. 5 are the meal and peace offerings and the burnt offering and sacrifice for sin,

follow in v. 6. These comprise the whole range of offerings under the Levitical economy, which in New Testament light are only meats and drinks and divers washings and carnal ordinances imposed until a time of reformation (Heb. 9. 10). Then follows, v. 9, the taking away the first covenant owing to its inability to procure Salvation for man, and its utter failure to do the WILL OF GOD; but Christ came, and came full of power to do it. Then *has* He said: "*Lo, I am come to do thy will O God,*" v. 9, and as a result of His doing it, we are being sanctified through the offering of His body once for all. He has taken away the first covenant, and He has established the second; yea more, when He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, He sat down at the right hand of God, from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made the footstool of His feet. His sitting down at God's right hand is contrasted with the standing, day by day, of the priests ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; yea even more, He will sit until His enemies be made His footstool (v. 13), and at v. 27, it is added they will be devoured with fire.

Verse 15. Moreover the Holy Spirit is a witness to us. The Father witnesses at chap. 5. 5-6; the Son bears witness chap. 10. 5; now the Holy Spirit, for after that He hath said, "This is the covenant that I will make with them, I will put (lit. "giving," referring to the giving of the law) my laws into their hearts and in their minds will I write (inscribe) them." Here He omits part of the covenant, "I will be to them a God," etc., and *i.e.*, after He had said the foregoing He adds; "their sins and their iniquities

will I remember no more." The object of the quotation is to prove "the remission of sins," and where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin. The object of the same quotation in chap. 8. 8, 13, that there being a new covenant the old is antiquated. Here the argument beginning with chap. 8. 1, is brought to a triumphant close. Since the object of all sacrifice is the purging of the soul from guilt: sacrifice is no longer needed when sins have been annulled.

It may be profitable to note the meaning of some of the words used in chapters 9 and 10 for the putting away of sin.

Prosphero—To bring an offering, used of Christ offering up prayers and supplications (chap. 5. 7), then of Himself (chap. 9. 14, 25, 28), for sin, and often of the priests (chap. 8. 3, 4; 9. 9, etc.).

Katharizo—To cleanse, to purify from defilement and sin (9. 14; Eph. 5. 26; Titus 2. 14; 1 John 1. 7; Acts 15. 9).

Athetēsīn—Abolition 9. 26, verb to do away with, nullify.

Aphesis—Pardon of sins (properly, letting them go as if they had not been committed) 9. 22; 10. 18, see also Acts 2. 38; 10. 43; 13. 38; Eph. 1. 7, and often

Anaphero—(Ananegkein)—To bear up (as sins on the cross) 1 Pet. 2. 24; Heb. 7. 27; 9. 28; Isa. 53. 12.

Aphaireo—To take away sins 10. 4 (Jeremiah 11. 15) the victims expiating them. It is used of God putting out of His sight sins committed by the restored remnant of Israel (Rom. 11. 27).

Periaireo—(Perielein)—chapter 10. 11. To take

away that which surrounds and envelops something, to strip off all around (Alf.). Take away entirely the sins one is (as it were) enveloped in, giving us freedom (compare Rom. 6. 18).

Mimnēsko—not. To remember one's sins (chap. 8. 12; 10. 17; Psa. 25. 7; 79. 8). To remember mercy (Luke 1. 54, the covenant 1. 72).

Thusia—A sacrifice for sin (Heb. 5. 1; 8. 3; 10. 12).

It is easily seen from even a slight analysis of the foregoing words, the appalling nature of sin, and there are others not used in this portion of Scripture, but all tell the same tale. Consider the idea of being enveloped in sin as a close-fitting garment (chap. 10. 11), *encompassed* with infirmity (chap. 5. 2), and the defilement from which we needed cleansing (Eph. 5. 26); so that to have forgiveness and no further offering or sacrifice needed (10. 18), followed by an entrance into the holiest by the blood of Jesus (10. 19); and then our Great High Priest there already bidding us to draw near into His presence with a true heart, are blessings so great no one can conceive their worth, and only eternity will reveal them. The argument which commenced at chapter 8. 1 here reaches its triumphant close, and we enter on the last great division of the Epistle chapters 10. 19 to 13. 25.

Chapter 10. 19. "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." In Israel the high priest alone, and that only once in the year was permitted to enter there, and that only in an earthly tent, but now every believer is bidden to draw near into the holiest, into the immediate presence of God, and that too, with boldness, which word has for its derivative meaning freedom and

unreservedness of speech. (Compare John 16. 25). Most Christians who live a godly life know the difficulty when they seek at times an entrance into the presence of God in prayer, the wandering thoughts, and the difficulty to set in order their requests as in Psalm 5. 3, "In the morning will I direct (set in order mrg.) my prayer unto thee, and will watch"; but if we persevere seeking His presence, His face, at length help is given until we are able to pour out our hearts unto God, telling Him everything. This is really the force of the word "boldness," (compare chap. 4. 16), "Let us draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and may find grace to help us in time of need."

Attention has been drawn to the skill of arrangement, that the very exhortation with which the apostle closes the argument of chapters 3 and 4 is now resumed at the opening of the last section of the Epistle, "Let us draw near with a true heart in fulness of faith" here, answering to, "Let us draw near with boldness to the throne of grace," there, chap. 4. 14; and "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope" here, to "hold fast our confession" there. In fact, to achieve this result is the main argument of the Epistle, for chap. 4. 14-16 resumes the thread of the argument broken at chap. 3. 1, and picked up again at the end of the parenthesis chap. 4. 13; and here again chap. 10. 19 with the exhortation to enter with boldness into the very holiest, yea even into the immediate presence of God, and there as we have seen pour out our hearts before Him, which is the communion of the Holy Spirit, and real communion only begins when we are able thus to speak with holy boldness, i.e., with

connected thought, and set in order our requests before Him. Compare also another reference to this access and approach unto God in Eph. 3. 12, "in whom (Christ) we have boldness and access in confidence"; and when we consider that it is in the *Blood* of Jesus we have this approach, what holy reverence it behoves us to exercise seeing

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which He inaugurated or dedicated for us is as "*newly slain*" and yet it is a living WAY and it leads through the veil, *i.e.*, His own flesh, right into the immediate presence of God. It is not as though it was already existing, but was inaugurated as a new thing, as was the new covenant (chap. 9. 18), a new, a recently opened and living way, and of perpetual efficacy because the living Christ *is* that way. The idea of something new runs throughout this section of the Epistle; a new covenant (9. 15); a newly slain way (10. 20), inaugurated or newly made for us (v. 20). What a contrast to the Aaronic priesthood where none could draw near except the high priest and that only once in a year.

Verse 21. "And having

A GREAT PRIEST

over the house of God (22) let us draw near." We have in Hebrews different titles used of the Priesthood, in chap. 7. 15 and 20, simply "Priest"; "High Priest" (chaps. 2. 17; 3. 1; 5. 10; 8. 1); "Great Priest" (chap. 10. 21); and "Great High Priest" (chap. 4. 14); all used of Christ. It seems somewhat singular the apostle should use this word "Great Priest" here instead of the usual one, but He is at once both King and Priest upon His throne. (Compare Zech. 6. 13—

A King Priest ruling over the house of God). Therefore (22) let us draw near (chaps. 4. 16; 7. 25; 11. 6); what consolation such words minister to weary hearts, when we are able to unburden them before Him. Certain conditions are attached though, a true heart, not double-hearted, but true and sincere and upright before Him, in full assurance of faith, not hesitating, not doubting, but in calm, quiet, restful confidence as in chapter 6. 11. It is the full assurance of hope centered in Him for the fulfilment of the promise here; it is having our hearts sprinkled and so cleansed from an evil conscience, which is the deadly foe of all restful peace and confidence in the presence of God. Where an evil conscience is, there can be no quiet peaceful assurance before Him. And our body washed with pure water,—as the heart denotes the internal state of soul before God, so the body denotes the outward visible life before one another and before the world. Clean every whit (John 13. 10), both are essential to abiding communion with God and a godly consistent life.

Verse 23. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope that it waver not, thus carrying the thoughts back to chapter 6. 11, the full assurance of hope to the end, for as here He is faithful that promised. Verse 24. Let us consider one another to provoke to love and good works, which will naturally be the outcome of the pure conscience and clean life, for He is *faithful* that promised, reminding us of the two things in chapter 6. 18, His word and His oath, that by two immutable things in which it is impossible for God to lie we may have strong encouragement to lay hold of the hope set before us. God's faithfulness

can never fail, and on this unfailing faithfulness Paul bases the three following exhortations: Let us draw near (v. 22), Let us hold fast the hope (v. 23), Let us provoke one another to love and good works (v. 24), and all resting on the having boldness to enter the holiest (v. 19), and having an high priest over the house of God (v. 21), and God's faithfulness (Compare 1 Thess. 5. 23, 24). Verse 25. Not forsaking *the assembling* of ourselves together but exhorting one another and so much the more as ye see the day approaching. Compare 2 Thess. 2. 1, the only other place the word occurs in New Testament. "We beseech you touching the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our *gathering together* unto Him," etc. It had already become the custom of some to drop off the meetings for mutual encouragement and exhortation, hence the appeal to the believers both at Thessalonica and among the Hebrews not to neglect these meetings altogether, but to hold fast the traditions as they were taught, and to cleave to the Lord, and *so much the more* as they saw the day drawing nigh. "By so much the more" is used twice already in the epistle chaps. 1. 4 and 7. 22, to strengthen the argument under consideration, or the appeal used as here. And is it not so with us now at the end of the age? how much we heard the truth of the Lord's coming taught in our assemblies in earlier years, and now it is but rarely touched on. Let us renew the encouragement it yields by reminding one another of the coming again and the shout of (1 Thess. 4. 16), "Come up hither" (Rev. 4. 1).

Verse 26. For the connecting link with the foregoing is the thought of the consequence to which sin-

ful neglect may lead (v. 25), and the awful revelation of judgment against such neglect. They had received the full knowledge of the truth, and they were sanctified by His blood and yet turned away; for such there remains no more sacrifice for sin but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries. The first visible step of apostacy lay in their neglecting to assemble themselves together, and then their return to Judaism: this was wilful sin and their continuance therein is expressed by the present tense, present continuance. To all such there is no longer any sacrifice for sin remaining. They have turned their back deliberately on the only sacrifice that can put away sin, even the *cross of Christ*.

Verse 28. A man that hath set at nought Moses' law dieth without mercy on the word of two or three witnesses. The reference is to Deut. 17. 2-7 there, it is apostacy from the Lord to the worship of idols; here, it is apostacy from the Son of God whom he has trodden under foot, and has counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite to the Spirit of grace, heaped insult and outrage on the Spirit of whose graces he had been made partaker (chap. 6. 4), and for which he returns arrogant scorn. The inference in chapters 2. 3, and 12. 25 is the same. If the man who thus rejected the law of Moses and apostatised to idolatry died without mercy under two or three witnesses, *how much more* shall the man who has trampled under foot the Son of God and counted His blood as common, and insolently despised (such is the meaning of the Greek word) the Spirit of

grace not merely or only the Spirit but the Spirit of whose graces he was made a partaker (chap. 6. 4), yea of how much sorer punishment shall not that man be counted worthy. "For, we know Him," says Paul who said "vengeance is mine, I will recompense." The latter word implies exact requital and when he receives back again what he has done, how fearful will not that vengeance be. And again, the Lord shall judge His people, which is also taken from Deut. 32. 36. In which passages the context indicates it is deliverance for His persecuted people, but in Rom. 12. 19 and here in Heb. 10. it is the execution of the penalty, even righteous judgment on His enemies, showing thus the double use God makes of His own word as expressed in 2 Thess. 1. 6, 7,—affliction to them that afflicted you and rest to those who are afflicted. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (see chap. 10. 31). In v. 27, it is a certain fearful expectation of judgment and a fierceness of fire; in v. 31 it is the man in the hands of the living God now executing the judgment threatened, fierceness (or jealousy) of fire. If any unsaved sinner should perchance come across such an awful warning before it is too late let him take warning in time and flee for mercy to Him who says, "Come unto me" (Matt. 11. 28).

Verse 32. In the last six verses after showing the awful danger of apostatising from the living God, and the fearful consequences thereof, Paul now turns around, as in chap. 6. 9, and encourages his readers as he calls to their remembrance their *former life of endurance and suffering*; and now exhorts them to imitate, not others, but themselves in their former

days in which after they were enlightened, as in chap. 6. 4, they had endured a great fight of affliction (chap. 10. 32)—a conflict as of athletes contending for a crown—and that in two ways, partly by being made a gazing stock as he himself had been (1 Cor. 4. 9), both by reproaches and afflictions done to themselves, and partly by becoming sharers with them who were facing reproaches and afflictions in their daily life, having their manner of life so that they incurred such affliction for their obedience and testimony to Christ. The Hebrews became sharers with them; thus so far from abandoning their fellow-Christians they courageously associated themselves by their actual avowal of sympathy with them in their sufferings. The tenses used suggest that upon some special occasion the persons addressed had in a singular manner identified themselves with the sufferers probably in an outbreak of persecution, and in addition they took *joyfully* the spoiling of their goods; such was the character of the early Christians, what a contrast to many to-day who have gone in for the world and the things thereof: but they knew that they themselves (note the emphasis) had a better possession and an *abiding* one, in contrast to the transitoriness of the sufferings and privations which their present manner of life was incurring. In a word, their present loss of earthly possessions which was only temporary at most, led to their possession of an abiding one, they not looking at visible things but at the invisible things of the Kingdom of God which are eternal (2 Cor. 4. 18).

Verse 35. Cast not away therefore your boldness which hath great recompense of reward. To cast

away one's boldness is the opposite to holding fast the boldness of the hope (chap. 3. 6). The one belongs to the endurance of the faithful servant; the other to the cowardice of the man who draws back (v. 38). The tense implies a deliberate act which indicates the grievous state of departure to which they have receded already, whereas on the other hand the holding their confidence implies their receiving a great reward. And still after having done the will of God they have need of patience for continued endurance till the appointed time.

Verse 37. "For yet a very little while" (words quoted from Hab. 2, 3), and "he that cometh shall come and shall not tarry." The subject from which the quotation is made is the Lord's coming to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; when to His own people, the remnant, He says: "Come my people hide thyself *for a little moment* till the indignation be past." "For yet a very little while, and he that cometh shall come and shall not tarry." Here again Paul quotes from Hab. 2. 3, 4 almost verbatim from the LXX. The immediate reference in Habakkuk is the coming of the Chaldean invasion when the Prophet, after inquiring from the Lord, took up his position in the watch-tower to see what the Lord would say to him. The Lord answered him, "Write the vision for it is yet for an 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." The reader will note the change from "it" of the vision to "He" in the quotation, "*He* that cometh shall come and shall not tarry." It is not a vision the Apostle tells the Hebrews to wait

for, but the Lord *Himself* for *He* shall come and shall not delay.

Verse 38. "Now the just shall live by faith" is quoted also in Rom. 1. 17, and Gal. 3. 11, and from the same prophet Habakkuk a connecting link between the three Epistles. In Romans, it is the revelation of the righteousness of God in the Gospel—from faith to faith, not merely the first apprehension on believing the Gospel message; but afterward growing in the knowledge of the character of God as a righteous holy *Being*, it is *from faith to faith*; and so throughout the Epistle, the righteousness of God is revealed progressively. In Galatians 3. 11 it is used in proof that no one is justified in God's sight by works of law because it is written "The just shall live by faith." The Galatians were going back to works of law, and require to be reminded that from the first it was by faith, hence there is no word following as in Romans, "from faith to faith." In Hebrews it is used to encourage them to hold fast their confidence and in due time they will receive the promise, and if anyone should shrink back, God speaks and says, "My soul shall have no pleasure in him." But how nobly the apostle says, "we are not of them who draw back unto perdition, but believe unto the saving (the preservation or possession—*i.e.*, acquiring by holding on the confidence to the end) of the soul" (chap. 10. 39).

CHAPTER XI.

WHAT FAITH IS AND MANY NOTABLE EXAMPLES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

CHAPTER 11. The beginning of this chapter with its long list of noble worthies follows in substance closely on the end of chapter 10, and it begins with an announcement of what faith is. Faith is that exercise of soul which has for its object things not seen but hoped for, and which, under difficulties, holds on to God in confidence and assurance; it is even more, it is the evidence or convincing proof even in trial, of things not seen. In short, it seems to be that knowledge of God that enables one to count on Him, resting on and applying the promises to the particular circumstances of the situation in hand. The close of chap. 10 shows the apostacy of some of the Jewish believers, when Paul takes up the word "faith" and shows its true object is "Christ," whether before the law, *i.e.*, Patriarchal, or under the law; and those who believed God were justified: and that the Gospel of the New Testament is no new thing and is not at variance with the law of Moses; and that in believing in Christ, those apostate Jews could not charge true believers with abandoning *the faith* of their *Fathers*. And he proceeds to illustrate all this by the numerous

examples he selects from the Old Testament, and especially those cases which were before the law and sacrifices were given: if *they* had wished to draw back where would they have gone to? hence the futility of their going back now to the Temple and its ritual. Faith believes what it sees not; by it we venture our eternal interests on the bare Word of God; and in it (as *their* element) the *Elders* (not ancients) had witness borne to them not by men only but by God also (see vv. 4, 5, 39), and in turn became witnesses themselves (chap. 12. 1).

Verse 3. "By faith we understand that the worlds (Greek ages) have been framed by the word of God." The "worlds" here is the same Greek word as in chap. 1. 2. There it is "He made the worlds"; here it is, "the worlds have been framed" by the (spoken) word of God. The word itself "*aiones*" has two senses in New Testament: (1) It is applied generally to periods of time, ages, etc., and in these two references it seems to be applied to material things as well—the all things, the universe to which "the Son" is heir (chap. 1. 2), and so here also. In chapter 1 we have the origin, "He made the worlds"; and of necessity, we have their course also: He upholdeth all things by the spoken word of His power (v. 3), thus giving a material sense to the word. But in chap. 11 the worlds (ages—margin) are said to have been *framed* by the spoken word of God. If we adopt the former sense, then it implies the whole universe of things including the creation of the single parts, their harmonious organisation and maintenance, such as the heavenly bodies, sun, moon, stars, planets, etc.; but if we regard the time periods as the sense of the word,

and it is the usual one, then we have the framing of those ages in the fore-knowledge of God. The root meaning of the word "framed" is "to fit" with a preposition prefixed, and it is variously applied in the New Testament for example, it is applied to the fitting of a body to our Lord, which in John's language, is "the Word made flesh" (John 1. 14). In 1 Cor. 1. 10 it is used of the restoring of the Corinthians from their divided state, to one another, and in Eph. 2. 20 the root is used in another combination of the building of the Church of God, it being fitly framed together—one living stone to another—so as to become a "Temple" for the living God to dwell in. Thus it is clear that, as applied to the ages, it has reference to the dovetailing of the different ages one to another by successive stages of development of the purposes of God to achieve the end for which the world was made (see Rev. 4. 11), and all this only as a step to the final goal, for which He created it; for before ever the world was founded at all, He had chosen us in Christ with a view to an end—that we should be holy and without blemish before Him in love (Eph. 1. 4). This was the grand culminating end in view before ever He created the world at all!

Verse 4. The Apostle now proceeds to illustrate his teaching on the subject of faith by reference to Abel and others. "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent (lit. a much more) sacrifice unto God than Cain." Now faith must have some revelation from God to rest on; and following the case of Adam who was clothed with skin, to obtain which, sacrifice must have been made, accordingly Abel took of the firstlings of his flock for his sacrifice, thus confessing his

sinfulness though a righteous man; and by his sacrifice he obtained this witness from God. Probably, the way in which God showed His acceptance was by fire coming down from the presence of the Lord, and consuming the sacrifice (see chap. 4. 4; compare Heb. 11. 4), and by it He being dead yet speaketh. Here, no doubt, we have a type of another sacrifice with which Abel's is compared—that of Christ in chapter 12. 24, which speaks better things than that of Abel. Cain, on the other hand, turned away and went out from the presence of the Lord, because he was *of* the wicked one (1 John 3. 12). Take care, dear reader, lest you also turn away from Christ, and lose your soul for ever.

Verse 5. By faith, Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and he was not found, because God translated him; for before his translation he had this testimony that he pleased God. The Genesis narrative simply says he walked (habitually the tense implies) "with God," which is rendered in Hebrews, "he pleased God," and God translated him. He was the seventh from Adam, and he was taken from this wicked world without dying—what a lively picture of the coming translation of the Church which we all look for; and we shall surely enter into rest, for there remains a rest to the people of God, and so shall we ever be with the Lord (1 Thess. 4. 17).

Verse 7. "By faith Noah being admonished of God, as in chapter 5. 7, as was Moses chapter 8. 5, moved with fear—reverential fear (some render it—"taking forethought"), prepared an ark to the saving of his house, by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by

faith." Noah is the first called "righteous" in the Old Testament (Gen. 6. 9), though Abel afterwards is said in Matt. 23. 35 to have been righteous. Noah is also called "a preacher of righteousness"; he also became heir of the righteousness which is by faith—a tangible asset in the currency of the coming Kingdom. (Compare Phil. 3. 9). Paul had suffered the loss of all earthly things (v. 8), for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus that he might win Christ and obtain the righteousness of God which is by faith.

Verse 8. By faith Abraham when he was called, obeyed, to go out into a place which he was to receive for an inheritance. The Authorised Version may seem to imply that when called he received *the promise* that the land to which he would be directed should even become his inheritance; it is not so, Stephen says in Acts 7. 5, "he gave him none inheritance in it," yet He promised that He would give it to him in possession, but this part of the promise was not given him till he was in the land (Gen. 12. 7). He became a sojourner in a land not his own, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob the heirs with him of the same promise: the reason for his not making a permanent and settled home was, he looked for the *city* (Heb. 11. 10) which hath the foundations whose builder and maker is God (Rev. 21. 14). The promise for immediate fulfilment was that he should become the father of many nations and receive blessing from God, (Gen. 12. 1-3). It is in the New Heaven and New Earth that he will receive the fulness of the promise. For Builder and Maker (comp. chap. 8. 2). The true tabernacle which the *Lord* "*pitched*" and not man,

He also "*found*" eternal redemption, chapter 9. 12, and John 14. 2, I go to "*prepare a place*" for you.

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 (comp. Rom. 4. 19). Abraham considered his own body as good as dead—and the deadness of Sarah's womb, but waxed strong through faith giving glory to God. Note the strong emphasis on "*even Sarah herself*"; what grace on the part of God to emphasise this, considering Sarah's former unbelief (see Gen. 18. 9-15), and what encouragement for us to trust in God notwithstanding all our unbelief.

Verse 12. Wherefore also, there sprang of one (man), and him as good as dead, as many as the stars of heaven and the sand of the sea (Isa. 51. 2).

Verse 13. These all, seven in number, three before and four after the flood, doubtless representative of the perfect number of the redeemed, died in faith; yet each one had his own characteristic feature of character wherein he shone: Abel in the matter of sacrifice; Enoch in walking with God; Noah obeying the warning as to the flood, and making the ark; Abraham's prompt obedience on every occasion; Sarah's impatience, yet she counted Him faithful that promised. But one thing was common to all—*faith*; and although they received not the promises they saw them and greeted them from afar, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. By so doing they make it manifest that they are seeking a native country of their own, contrast v. 9—a land not his own, which is a better country, wherefore God is not ashamed of them to be called their God,

for He hath prepared for them a city—a *native country*, a fatherland, a better country, a city—with which compare in New Testament Phil. 3. 20-21 ; Gal. 3. 26 ; Heb. 12. 22 ; Rev. 21. 9-27.

Verse 17. "By faith Abraham hath offered up Isaac being tried," such is the order of the Greek words showing the continuous nature of the trial all the time and yet he hesitated not till all was over. Yea, and he that gladly received the promises was offering up his only begotten son though it was in Isaac the promises were all to be fulfilled. What a stretch of faith and obedience on Abraham's part ! His only hope was, that God was able to raise up even from the dead, from whence he did also in a parable receive him. I cannot do better than quote Theodoret's note in Wordsworth on this remarkable scripture : "The sense is, Abraham not only received back his son, whom in *will* he had already offered (v. 17), but as an additional reward for his faith he received him back also in and with a parable or likeness of some great recovery, none other than the resurrection of the Son of Abraham, even Christ, in whom all Abraham's seed are blessed—typified by this restoration of Isaac from the dead. Then in faith Abraham had prophesied and said : 'God will provide Himself the Lamb, for the burnt offering,' (Gen. 22. 8). Then in faith he called the name of the place Jehovah Jireh (v. 14). Then in faith he saw the day of Christ and was glad (John 8. 56). Thus he received more than Isaac from the dead : he saw in him a parable, a figurative vision, of Christ given up to death and raised again from the dead." All this was done to presignify that the only Son of God was really and

actually to die and to be raised again to life, and thus the resurrection of Christ was foreshown in a parable. The sense in which the word "parable" is best shown is by its use in chapter 9. 9, where the tabernacle is called a parable. Isaac was born out of death (Rom. 4. 19), and he was raised again to life out of a second death, figuratively speaking.

Verse 20. By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning *things to come*. It was Isaac's purpose to bestow the right of primogeniture, *i.e.*, the patriarchal or spiritual blessing on Esau, but God overruled and gave it to Jacob; both were blessed, but the younger obtained the precedence, the birthright blessing, and became heir of the promise (compare Mal. 1. 2-3; Rom. 9. 13; with chap. 12. 16). Isaac recovered himself later. (Compare Gen. 27. 33 with chap. 28. 3-4). He becomes assured of the divine guidance. The blessing was mainly concerning things to come (see Obadiah 17-19).

Verse 21. "By faith Jacob when he was a dying blessed each of the sons of Joseph (Gen. 48. 16-20), and worshipped leaning upon the top of his staff" (Heb. 11. 21). What a good end to a very eventful life! it will be seen that Paul refers to two incidents toward the close of Jacob's life in this one verse, and he reverses the order of the Genesis account. The immediate occasion of the worship was when Joseph on oath promised to carry him up out of Egypt, which charge he again enjoined on his twelve sons (chap. 49. 28-32), and which accordingly was done (chap. 50. 7-13). The blessing of the sons of Joseph followed. Dear old Jacob, after all his trying and chequered life, dies worshipping God and blessing his sons, even

concerning things to come—an end which we might well covet; and is it not rather remarkable that it is the latter end of the lives of these patriarchal servants of God that the Apostle dwells on? and see how eagerly anxious Paul was that he should have a good ending too, when he says to the Ephesian Elders: “I hold not my life of any account, as dear unto myself, so that I may accomplish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God”; and some few years after, he writes to Timothy, his beloved child in the faith, saying: “I am already being offered and the time of my departure is come. 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 of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not only to me, but also to all them that have loved His appearing” (2 Tim. 4. 7, 8). May this become ours also.

Verse 23. By faith Moses when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a goodly child; and they were not afraid of the King's commandment. In Exodus the mother only is spoken of as hiding him; here, both parents are spoken of, showing the united action of both. It would seem that the remarkable beauty of the child, comely to his parents and fair to God (Acts 7. 20), was understood by his parents as a divine indication for his preservation, accordingly it is said they hid him by faith; and so they feared not the order of the King. They saw he was a child of *destiny*, and so their faith rose above the King's order, and they feared him not.

Verse 24. We come now to Moses' own personal faith, for when he was grown up, he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; accounting the reproach of the Christ greater riches, than the pleasures of Egypt, for he looked unto the recompense of the reward. "He refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter"; it is not so said in so many words in the Old Testament, but this is the New Testament method of looking at the deeds of the Old Testament saints. This is Paul's interpretation by the Holy spirit, of Moses' attitude toward his own people, in associating himself with them (see Exod. 2. 11, 12), instead of remaining at Pharaoh's court. By this time he understood that God by His hand was giving them deliverance from Egyptian bondage (see Acts 7. 25), but the time or the way had not yet come. He reckoned the reproach of the Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. The reproach which Moses received by joining the people of the promise, was therefore the reproach of the Christ, reminding one of the words addressed to Saul of Tarsus, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest," *i.e.*, in the persons of the disciples (Acts 9. 2-6). From the New Testament standpoint, Paul regards Christ as being in the midst of His people even then (see also 1 Cor. 10. 4). The spiritual Rock that followed Israel in their journeying through the desert was "*the Christ*," yet at that time, Israel had not even heard of Christ (see also Rom. 15. 3), "The reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen on me." The reproaches that fell to Christ, fell on Him, because He pleased not

Himself but God, because of His zeal for the house and people of God (Psa. 69. 6-9). Now to us any reproach borne for the cause of Christ He regards as His own, and the help that sustains, is in looking forward to the reward.

Verse 27. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the King. In Exodus 2. 14-15 it says, "Moses feared and fled from the face of Pharaoh." In Hebrews 11. 27 we read, "By faith he forsook Egypt *not* fearing the wrath of the king," and in Exodus 12. "He left Egypt for Canaan, taking Israel with him." There can be no doubt the reference in Hebrew 11. is to the exodus, the leaving Egypt may be regarded as from the time the Lord sent Moses to Pharaoh with the message, "Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness" (Exod. chap. 5. 1). Jehovah sent Moses repeatedly to Pharaoh with the same message, and as often Pharaoh refused to let them go, until the overwhelming judgments caused him to fear; accordingly at the last, he not only let them go, but called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said: "Rise up and get you forth from among my people...and go and serve the Lord as ye have said" (Exod. 12. 31), and connected with the leaving Egypt, is the Passover in the next verse, which could not be mentioned sooner, if the view taken as to the commencement of the leaving to the finish be correct, of which there can be little doubt. By the ten successive judgments on Egypt, increasing in severity up to the last, in which Moses saw the hand of God and Pharaoh made to fear—we can easily see how Paul said: "By faith Moses forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king, as seeing

Him who is invisible," by the judgments executed.

Verse 28. By faith he hath kept the Passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest the Destroyer should touch their first-born (neuter, including both man and beast).

Verses 29-31. By faith the walls of Jericho fell after they were compassed about seven days. It is a very significant thing, the whole forty years of the wilderness journeying, are passed over without a single reference in Hebrews 11.; whereas on the contrary, in chapters 3 and 4 it is regarded as a period of constant failure, and in Amos, we are told they worshipped idols (chap. 5. 25-26). By faith, the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days. The obedience of Israel perseveringly for seven full days, when to all outward appearance, it was to no purpose; but therein lay their faith, and the walls fell down. So also with Rahab—her faith saved her (see James 2. 25), and afterwards, as a reward of her faith, she became honourably married into the tribe of Judah: and our Lord's genealogy is traced through Rahab in Matthew 1. 3.

There follows a long list of worthies, whose deeds of faith are recorded. We should have expected to see Deborah's name figuring in the list, after reading her song in Judges 5. but rather instead, timid, hesitating Barak, who in her song finds a secondary place, but it is he whose name appears in Hebrews 11. in the list of worthies. How varied were the trials of these dear souls whose names are given, the mockings, scourgings, bonds and imprisonments, being stoned, sawn asunder, slain with the sword. Some wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented, of whom the world was not

worthy, wandering about in caves and holes of the earth; but they all had witness borne to them through their faith that they pleased God, and yet they received not the promise, God having foreseen or provided some better thing concerning (for) us; that apart from us they should not be perfected, but in chapter 12. 23, we read of their spirits as "perfected" as chapter 10. 14 seems to point to. That the death and resurrection of Christ have changed the estate of the Old Testament saints into a state of more perfect bliss, there is no doubt, so that their perfecting was dependent on the better thing concerning us of verse 39; and yet they with us, still wait for the final stage of that perfection, which He has promised, "Who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of His glory, according to the working, whereby He is able even to subject all things to Himself" (Phil 3. 21; compare Matt. 13. 17). Many prophets and righteous men have desired to see the things which ye see and have not seen them, and to hear the things which ye hear and have not heard them; these are some of the better things we even now enjoy. Also see 1 Peter 1. 11, the sufferings of Christ, and the glories after these, to which the God of all grace has called us (chap. 5. 10). These are some of the future better things.

CHAPTER XII.

CHAPTER 12 IS AN EXHORTATION TO PERSEVERE—AND BY THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST'S ENDURANCE AND TO ENDURE CHASTENING AS GOD'S DEALING FOLLOWED BY A WARNING NOT TO DISOBEY.

CHAPTER 12. Therefore let us also—seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, having put away every encumbrance, and the sin which doth so easily beset us—run with patience the race (the contest) that is set before us, looking (off) unto Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith. The opening words pick up the thread of the exhortation at the close of chapter 11, with fresh encouragement to run with patient endurance the race set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author or Prince-Leader (same word as in chapter 2. 10—the Captain of our salvation) and Perfecter of our faith, Who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the Throne of God. The chief thought is “the running the race,” and to this end, the exhortation is to put off every encumbrance, and run with patient endurance the race set before us, having our eye fixed on Jesus, steadily and constantly. As those who preceded us reached the goal, each one for himself by faith and patience, so must we—and this seems to be the idea of the cloud of witnesses, who, in their day and generation obtained witness that they had pleased God, and are held up before us as examples

to follow—but by far and away most of all is JESUS, Who is set before us : He is placed at the *head* of all the *worthies* as the Author and Perfecter of our faith, and is now set down at the right hand of the Throne of God. The prize is more by far than the struggle, even as our Lord Jesus, for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, for the joy of taking His seat at the right hand of God in His glorified humanity, He endured the cross, despised the shame, and sat down at God's right hand. The peculiar joy, here, seems to be, having done the will of God perfectly, having completed the work the Father gave Him to do ; and then the outcome of it all, is His having His blood-bought people with Himself (see John 17. 4-22, also Matt. 25. 34, and compare Luke 10. 21-22).

Verse 3. For—grounding his reason for the following exhortation on the foregoing—consider attentively Him that hath endured such contradiction (7. 7—same word) of sinners against themselves, that ye wax not weary fainting in your souls. Christ was a mark for incessant contradiction, a sign which was spoken against ; such opposition as showed itself in the infliction of the most cruel shame and death with which yours is not to be compared, and the sinners who contradicted Him will reap it all again ; they did it—against themselves (compare Num. 16. 38). Consider Him, that ye wax not weary fainting in your souls. The final stage of the failure comes from continuous weakening : some are unable to sustain the long stress of the conflict, and are yielding—ye have suffered the loss of goods, been made a gazing stock, both by reproaches and afflictions (chap. 10. 33), but

ye have not shed your blood striving against sin. Yea, moreover, ye have completely forgotten *the exhortation*, which discourseth with you as with sons, the utterance of Scripture is treated as the voice of God conversing with men, but the personification in Galatians 3. 8, Scripture foreseeing is even bolder. Thus affliction, from whatsoever cause, is to be regarded as God discoursing with us, and ours is to learn (see Job 5. 17, ff, also Prov. 3. 11). Varied may be the lessons God is teaching us, but increasing submission, and practical holiness, are the ends in view here (vv. 9 and 10); and the ultimate end is that we should be crowned with a great recompense of reward (compare chap. 6. 12-18, and 10. 35-39); hence the increasing benefit of patient endurance both for now and hereafter—on this rests the promise “we shall live,” proportionate life, to the degree of submission, life more abundantly (John 10. 10). But for the time being, all chastening seems to be not joyous, but grievous, and often very distressing; but when it is all over and peace restored to the soul, it yields peaceable fruit, even the fruit of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby—this was the object in view in the chastisement.

Verse 12. Wherefore lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees; and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but rather be healed. The halting of the Hebrews, between the going back to Judaism, and continuing in the right ways of the Lord, was the cause of their feebleness; just like many christians in our day, who, instead of going on in a straight course, walking in the ordinances and truth of God,

hesitate and halt, going hither and thither. Even leaders and teachers are found here and there among missions and kindred places, and by their example, as well as their sickly teachings, stumble many who might be found walking in truth (3 John 4.), which gives joy to all who walk therein. The words of verse 12 are clearly a reference to Isaiah 35. 3, "Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees," addressed to the returning remnant of Israel, after the great tribulation of chapter 34 is over. There were fearful hearts, blind eyes, deaf ears, lame and dumb, all healed and all breaking forth in joyful praise for their salvation; so would the Apostle exhort the guides to watch for those who had halted by the way, and more especially in view of the following exhortations (vv. 14-17).

The first exhortation is, follow after peace with all, and the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord. The first exhortation after the recovery of the enfeebled, and their being set straight in the way, is now addressed to all. *Follow* after peace with all men, and that sanctification which is absolutely necessary, which is none other than a clean separation from all the Judaizing and worldly influences, which lead away from Christ. It is not only a recovery of the enfeebled members, but a *following after* in the ways of the Lord; a complete sanctification or separation from all these injurious and hurtful teachings that would lead them back into Judaizing religious bondage from the Lord Jesus, to whom we were led by the sanctification of the Spirit (2 Thess. 2. 13; 1 Pet. 1. 2), and apart from which it is said no man shall see the Lord (v. 14).

Verse 15. The second exhortation would seem to be addressed chiefly to the guides—looking diligently (overseeing) *lest* any man should be falling back from the grace of God, clearly into Jewish rites and ceremonies; but full of force in its application to-day, to any falling off from the living God into his old sins. "*Lest* any root of bitterness, springing up, trouble you and thereby the many be defiled." The image is taken from Deuteronomy 29. 18. The context there refers to going after strange gods. So long as the poisonous herb is under the ground, it is unseen, but when it springs up, it must be dealt with energetically, as, for example—Simon Magus, in Acts 8. It is the sudden manifestation of some hitherto hidden error, or evil doctrine, which is now brought to light, and which threatens to carry away the many. A notable instance of this occurred within my own experience, when practically all, with very few exceptions, were clean carried away with *the man*; but happily, with indomitable firmness a stand was made which, under God, became the salvation of the situation, and most of those who were carried away, were afterward recovered, and the testimony of well over 100 assemblies was preserved, so that very little division was made; and we believe the day of reckoning that is coming will fully adjust all things, and the troublers receive their full reward: but meantime the testimony has been preserved, and God's blessing afterward has rested with those who stood by the truth in the breach (see Psa. 106. 23; Ezk. 13. 5; 22. 30). Moses in Israel, standing in the breach, answers to the looking diligently of Hebrews 12. 15. A further warning is given in:—

Verse 16. "Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person as Esau." Fornication and idolatry are closely connected in the New Testament (see 1 Cor. 6. 9; Rev. 21. 8; 22. 15), and Esau's sin is classed with fornication. By birth he occupied a privileged position, which he recklessly sacrificed—for one meal, he sacrificed his birthright (Gen. 25. 29-34). His profaneness consisted in bartering it away for one meal—he despised his birthright (chap. 12. 16). At this time he had no remorse for his action; it was not till afterward, when he found that the forfeiture of it involved temporal loss, that he grieved, and when he heard that the blessing had conveyed to Jacob, dominion over him, together with the loss of superabundance of wealth in corn and wine; then he lifted up his voice and wept. He regretted what he had done, and sought to undo it; but he had done it, and could not now undo it, for he found no place, and no way to change it, though he sought the blessing carefully with tears. There was no door of repentance, however much he wished it, and however many tears he might shed—it was now too late.

'Too late, too late,' shall be the cry,
Jesus of Nazareth has passed by,

will be the wail of multitudes throughout eternity, who, like Esau, neglected their opportunity to obtain God's salvation, when His Spirit strove with them, to lead them to Christ. The reckoning day will come to all, as it surely came to Esau, but the repentance is not, nor will it ever be, that of contrition for sin, but for its penalty, when they see that they are hopelessly lost for ever. And when Esau saw that the

blessing was irretrievably lost, he purposed to murder Jacob, and then it would become his; but God overruled: Jacob obtained the blessing, and Esau went on his way to the end, and afterward it is said: "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated" (Mal. 1. 2, 3; Rom. 9. 13). The matter rightly understood, was a solemn warning to the Hebrews, as showing the great danger of their going back to Judaism, which, when it is too late, they may vainly attempt to recover from; and no less is the force of the warning to-day, lest by resting content with a form of godliness men fail to enter the Kingdom of God by the Second Birth, hence the force of the words of our Lord, "Strive to enter into the Kingdom by the strait gate, for many will seek to enter in and shall not be able" (Luke 13. 24). Consider the three "lests" of verses 15 and 16 following the exhortation "looking carefully."

1. Lest any man falls short of the grace of God.
2. Lest any root of bitterness, springing up, trouble you.
3. Lest there be any fornicator or profane person as Esau, who sold his birthright,
for ye know he was rejected, when he sought the blessing even with tears.

Verse 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, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words," etc. The "for" supplies the connecting link with the foregoing, and the connection seems to be, that following on Esau's rejection from the blessing, for his selling his birthright, comes Israel's refusal to hear the word of the

Lord: they intreated that no word more be spoken to them by the Lord, but only through Moses (compare 2 Cor. 3. 7-13), for they could not endure it, hence the exceedingly solemn warning to them, not to refuse Him that speaketh (v. 25); for if they escaped not, when they refused Him that warned them on earth, with such a fearful warning as the burning fire, the blackness and darkness, and tempest and trumpet sound, and voice of words, and so fearful was the sight, that Moses said, "I exceedingly fear and quake," how much less shall they escape, who turn away from Him that speaketh from the heaven, whose voice then shook the earth; but the next time it will not be the shaking of the earth merely, but heaven also, which signifieth the utter removal of those things that are shaken (see Haggai 2. 6, 21, 22). How dreadful will be the judgment of those who refuse to hear Him, and how shall they escape who neglect so great salvation? (chap. 2. 3). The fearfulness of the Sinai appearance, with its blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and voice of words to disobedient Israel, is a small foreshadowing of the more fearful judgment yet to come, on those who receive not the love of the truth, but reject Him Who now speaks from Heaven, saying, "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest." But there again, think of the woes pronounced on those cities which rejected Him (Matt. 11.) Moreover, if it was only an appearance of the majesty and glory of Jehovah which caused the people such fear and consternation, what will it be when He comes in person, and consumes His enemies with the brightness of His appearing? (2 Thess. 2. 8). Here it is written that Moses said, "I exceedingly fear and quake," these

words are added by the Apostle, for no such saying is to be found in the narrative in Exodus, but in Deuteronomy 9. 19, he does say, "I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure, wherewith the Lord was wroth," but this stands connected with the golden calf idolatry. If this is what Paul refers to in Hebrews 12. then the whole scene from Sinai and onward is viewed as one (v. 22). But now while *we* have not come to the earthly Mount Sinai, with its awful thunderings and lightnings, yet we *have come* unto the Mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem which is above, which is free, which is the mother of us all, regarded as our "mother" to adapt itself to the quotation from Isaiah 54. in the next verse : For it is written, rejoice thou barren that bearest not, break forth and cry, thou that travaileth not, for more are the children of the desolate than of her that hath an husband. What is this but the Gospel message of God's grace, bringing forth unto eternal life the countless multitude of God's redeemed.

Verse 22. There are eight things altogether to which we *have* come, and seven of them have a qualifying expression added :

Ye have come to Mount Zion
 And unto the city of the Living God
 The heavenly Jerusalem,
 And to innumerable hosts of angels
 A full festal assembly,
 And to the Church of first-born ones
 Enrolled in heaven,
 And to God
 The Judge of all,
 And to the spirits of just men

Made perfect,
And to Jesus
The Mediator of the New Covenant,
And to the blood of sprinkling
That speaketh better than that of Abel.

Over against the material and burning mountain of Sinai, is set forth the heavenly spiritual mountain of God which represents the stability and firmness of the new economy to which we have come. The firm foundation of God standeth, no matter what forces are arrayed against it, having for its seal "the Lord knoweth them that are his" (2 Tim. 2. 19). The seal of the foundation is God's knowledge of His people (Comp. Gal. 4. 9); "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." (John 10. 14 and 27). What confidence this gives to the heart of the believer! "To remove mountains," is a proverbial phrase, used to accomplish most difficult, stupendous and incredible things (1 Cor. 13. 2; Matt. 17. 20). Thus He has brought us

To the city of the Living God
The heavenly Jerusalem.

In the New Testament "City" is used of a city itself (Matt. 2. 1); or its inhabitants (Matt. 2. 3; 3. 5)—the contained within the container, sometimes both (Isa. 25. 2. 3); sometimes it is used metaphorically: we have a strong city (set in contrast to the city just referred to, Isa. 25. 2, 3), salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks; open ye the gates that the righteous nation which keepeth truth may enter in; obviously, this is a spiritual city having salvation for its walls and fortresses, and represented as having gates. "I am the door (gate), by me if any man

enter in, he shall go in and out and find pasture" (John 10. 9), and the righteous nation that keepeth truth enters into it and is kept in perfect peace from every hostile influence, with Jehovah Himself as its everlasting strength (Isa. 26. 1-4). This is the peaceful polity of the city and is that to which we have come. "He is our peace" (Eph. 2. 14). This is the city for which Abraham looked (Heb. 11. 10), and for which we also look (chap. 13. 14); and possibly also that which John saw in the Apocalyptic vision (Rev. 20. 2-10), and it is here named the heavenly Jerusalem where God dwells—the living God. And it is so intimately associated with the Mount Zion, that it may be regarded as the Mountain city (see Rev. 21. 1-10); and this is none other than the Bride the Lamb's wife, the heavenly Jerusalem; and the nations shall walk amidst the light thereof, for the glory of God did lighten it and the Lamb is the light thereof (Chap. 21. 23).

And to the myriads of angels

A full festal assembly.

Angels are now sent forth as ministering spirits, to minister, or do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation. Angels have charge of every child of God. "Their angels (speaking of the little children) do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 18. 10). Thus we see that every child of God has at least two angels, but may have many more, ministering unto him; they are in every assembly of Christians (1 Cor. 11. 10), witnessing the order, and *through us* having access into the immediate presence of God, past where the greatest archangel ever ventured, they learn thereby the wisdom of God

(Eph. 3. 9-12). Seeing this is so, how we ought to have our behaviour! Now in the passage before us, we see their work finished, and all the children of God to whom they ministered gathered home; and they, so to speak, have delivered up their charge—they also are gathered in full festal assembly. Just as there was joy over sinners being saved amongst the angels in heaven, what will the joy be then when all is over, and all congregated together? What rapturous heights of heavenly delight will fill their ranks. This is another of those things to which we are regarded as having come. This is the only occurrence of the word in the New Testament: consider the great contrast between the ministry of angels at Sinai, where the law was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator; and their ministry to the saints all down the present age.

And to the church of the first-born (lit. "first-born ones")

Enrolled in heaven.

The church is here regarded as complete, and to it, as such, we are said to have come, not to say that each individual believer forms an integral part of it, and yet such are said to have come to it, and every member of it is enrolled in heaven. They are the church of first-born ones, because of the oneness between them and Christ Who is *the First-born* from the dead; and as such He inherits the birthright blessing, as the appointed Heir of all things (chap. 1. 2), and that He might be the First-born among many brethren, He (God) predestinated us to be conformed to the image of His Son (Rom. 8. 29)—and enrolled in heaven, which is a cause for perpetual joy (Luke 10.

20), and assures us that we can never be rejected, as was Esau.

And to God

The judge of all.

It will be observed that the things to which we have come are narrated in an ascending scale until we get to God Himself, and here He is set forth as "the Judge of all"; and in its application how dreadfully searching as applied to those who were relinquishing their hope in Christ alone for salvation, and going back to Judaism; and as later on, Paul addresses true believers at verse 28, let us have grace whereby we may offer service well-pleasing to God with reverence and *awe*, for our God is a consuming fire. If He is a consuming fire to His people "our God," what will He be to apostates going back to the Judaizing ritual of the Temple which was about to be destroyed?

And to the spirits of just men

Made perfect.

Apparently the spirits of the Old Testament saints were perfected after the resurrection, Jesus the Lord being the first to come forth from Paradise to which He descended (Luke 23. 43; Eph. 4. 9-10). And in Paradise apparently they bore some corporeal form, which as seen in the case of Abraham and Lazarus, they had, as in Luke 16. And this previous to resurrection but now that resurrection has taken place their *spirits* may be regarded as "perfected"; and of course, all the saints who have gone to be with Christ passing into the presence of God are perfected as to their spirits, and all together are waiting the final stage of the glorious perfection awaiting all the redeemed on *the* resurrection morning when the Lord comes

again (Phil 3. 21), when the bodies of the saints will be raised and glorified

And to Jesus

The mediator of a new covenant.

How appropriate and befitting it is now to make mention of Jesus as the mediator of the new covenant, after speaking of God, the Judge of all into Whose hands it is a fearful thing to fall (chap. 10. 31)—if any accepted the warning thus held out, to find in Jesus a full propitiation for all his sins, and to Whom, if he turn with all his heart, God is gracious and merciful, and will accept him in the mediatorial work of the Son. Contrast His mediatorship with that of Moses in the giving of the law—the one proclaiming judgment and death; the other giving Himself a ransom for all.

And to the blood of sprinkling

That speaketh better than that of Abel.

The contrast is between the two sacrifices—Christ's sacrifice, and that of Abel—which is in keeping with the whole Epistle to show the superiority of the sacrifice of Christ over all other sacrifices of which Abel's was the first. At once we are reminded of the blood, the blood that cleanseth from all sin. How rich in grace and mercy, after reminding us of God as Judge into Whose hands it is so fearful a thing to fall, in face of the tendency to apostatise and forsake Him, and return again to the Jewish ritual,—I say what grace and mercy to remind us of Jesus and His blood, so ready to pardon and forgive when we return to Him.

Thus now, we have seen the eight different things to which we have come. What hope is held out, what encouragement to cleave to God. Keeping in mind

the different things, joys and pleasures, that are before us on the one hand; and what fearful judgment awaits those who turn their back on Him and return again to the weak and beggarly elements of a system which stood only in meats and drinks and divers washings that could never take away sin (chap. 9. 10), one can now very easily see the force of the exhortation in the next verse: See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh, for if they escaped not who refused Him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape if we turn away from Him that speaketh from heaven, Whose voice then shook the earth, but now He hath promised saying "yet once more," I shake not the earth only, but also heaven; and this word "speaketh" in an oracular utterance to which all had to take heed (Hag. 2. 6). The Apostle gives us the interpretation of the "yet once more" as the removal of the things that were shaken as of things that were made. See 2 Pet. 3. in this connection, that the things which are not shaken may remain; the things shaken are the material earth, but the unshaken things which we are to receive are the coming Kingdom which can never be moved. Thy kingdom come. Come quickly Lord Jesus.

This being so, let us have grace or thankfulness whereby we may serve God well-pleasingly with reverence and awe; for our God is a consuming fire (v. 28). The saints will still have the honour of serving Him in the coming Kingdom—"do Him service" as in R.V. See Rev. 7. 15; 22. 3; and doubtless, the service there will be in proportion to the degree and acceptability of our service down here. Lord, stir the hearts of Thy people that we may serve Thee better!

CHAPTER XIII.

CHAPTER 13 IS THE CONCLUSION OF ALL AND GIVES CERTAIN PRACTICAL EXHORTATIONS ABOUT HOSPITALITY AND MANNER OF LIFE, FOLLOWED BY INSTRUCTIONS AS TO THE POSITION OF GUIDES AND THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE YOUNGER BRETHREN.

CHAPTER 13. We come now to practical exhortations enjoined, following on the doctrinal part of the Epistle, chiefly to the imitation of the faith of their guides who had departed to be with the Lord (v. 7), and to steadfastness in the faith following Jesus in His sufferings Who left us an example that we should follow His footsteps.

Verse 1. The first of the exhortations is to let brotherly love continue, a most important exhortation for present-day usage. So many alienations among Christians creep in, which are to be avoided, and if or when they do occur to adjust them as quickly as possible, so that love of the brethren may continue. The Hebrew believers had exercised it beforetime, chapter 10. 32 and following verses, and from chapter 6. 10 we know they were still continuing it. Similar exhortations are found in other Epistles (see Rom. 12. 10; 1 Thess. 4. 9; 1 Pet. 1. 22 and 2 Pet. 1. 7) the only places where the same word occurs, "and forget not to show hospitality," this is an evidence

of brotherly love (Compare 1 Peter 4. 8), where above all things Christians are exhorted to have fervent love among themselves for love shall cover a multitude of sins, using hospitality one to another, and as every man hath received a gift even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any speak let him speak as the oracles of God; if any minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth, that God in all things may be glorified. Our numerous conferences and fellowship meetings among believers on an extended scale, and the ministry of the Word, have often been profitable to the Lord's people, but let those who do it, do it as of the ability which God gives and not simply as giving out mere heady, intellectual addresses, but speaking as lively oracles from God; and this is to be done in both spiritual and temporal matters, not charging for every meal, where there is ample means to entertain the saints freely.

Verse 3. Remember those who are in bonds as bound with them, and those being evil entreated as being also yourselves in the body. It is a matter for great thankfulness that not many are to-day imprisoned for their testimony, neither is there much affliction in any way in most places, but the time will come again when there will be greater tribulation than has ever been; therefore let us embrace the opportunity now while we have it, of doing service to the Lord to the full.

Verse 5. "Be ye free from the love of money, content with such things as ye have, for He hath said, I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in anywise forsake thee, so that with good courage we

say, The Lord is my helper I will not fear: What shall man do unto me?" God had promised not to forsake them or leave them. (See Deut. 31. 6; Josh. 1. 5; 1 Chron. 28. 20). So that Paul bases his exhortation on the promise of the Divine Presence with them—therefore, keep yourselves free from the love of money, God's presence is everything. The promise made is not contained in so many words in the Old Testament, but the reference seems to be to the definite promise to Moses repeated and confirmed to Joshua; and putting all together, Paul presents it in a very emphatic manner, "I will by no means (double negative) leave thee, nor by any means (double negative again) forsake thee": and on the strength of this promise he urges freedom from money-loving and contentment with present things possessed. So many of the Lord's people seem to be so engrossed in business and money-making, seeking their own things and not the things which are Jesus Christ's, and are would-be rulers in God's assemblies. So it was in Paul's time (Phil. 2. 21), and so it is still: whereas our Lord says, seek first the Kingdom and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you. And with His presence we may boldly say "The Lord is my helper, I will not fear: What shall man do unto me?" drawn from Psalm 118. 6, where all nations had gathered against David, and being in great distress, he was brought nigh unto death; but the Lord helped him and raised him up again on high over all his enemies, and now he boldly says "What can man do unto me?" And so Paul applies it to the Hebrews in their trouble and so encourages them in their trial.

Verse 7. "Remember them that had the rule over

you, which spake unto you the Word of God; and considering the issue of their life, imitate their faith." Paul foresees the danger of their being turned aside from the path by the strange teachings referred to in v. 9, and their safety lay in following in the footsteps of their leaders who are now no longer with them, but who have gone to be with the Lord. Compare the reference in 2 Peter 1. 12-16 given under similar circumstances, and to enforce the exhortation he says "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day and for ever," therefore follow in the footsteps of your former guides; and immediately he gives the command, Be not carried *aside* by divers and strange teachings about meats and drinks, not even a little way, but continue following the example left them by their former leaders who spake unto them the word of God. In so doing they would be preserved from these strange teachings about meats and drinks. How appropriate and needful such exhortations would be to-day, when so many strange teachings are afloat, and so many, even true Christians, are caught in their snares. One thing only can save us, *i.e.*, cleaving to God and the word of His grace (Acts 20. 32). For it is good that the heart be established by grace and not by meats wherein they that occupied themselves were not profited. These and such like were the things that occupied the attention of these early disciples, but it is different now, though none the less dangerous are the present-day doctrines: we hear of being baptized with the Spirit, the Second blessing, and a light superficial gospel is preached accompanied by many professions of conversion with much excitement, and in a little while, when the meetings are

past, and the excitement over these converts disappear. Much of such work is of Satan as an angel of light, and it is disastrous to those who have been thus deceived. Then we hear of the Gift of Tongues, and other accompaniments which you will do well to keep clear from. And Paul follows up these exhortations showing the provision God has made for His people : "We have *an altar* whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle." Although it was the Temple services and ritual of that day the Hebrews were going back to, the reference is always to the Tabernacle in the wilderness and its services as given by Moses, that Paul refers to as the background ; and apparently those Jewish believers who were going back to the sacrifices and Jewish altars were reflecting that we have no altar to go to with our sacrifices, and thus were deprived of the consolation of the Priestly and Temple services with their gorgeous display of their imposing ritual, which were so near to complete destruction, for the Lord had said, one stone should not be left on another in this great building, Herod's Temple, which was so soon after completely destroyed by the Romans. And in answer to these Jewish arguments the Apostle, shall we say, peremptorily replies : "*Yes, we have an altar, and an altar too, which they have no right to eat from who serve the Tabernacle.*" Christ is the substance, the fulfilment, of these things which were mere foreshadowings, and he proceeds to show that even when the Tabernacle was in full swing the priests had permission to eat of the smaller sin offerings only (Lev. 6. 26 and 29), such as were offered for the ordinary Israelites (chap. 4. 27), but the larger sin offerings

offered for the priest that sinned (chap. 4. 3), and for the whole congregation (v. 13), whose blood was brought inside for sin (vv. 6 and 17), their bodies were burned without the camp (vv. 12 and 21, also see Lev. 6. 30). And these offerings for sin that were burned without the camp correspond to the offering of Christ, Who went forth without the camp when He offered Himself for sin (Heb. 13. 13); so that those would-be Temple-worshipping Jewish Christians could have had no share in the major sin offerings to which the offering of Christ corresponds, because those offerings whose blood had been brought inside, their bodies were all burned outside the camp; and Jesus, that He might fulfil the type to the utmost suffered without the gate, and He entered in through His own blood right into the immediate presence of God, and His blood is afterward called the blood of sprinkling under which believers are brought (1 Pet. 1. 2). Accordingly, we want no Jewish altar, because we have *an altar, "the person and work of Christ,"* whereof they have no right to eat who serve the Tabernacle. Thus Jerusalem, its Temple and altars, and the whole ritual attached to them, are regarded as "*the camp*" outside which He went to suffer (Heb. 13. 12), a foreshadowing of which we have in Israel when they bowed down to and worshipped the golden calf, and when Moses went to seek the Lord, he took the tent and pitched it without the camp and called it the "Tent of meeting"; and it came to pass that every one who sought the Lord went out from the camp unto the tent of meeting, which was pitched without the camp (Exod. 33. 7). Therefore, says the Apostle, let us go forth without the camp *unto Him*, outside

the camp, bearing His reproach. The idolatrous camp of Moses' time, the Judaism of our Lord's time with its various sects—Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, Stoics, etc.—stand in the same relationship to the original pattern given by God to Moses, that the various sects of so-called Christianity of our day with their votaries, etc., do to the pattern given to the Apostle Paul for the Church of God in the New Testament until He comes again. Therefore obedient believers come out from them, and gather together after the pattern of the New Testament Churches and so worship God (See Matt. 28. 18-20). He commanded the eleven to go and make disciples of all nations, baptise them and teach them to observe all things whatsoever He commanded, and His promise is, "Lo, I *am* with you alway, even unto the end of the age." So far for the commission to the eleven as to the making of disciples, and what follows then as to the observance of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper? So far from being inapplicable now as say some. It is commanded us to keep the ordinance till He come (1 Cor. 11. 26). There are and have been those who tell us that the commission in the end of Matthew is not for to-day, to which it may be replied : It is a singular thing the Lord says to the eleven "go make disciples, baptise and teach them to observe all I commanded," and yet did not mean it for them at all, but for others in a day yet future. On that principle of interpretation every one would require to single out the Scriptures he is to observe and keep, each one for himself. May it not rather be, as in most prophetic scriptures, there is a primary and a secondary

fulfilment; that in the present day the work of the Lord is to pick out a people by selection for the Church (Acts 15. 14); and later on, make application of the commission to the nations at large, when a nation shall be born in a day (Isa. 66. 8).

Verse 14. Then follows at verse 14 the reason why we are to go outside the camp unto Him, bearing His reproach—"For here we have no continuing city, but we seek after one to come." We have no resting place, no home here, but we certainly look for that which is to come.

Verse 15. By Him therefore let us offer up the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is the fruit of lips which make confession to His *Name*—that is confession of thanksgiving, same word as in Matt. 10. 32; Rev. 3. 5. Those who confess Him before men, He will also confess them before His Father in heaven, and with a prepositional prefix added, same as in Matt. 11. 25 where Jesus says, "I thank Thee *O Father*, Lord of Heaven and Earth, etc.," and Phil. 2. 11 when every tongue in heaven and earth, and under the earth shall in one united grand acclaim confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. What a day that will be! What a confession! from heaven, earth, and under the earth every one shall bow the knee, and every tongue confess Him as Lord. O, let those blood-thirsty priests who crucified Him, let all who took part in the condemnation of our blessed Lord hear the echo of that wondrous acclamation from all redeemed humanity, and all the angelic hosts crying with one mighty celestial acclamation—Jesus Christ is Lord.

Verse 16. But while thus even now offering praise

with the heart and voice, let us not forget the exhortation, "to do good and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." Communicating is giving of our earthly things, distributing to the necessity of saints, doing good to all, but especially to the household of faith. In Gal. 6. 6 Paul tells us the man deceives himself who gets help in spiritual things, if he fails to minister to the ministering brother in his carnal things. Let him that is being taught in the Word communicate to him that teacheth in all good things; otherwise, he is deceiving himself and mocking God, an exceedingly solemn warning to which many would do well to take heed. These things are spoken of as sacrifices with which God is well pleased, and which will meet with their reward in a coming day.

Verse 17. We come now to the closing verses of this magnificent Epistle, and here Paul resumes the exhortation given at v. 7 which we have noticed. Here he goes farther and says, *obey* them that have the rule over you, your guides, and submit to them, for they watch for your souls as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy and not with grief; for that were unprofitable for you. There will evidently be mutual relationships in the day of judgment: here we have the guides and followers in close relationship with each other, with grief or joy as the case may be. Let none think there will not be grief and shame at the Judgment Day; here the leaders will have grief and joy, but the loss is not to them, but for those who were disobedient to the Truth as set forth by their leaders. And no godly leader would ever think of asking obedience to themselves; but as

they exhorted and sought to lead the saints in the way of truth in obedience to God, it is accredited to them, and we are exhorted to obey them—that is, of course, the truth they spoke. See again v. 7, who spake unto you the word of God, and finally at v. 24, the command is still a further honour to all such as guide the saints in God's way; and I certainly would not like to influence them in any way but The Way: and now after fifty years in this service I think I can say I have sought to lead on God's people in the path of obedience to God as revealed in His Word, and I can surely say in the language of the Apostle in the next verse:

Verse 18. "Pray for us, for we trust we have a good conscience, desiring to live honestly and uprightly, holding a straight course in the word of truth (2 Tim. 2. 15). The man who does this may expect to be evil spoken of by the carnal and unspiritual people amongst whom we mingle, and hard knocks he will receive and many a disappointment, but he may well remind himself "ye serve the Lord Christ" (Col. 3. 24); and it is from Him we all shall receive our rewards. And the Apostle would remind those refractory brethren that he will get back the wrong he has done, and to those who serve in godly sincerity, from the Lord they shall receive the reward of the inheritance (Col. 3. 22-25).

Verse 20. What a delightful close to such an epistle, and written by one who is in bonds for the Truth of the Gospel, and who longs to be at liberty to go back again and see those to whom he writes: none can enter into this but those who have been in the circumstances, and what deep heart longings there

are at times to see and greet fellow-saints from whom there has been a separation for a time, but particularly an enforced separation; and then what heart delights and pleasures when we meet again. Such affords only a slight appreciation, but it does afford an appreciation of what will be the delights and pleasures that will fill every heart on that coming resurrection morn when saints will meet fellow saints, and, so to speak, clap hands and shout with exclamations of delight "at last we have seen Him whom our souls love and delight in!" What gratification, what raptures, meanwhile :—

Verse 21. "May the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ, to Whom be glory for ever and ever."

Verse 22. Paul appeals to the Hebrew believers to suffer the word of exhortation. He has just reminded them that he has a good conscience (v. 18). They may have been accusing him *from* the past Jerusalem experience, but he reminds them he did nothing contrary to his conscience, and asks them to suffer the word of exhortation; for, said he, I have written you in few words—one understands the meaning of this expression better after having gone carefully through the Epistle, and at every turn of the way having felt the exceeding fulness of what is written. How much more might have been written, but wishing to be brief, he passes over volumes that might have been said, reminding one of the Apostle

John at the close of his gospel, who said, if all was written of what Jesus did and taught, he supposed the world itself would not contain the books. So with beloved Paul who seems to have been at liberty when writing this letter, otherwise he would scarcely have said, as in verse 23, "I will come shortly unto you." He was only awaiting Timothy's arrival, who also had been at this time liberated from his captivity. It would appear Paul had left Rome at the time of writing while he waited for Timothy coming, as he says, "They from Italy salute you." They had left Italy. Probably these were a few of the brethren who accompanied him on leaving the city of his imprisonment, and Timothy having been liberated he was waiting for him to join him to start Eastward; and it would seem from 1 Tim. 1 that they had visited Ephesus together.