

General Epistles

Hebrews to Jude

with Notes and Explanations
of their meaning and teaching
— by W. G. Broadbent —

INTRODUCTION

The Epistles from Romans to Philemon were all written by Paul, and the first word of each of them is “Paul”. They were written by the apostle to the Gentiles for the Gentile churches which were the special sphere of his service for the Master.

We now come to the Epistles of Scripture which were written initially for the Jewish Christians of the first century. All the remaining epistles from Hebrews to Jude are in this category.

In this section of Scripture we have a number of writers. Here Paul shares the writings with James, Peter, John and Jude. Paul’s name does not appear at all in the Hebrew epistle, but there can be no doubt that he was the writer. The teaching is Pauline and many arguments can be brought to show his authorship. But a sufficient proof is that Peter refers to a letter by Paul to the same people that Peter writes to, and Peter refers to that letter clearly as standing part of Scripture. Now no other writing of Paul in Scripture fills the description of Peter except Hebrews. We judge thus that Hebrews is the Scripture Peter referred to, and that Hebrews was written accordingly by Paul (see 2 Peter 3:15-16).

It is appropriate that Paul should use his name and apostleship in writing to the Gentiles whose apostle he was, but that in writing to the Jewish Christians he should refrain from using either his name or apostleship. Instead he makes very extensive use of Old Testament figures and the teachings with which his Jewish readers were fully acquainted.

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS CHAPTER 1

The first word is "God" and the whole effect of this Epistle is to leave the reader in no doubt that though Paul was the instrument used to write, God is indeed the author, and that the communication is of great importance to God Himself as well as to His people to whom it is sent.

The subject of the first Chapter is Christ. And Christ is the subject of the whole epistle. He is shown to be the Apostle and High Priest of the Christian's profession. The Jews knew many things about the Jehovah God of their fathers. But now Christ is shown to be Himself the fulfilment of all the Old Testament Scripture, and Christ is shown to be the full revealing of God. Thus Christ is all in all to the people of God. He is both **the** Apostle and **the** High Priest of Christian profession. He is Captain of the host and the Kinsman-Redeemer and Sanctifier of His people. **GOD . . . HATH SPOKEN** (v.v. 1, 2)

The whole of Christianity, its faith and profession, is that there is now good news from God. God spoke of old through prophets as is testified by the Scriptures of the Old Testament. But now God has spoken again, and this is the gospel of the New Testament. Christ Himself is the Epistle, or Revealing of God. He is the living Word of God.

He has **now** spoken by His Son. Christ has brought the gospel of the blessed God. It is spoken and brought to men by Christ, God's Son.

Not by men, but by God's Son.

Not by prophets, but by God's Son.

Not by angels, but by God's Son.

WHO IS GOD'S SON ?

Our Chapter reveals and declares that:

He is the appointed heir of all things.

He is the One by whom God made the worlds.

He is the brightness of God's glory. That is, all God's love and delight centres in Him and all the brightness of the universe of God shines forth from God in Him.

He is the express image of God's person. Thus, the invisible God is seen and known and worshipped in and through Him.

He is the upholder by the Word of His power of all things.

He is the One who having by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

He is so much better than the angels (v.v. 4-14).

He is "the" Son (v. 8).

He is God (v. 8).

He is King for ever (v. 8).

He is anointed with the oil of gladness **above** His fellows (v. 9).

HEBREWS

CHAPTER 1

1. God, who at sundry times and in ¹divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,
2. Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;
3. Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;
4. Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.
5. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, ²Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, ³I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?
6. And again, when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.
7. And of the angels he saith, ⁴Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.
8. But unto the Son he saith, ⁵Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.
9. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.
10. And, ⁶Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands:
11. They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall ⁷wax old as doth a garment;
12. And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.
13. But to which of the angels said he at any time, ⁸Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?
14. Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?

¹ many and different.² Psa. 2 : 7.
³ 2 Sam. 7 : 14.⁴ Psa. 104 : 4.
⁵ Psa. 45 : 6 - 7.⁶ Psa. 102 : 25.⁷ become.⁸ Psa. 110 : 1.

BY HIMSELF (v. 3)

God's wondrous Son, **by Himself** purged our sins. None other could have purged our sins. There was none who could assist or help in the work of purging sins. It was He Himself, alone, who did it. And it was by Himself He did it, for He offered up Himself a sacrifice to purge our sins, He was the perfect sacrifice and He was the willing offerer of Himself. He purged our sins by Himself, and having accomplished His death at Jerusalem, now in resurrection life and power and glory He is seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

A SON (v. 5)

Our Lord is **the** Son of God. But He became Man while still retaining deity, and He became the first of a new order of men, who share His resurrection life. It is in this order of life that He shall reign for ever, and in this respect He is a Son. And we who share His life with Him, have a place also as sons of God.

But He must ever have the pre-eminence, for we can be sons only because the Son became also a son. In this regard He is the **first-born** (v. 6) and the heir of all that is God's.

In His coming into the world as man He is referred to as the "only begotten" Son of God. In His resurrection life He is referred to as the "first begotten". The truth to be unfolded in Hebrews follows for those who benefit because the "first begotten" is now at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

HIS SEVENFOLD EXCELLENCE

In verses 5 to 14 are found seven notable quotations from the Old Testament concerning Christ, all of which are given to show His pre-eminence and glory.

The central quotation is from Psalm 45. This is used to show that as God, He has the sceptre and kingdom (v. 8) and that as Man, having demonstrated His love of righteousness and hatred of iniquity, He is preferred above His fellow men. God has anointed Him with the oil of gladness above His fellows. Verses 8 and 9 together give a fine picture of our Lord as Immanuel "God with us".

CHAPTER 2

1. Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.

2. For if the word ¹spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward;

¹ Deut. 32 : 2.

3. How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;

4. God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with ²divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?

² many and different.

5. For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak.

6. But one in a certain place testified, saying, ³What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him?

³ Job 7 : 17
Psa. 8 : 4 - 5.

7. Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands:

8. Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him.

9. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

10. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

11. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,

12. Saying, ⁴I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.

⁴ Psa. 22 : 22.

13. And again, ⁵I will put my trust in him. And again, ⁶Behold I and the children which God hath given me.

⁵ Psa. 18 : 2.
⁶ Isa. 12 : 2.
⁶ Isa. 8 : 18.

14. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;

15. And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

16. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.

17. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

⁷ help.

18. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to ⁷succour them that are tempted.

CHAPTER 2**SO GREAT SALVATION (v. 3)**

Our salvation is “so great” because our Saviour is so great and He has saved by Himself, by the sacrifice of Himself. “So great”, for we are saved by Him from death to life, and from sin and the habit of it, to holiness and sonship, to share with Him His kingdom and gladness.

The “Word spoken by angels” (v. 2) was the law and the commandments which came under Moses. Those who transgressed or disobeyed were punished for every single default. That law was God’s law and we still deal with the same holy God.

How then shall men escape today, who neglect so great salvation! They still have their sin and they have dishonoured God’s Son by rejecting Him and they have spurned the mercy and grace of God!

This reference relates to sinners who refuse or neglect the so great salvation. It has no application to those who have accepted and have been saved through that so great salvation.

WHAT IS MAN? (v. 6)

In verses 6-8 man is compared with the angelic creation, and is shown to have been given a place in creation “a little lower than the angels” (v. 7).

Jesus also “was made a little lower than the angels” (v. 9) for He became Man.

He did not take the nature of angels (v. 16) but He came of the seed of Abraham. He became partaker of man’s flesh and blood, so that He could take the part of man in sacrifice. He thus became a Kinsman-Redeemer. He stooped to this position to rescue those who had become subject to sin and the power of sin and Satan.

But by so doing He was able as Man, to be crowned with glory and honour and has put all things under His feet (v.v. 7-8).

What is Man? In Christ, Man is the inheritor of all things with Him, and Christ is not ashamed to call those He has redeemed “brethren” (v. 11).

He is also able to act as their High Priest with God (v. 17) and He is able to succour them that are tempted (v. 18).

In Christ men have Christ for their captain, for Christ is the Author and Finisher of faith and salvation. Christ rejoices in His redeemed ones. They are His, and He sanctifies as well as saves them.

CHAPTER 3

1. Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;

¹ Num. 12 : 7.

2. Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also ¹Moses was faithful in all his house.

3. For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house.

4. For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is Gcd.

5. And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, ²as a servant, ³for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after;

² Ex. 14 : 31.

³ Deut. 18 : 15.

6. But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.

7. Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, 'To day if ye will hear his voice,

8. Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness:

9. When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years.

⁴ Psa. 95 : 7 - 8.

10. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart; and they have not known my ways.

11. So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.)

12. Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

13. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

14. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end;

15. While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.

16. For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses.

17. But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned ⁵whose carcasses fell in the wilderness?

⁵ Num. 14 : 22, 29.

18. And to whom swore he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?

19. So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

CHAPTERS 3 and 4**HOLY BRETHREN (v. 1)**

Those whom Christ is not ashamed to call brethren, are now referred to as brethren of the writer of Hebrews, and he calls them "holy" brethren, for they have been saved and sanctified, and together with the writer are distinguished by the mark, that they are Christ's. They are all brethren together who are His, and as such they are together "partakers of the heavenly calling". They are **made** holy by the sanctifying work of Christ. They **are** holy because they are part of Christ Himself, who is the Holy One of God. They are holy because that is their very calling and they are partakers together of that holy heavenly calling.

OUR APOSTLE

Within the profession of law, all those similarly qualified and equipped have a fellowship, and thus are formed the Inns of Court, such as Lincoln's Inn in London. Such a house of lawyers is a fellowship as to the profession and experience of the practice of British law.

The fellowship of holy brethren is also a house of brethren who profess the same thing together. There can only be one Architect and Patron, Guide and Master of such a society of holy brethren. We are to consider then the Apostle of our profession Christ Jesus.

The lawyers profess law. The brethren of our profession who have Christ Jesus as our apostle, profess His holiness and faithfulness. Lawyers profess the law of their respective jurisdictions. It is ours to profess the holiness and faithfulness of our apostle, Christ Jesus.

Christ created all things and He made the world. He built it. And He built the house of holiness to which we belong. He built us each into that house, and we have been properly inducted to the profession of our Apostle.

We belong to Christ's Inn and practise together as part of His house. This is our profession; This is our confidence, our rejoicing and our hope "firm unto the end" (v. 6).

Put up the brass plate of your profession before the world, holy brother, as a professor of the holiness and faithfulness of Christ Jesus, our Apostle.

OUR HIGH PRIEST (v. 1)

In our holy profession we have Christ Jesus as our High Priest as well as our Apostle. Here in this world, being mortals, we need the constant help of One infinitely holy to maintain us in holiness suited to His house and service. This becomes the subject of the main part of the Epistle from Chapter 4; 14 onwards.

CHAPTER 4

1. Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.

2. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.

3. For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, ¹As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

¹ *Psa. 95 : 11.*
Ch. 3 : 11.

4. For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day ²on this wise ³And God did rest the seventh day from all his works.

² *thus.*
³ *Gen. 2 : 2.*

5. And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest,

6. Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief:

7. Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, 'To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

⁴ *Psa. 95 : 7*
Ch. 3 : 7.

8. For if ⁵Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.

9. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.

⁵ *Joshua.*

10. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.

11. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

12. For the word of God is ⁶quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

⁶ *living.*

13. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

14. Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.

15. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

16. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

THE REST OF GOD (Ch. 3:7, 4:11)

Chapters 3 and 4 are mainly occupied with our profession as members of Christ's house. The Chapter commences "**Wherefore** holy brethren". Then after the nature of the house is declared, the word goes out again, "**Wherefore** (as the Holy Ghost saith, Today . . . my rest)" (v.v. 7-11).

All who belong to Christ's house have a right to the rest of God, and in eternity in glory they will share the rest of God's perfection. They have the right **now** to enjoy it later. But that rest is not now. This is the time of toil, of building, of work and labour for God.

As God worked six days and then rested, when all of creation was completed, so the work of our Apostle and Builder is going on now, but He and all who serve in His house will later share together the bliss of perfect rest.

That rest involves for Him that He is satisfied and sees of the travail of His soul.

The warning of this section of Scripture is "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily while it is called today" (v.v. 12-13). We are warned against the deceitfulness of sin.

The experience of the children of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai is referred to as a warning and example of the ways in which we may be diverted from the path of holiness and faithfulness in our walk here through the wilderness of this world as we carry on our profession and plod our way towards the journey's end and the rest of God.

Our Apostle will abundantly have satisfaction in the state of ultimate rest as He and all heaven with Him, surveys the work He accomplished and the building He built. There is a sense in which each of those whom He is not ashamed to call brethren, will have a special satisfaction in the rest of God, if they hear Him say to them, of their work and building within the profession of His house, "well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord".

The warnings of these two chapters are against all that would restrain us here, weaken our testimony and spoil our work, "lest . . . any of you should seem to come short of it".

THE WORD OF GOD (Ch. 4:12)

God's Word is able to show us where we are astray, or have "come short". It is able to reveal the wickedness and the deception that is all about us. And not only about us, but in us, for it is "a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart". And it is quick and powerful to do this.

Similarly, our Lord Himself is watching, and He sees everything. He sees all that the Word would show us. All we do and are is in His sight "manifest". It is plain and clear to Him, what our profession and

CHAPTER 5

1. For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins:
2. Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity.
3. And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins.
4. And no man taketh this honour unto himself but he that is called of God, ¹as was Aaron.
5. So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest: but he that said unto him, ²Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee.
6. And he saith also in another place, ³Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.
7. Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared;
8. Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;
9. And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;
10. Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec.
11. Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing.
12. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.
13. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.
14. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

¹ Ex. 28 : 1.

³ Psa. 2 : 7.

³ Psa. 110 : 4.

testimony really is. “All things are naked and opened (laid open) unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do” (v. 13).

Our Apostle is Himself the Word Incarnate, and He was Himself a Man who once walked where we walk, so that He knows all about our problems and experiences from participation in them. He will help as the next chapters will show. We have the Written Word and also the Living Word to search us, and to succour us.

Let us then “Hold fast our profession” (v. 14).

“Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (v. 16).

That is, we must persevere with our profession of holiness and faithfulness in His house.

In doing so, we shall take care to yield to His scrutiny at all times and to the illumination and power of His Word to direct and adjust the course of our profession. But we do so in reliance in Himself, His mercy and grace, knowing that He is ever ready to meet our need. We are to come to His very throne **boldly**, for it is a throne of grace, and He loves to have us come. He is a **great** High Priest, who is our High Priest, who was Himself an earth-dweller like ourselves, but who has “passed into the heavens”. Our great High Priest is Jesus, the Son of God.

CHAPTER 5

THE OFFICE OF HIGH PRIEST

Verse 1 portrays the essentials of the nature of the office and function of a high priest. He is “taken” (v.v. 1 and 4) “from among men”. That is, he must be a man, but a man chosen of God (v. 4). His work is as a chosen man, to come before God on behalf of other men, to offer “both gifts and sacrifices for sins” (v. 1). He so represents men to God in things pertaining to God. He can represent men, because he is a man, and because he has experienced all the infirmities of life that are common to men. That is, he knows how they feel and react because he has had the same experience in mortal life. He can represent God, because God has been pleased to select and appoint or “ordain” him to be a high priest for men in things pertaining to God. The matter that a high priest is concerned with is “sins” for it is the sins of men that require both gifts and sacrifices as a holy God is confronted with men who are sinners, and with their sins.

Now high priests who are themselves sinners, must offer for their own sins as well as for the sins of others. Such was Aaron.

Christ, however, was a priest after the order of Aaron, sin apart. He was man, and was touched with the feeling of our infirmities (the limitations and weaknesses of humanity). He was tried and tested (tempted) as we are, "yet without sin" (Ch. 4:15). That is, He could not be tempted of sin for He was God as well as Man, and His person was holy and pure. He could not sin. But he did learn by experience as a man what it is to be obedient in mortal life, as a man on the earth is required to be obedient to all the requirements of God in heaven, and to answer here on behalf of men in things pertaining to God. It was as a high priest of the Aaronic order on earth divinely appointed that He gave Himself and offered up Himself, becoming also Himself the sacrifice.

THE ORDER OF MELCHISEDEC (v. 6)

Christ was "called" as Aaron was (v. 4). He was called to be a priest of that order, and Aaron was only a weak type of the person and work of Christ the high priest on the earth, attending to things pertaining to God, for men, Himself a Man.

But now, Christ is not only a high priest of the order of Aaron but He is also called thus: "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec" (v. 6). The Aaron order was on earth for a period. The Melchisedec order is "for ever" and it is a heavenly order. It relates the things of heaven to men on the earth.

The Aaron order wears the clothes of sacrifice on earth. The Melchisedec order is that of a King in Heaven, wearing robes of kingly glory, But it is ever a Man who is priest, ever one who knows and feels for men. The King-priest, whose is the Throne of Grace, is the Son of Man and the Son of God.

Wearing the sacrificial garments of the Aaronic priesthood, "He became the author of eternal salvation unto all of them that obey Him".

He shed His own life's blood to save us and to sanctify us; to purge our sins (v. 9) (Ch. 1:3).

Now in kingly robes, in Heaven, throned in grace, Christ has been ordained "called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec" (v. 10).

The meaning and effect of our Lord's present office as High Priest is continued in the next few chapters, particularly Chapter 7. But first we have a parenthetical change.

THE DULL OF HEARING (v. 11)

As mentioned earlier, Peter comments in his epistle, that some of the Scriptures written by Paul were hard to be understood by Jewish Christians. Now here, Paul himself, while writing some of these Scriptures to the Jewish Christians, shows that he also was aware that they would find it hard to understand these truths. And he then shows why they find it hard. It is because the Old Testament Scriptures and the ordinances of the law of the Old Testament held them bound so that they could not see the full effect of the truth of Christ that those Scriptures really contained.

That this is the real implication of verses 11 to 14 where the apostle refers to "milk" and "strong drink", is borne out by the argument of Chapter 6, which flows from this.

These Jewish Christians were getting only a milk, or babyish sustenance out of the Old Testament, whereas Christians in properly developed spiritual living, should be getting the meat and strength of Christ therefrom. "By reason of use", they should "have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (v. 14). They should be learning to rightly divide and discern the Word of God, finding Christ in all the Scriptures, and learning the wonder of such truths as those relating to His priesthood of the order of Melchisedec.

CHAPTER 6

1. Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,

2. Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

3. And this will we do, if God permit.

4. For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost,

5. And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come,

6. If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.

¹ *fit.*

7. For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs ¹meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God:

8. But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is ²nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned.

² *near.*

9. But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.

10. For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

11. And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end:

12. That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

13. For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself,

14. Saying, ³Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee.

³ *Gen. 22 : 16 - 17.
Psa. 105 : 9.*

15. And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.

16. For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife.

17. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise ⁴the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath:

⁴ *see Rom. 11 : 29.*

18. That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:

19. Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil;

20. Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

CHAPTER 6**“IF THEY SHALL FALL AWAY” (v. 6)**

The subject of the Jewish dull of hearing is continued in Chapter 6.

Paul now argues forensically, as a lawyer would in Court, putting up an argument. He says, the true doctrines of Christ lead on to perfection. **Therefore** do not revert to the old doctrines of the law — and he lists six doctrines, which are the doctrines of Judaism and not the essential doctrines of Christianity. There is nothing “Christian” in the six doctrines listed in verse 1 and 2. The emphasis is “**not**” laying again the foundation of these doctrines.

Verse 3 says “This will we do, (go on to perfection) if God permit”. Not the things of Verse 2; not the carnal ordinances of “baptisms”, “laying on of hands” etc., which typify Judaism.

Then follows a section (v.v. 4-8) which is “hard to be understood” by many people today who are on the milk of denominationalism and ritualism.

Paul here is referring to people who have received a good degree of enlightenment as to the truth of Christ, which reveals Him to be the true and only sacrifice for sins. But they do not avail themselves of His sacrifice, They turn again to Judaism or its modern counterparts, to ritualism and ordinances, preferring the shadow to the subsance, the type to the true and real and eternal.

In doing this, such people are making Christ an open shame, To those who did not understand, Christ said at the cross “Father forgive them, for they know not what they do”. But when people have been told, and do understand that Christ died for sins, then if they do not accept Him, but prefer other sacrifices, they are like the Roman Catholics who in the ritual of the mass crucify Christ again and again.

“If they thus fall away”, from the enlightenment they have, having come so close to salvation it is impossible to renew or change such.

The Judaisers of Paul’s day were apostates and were cast off by God. So also, the modern apostates of Romanism and Protestant Ecumenism will ultimately be cast off by God as is shown in Revelation 17 and 18.

But Paul says to the Christian Jews to whom he was writing “But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation” (v. 9).

AN ANCHOR FOR THE SOUL (v. 19)

Those who truly have salvation can never fall away in the sense referred to above, for they are anchored, sure and stedfast.

First they have God’s Word, given under oath, that He will honour His promise of salvation (v.v. 10-18).

Secondly, those who are the heirs of salvation, under the promise and oath of God, have a “forerunner” entered in within the veil where God is. Christ has gone in, and that “for us” (v. 20). And there, “within”, He has been “made” “our high priest for ever after the order

CHAPTER 7

1 For this ¹Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him;

¹ Gen. 14 : 18 - 20.

2. To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace;

3. Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually.

4. Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils,

5. And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham:

6. But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises.

7. And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better.

8. And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth.

9. And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham.

10. For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him.

11. If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?

12. For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.

13. For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar.

14. For it is evident that ²our Lord sprang out of ³Judah; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood.

² Isa. 11 : 1.
³ Matt. 1 : 3.
⁴ Rev. 5 : 5.

15. And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest,

16. Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.

17. For he testifieth, ⁴Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

³ Judah.

18. For there is verily ⁵a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof.

⁴ Psa. 110 : 4.
⁵ Ch. 5 : 6 and Ch. 6 : 20.

19. For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing

⁶ an annulling.
⁶ near.

of Melchisedec”.

Our hope is Christ.
Christ is within.
We are thus anchored to Christ,
Sure and steadfast.

CHAPTER 7

MELCHISEDEC

It has often been remarked, that this passage, being an exposition by Paul of the meaning to us of a passage in the book of Genesis, is a prime example of the use and method of typical teaching.

Paul takes up what the Old Testament Scriptures say regarding Melchisedec and draws a meaning in respect to Christ from almost everything that is said, and also from the Scripture's silence on other points about this wonderful person. Thus the fact that Scripture is silent on the beginning and end of Melchisedec is shown to foreshadow the truth that Christ is of eternity having no beginning of days and that He lives for ever, unto all eternity.

Thus also His name is a foreshadowing of Christ as the Priest-King of Righteousness and of Peace. So also with the references to Abraham and Levi in this Chapter. This is the strong meat that the Word of God contains for those to assimilate who are sufficiently mature in the handling, use or dividing of Scripture.

Melchisedec is shown to be greater than Abraham, and greater still than Levi and the order of Aaronic priesthood of carnal ordinances which sprang from Levi.

The later part of the Chapter (v.v. 11-28) shows that in Christ the whole Aaronic order of priesthood is done away (disannulled) (v. 18) because He suffered once in the offering up of Himself, and accordingly no further sacrifice of this order will ever be required again.

He is still High Priest, but now of the order of Melchisedec. He is not by Levi according to the flesh, but He is of Judah, the kingly seed. He is One, whereas they of Levi were many. He lives for ever, whereas they were limited by mortality.

CHRIST'S WORK IS:

1. To save to the uttermost them that come to God by Him (v. 25).
2. To make intercession for them (v. 25).

He pleads for His people who confess their sins, and His pleading is efficacious to obtain forgiveness of sins and cleansing from all unrighteousness.

He can do this because He is absolutely holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners and made higher than the heavens (v. 26). He made one sacrifice for sins, once and for all, when "He offered up Himself" (v. 27). God has called this King-man to be Priest for ever on behalf of His people. By word and oath the Son has been consecrated and He is "set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens".

in of a better hope did; by the which we draw ⁶nigh unto God.

20. And inasmuch as not without an oath he was made priest:

21. (For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:)

22. By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.

23. And they truly were many priests, because they were not ⁷suffered to continue by reason of death:

24. But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.

25. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

26. For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;

27. Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself.

28. For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.

⁷ permitted.

CHAPTER 8

As a priest of the order of Melchisedec, Christ is "set" at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, which is the throne of grace, which is on high.

He is so set to serve in His high office in the sanctuary which God has made. This is the holy place in the heavens where God dwells eternally. No man had anything to do with this great building of God. It is His heavenly holy house where He resides and rests in eternal blessedness. It is "within" this sanctuary that the throne of Grace is found and it is within and at the right hand there of the Majesty on High, that Christ has taken His place as the King-Priest. And He is **our** High Priest. He serves us thus. He is the forerunner within that sanctuary in the heavens and ultimately we shall all be brought in, who are His, where our Hope is already stedfastly secure.

He is there, having first purged our sins. Accordingly He does not serve there as He did here in earth, purging sins, for by one sacrifice of Himself for ever He purged our sins. He serves on the basis of a finished accomplished work of sacrifice.

He offers instead His Own worth, and the fragrant merit of His eternal sacrifice of Himself. For He is there seen as slain from the

foundation of the world, and yet as “newly slain”.

The God-Man, Priest-King, is Himself, in the value of His Person and Sacrifice ever sufficient to offer. He offers Himself to God, and God gives His grace to us. Thus it is called the throne of Grace; and thus He saves to the uttermost; thus “He makes reconciliation for the sins of the people”; and thus “He is able to succour them that are tempted” (Ch. 2:17-18).

A BETTER COVENANT (v.v. 6-13)

In the first few verses in this Chapter we have Christ’s work and ministry portrayed, and the superlativeness of His office and gifts. In the heavenly sanctuary there is no more sacrifice, but there is instead the effulgence of grace. All God’s choicest gifts are there provisioned and dispensed to men by the appointed One, our great High Priest.

Now in the last section of the Chapter the principles of promise and benefit to God’s people are spelled out in covenant form. Christ’s sacrifice is such that as from the sanctuary itself it is right for God to promise and decree that God shall grant mercy and grace to all who are the beneficiaries of that once for all atonement.

Christ’s sacrifice is final and complete, and there is no limit to the pardon, mercy, grace and love it provides. It is obvious that this is a better covenant than that formerly made with Israel and it accordingly replaces it. In the Millennial age this is the covenant that will operate in the earth as is shown in verses 10 to 12. It does not now operate in Israel or among the nations in this way. But as is shown in the next two Chapters, it does operate now in God’s spiritual Israel, the Church of God. This is the covenant into which all the blood-bought children of God of this age of grace and of the Church have been brought.

Our covenant is only of blessing to us. It assures the gift to us of all the choicest of heaven’s stores, because Christ gave Himself, and God gave His only begotten Son.

The sacrifice **was** Christ’s and His **is** the present ministry of the sanctuary for us. God promises and covenants with us. We who are Christ’s, and God’s, are the recipients, the beneficiaries and the redeemed. We have assured to us by sacrifice and covenant, by word of promise and oath of God, forgiveness of sins, remission of sins, and remembrance of them no more. Further, God’s laws are put into the hearts of His people, and inscribed in their minds and thoughts, pursuant to this covenant (see Ch. 10:16-18).

It is a **new** covenant (v. 13).

It is a **better** covenant (v. 6).

It is a **second** covenant which is complete and entire and it replaces the former covenant which was but figurative and was in itself insufficient to meet the needs of men (v. 7).

CHAPTER 8

1. Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens;
2. A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.
3. For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer.
4. For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law:
5. Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for ¹See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.
6. But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.
7. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.
8. For finding fault with them, he saith, ²Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah:
9. Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.
10. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:
11. And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.
12. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.
13. In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and ³waxeth old is ready to vanish away.

¹ Ex. 25 : 40.² Jer. 31 : 31 - 34.³ groweth.

CHAPTER 9

1. Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a ¹worldly sanctuary.
2. For ²there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary.
3. And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all;
4. Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant;
5. And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the

¹ an earthly.² Ex. 26.

CHAPTER 9**THE TABERNACLE AS "A FIGURE" (v.v. 1-10)**

In this Chapter Paul recapitulates and expands the teaching thus far and thoroughly prepares the way for the conclusions and issues of Chapter 10. In this first section he shows that the tabernacles (plural) of the Old Testament were figures, or types, or parables, or pictures of the greater tabernacle of God today.

The emphasis is that these things have spiritual significance, "the Holy Ghost thus signifying" (v. 8). The "figure" was "for the time then present" (v. 9) and "until the time of reformation" (v. 10). They related to "the first covenant" (v. 1) and the "first tabernacle" (v.v. 6 and 8).

The tabernacle that Christ has built is the whole of creation. It is the vast universe of the heavens and the earth. He built it and when sin came in to it He dealt with sin Himself and He has gone in to the inner sanctuary of God, having purged sin.

The tabernacle in the wilderness that Moses built is but a figure of the vast building of Christ. All that was transacted in the tabernacle of old had a meaning which was limited in effect and in time and is now done away in Christ, except that it still gives a picture which helps us to understand the reality of the substance of the glories of our Lord's present office and sphere.

The particular thing that Paul calls attention to in this section is that there were **two** tabernacles in the figure—the holy place and holiest of all and that these were separated by a veil through which the High Priest could pass only once a year with the blood of atonement.

Until Christ died, called "the time of reformation" in verse 10, the veil separated, and "the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest" (v. 8). There was no access to God in His holiness until Christ died. And the sacrifices and gifts of that service "could not make him that did the service perfect as pertaining to the conscience".

"BUT CHRIST" (v.v. 11-15)

- An High Priest of good things to come.
- By a greater and more perfect tabernacle.
- By His own blood.
- Having obtained eternal redemption for us.
- Who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God.
- By His blood, our consciences shall be purged from dead works to serve the living God.
- Thus He is the Mediator of the New Testament.

mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly.
6. Now when these things were thus ordained, ³the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God.

7. But into the second went the high priest alone ⁴once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people:

8. The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing:

9. Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience;

10. Which stood only in ⁵meats and drinks, and ⁶divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.

11. But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building;

12. Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

13. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh:

14. How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

15. And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of ⁷death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

16. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.

17. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.

18. Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood.

19. For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, ⁷he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people,

20. Saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you.

21. Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry.

22. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.

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

24. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for

³ Num. 28.

⁴ Ex. 30 : 10.
Lev. 16.

⁵ food.

⁶ many and various.

⁷ Ex. 24 : 5 - 8

THE DEATH OF THE TESTATOR (v.v. 16-18)

Christ as God sealed to us the new and better covenant in and by His last will and testament. He willed to us forgiveness, and to share Heaven with Him and make us a family of royal priests in Him, holy and made right for the Father's inner sanctuary. Then He died, making the will operative forthwith. There is for us His Word and Will and His blood.

REDEMPTION (v.v. 19-28)

The whole teaching of the Scriptures is that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin. The Old Testament sacrifices were of blood, but the blood of those sacrifices could not atone or redeem or purge away sin. But now it is said: "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many" (v. 28).

His was the "better sacrifice" (v. 23). By His blood "the pattern of things in the heavens" was purified and we were redeemed. His blood bought us out of sin's slavery and serfdom. His blood bought us holiness and freed us from Satan. His blood bought us the Father's smile and forgiveness and remission of sins and a name and a service and sonship and kingship and glory eternal in the love and joy of His House.

ONCE ONLY

Christ suffered once. He will never suffer for sin again, for He has eternally settled for sin. He has "put away" sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

He "was once offered to bear the sins of many" (v. 28). He "once", "appeared" (v. 26), to put away sin, and He did this at Calvary as the New Testament Scriptures record.

He is shortly to appear again. He will return. His coming is near. But He is not now coming to deal with sin. He is coming and will appear the second time without, (or apart from) sin and the sin question. His coming is "unto salvation". That is, to bring the full fruits of the salvation He has wrought, unto the redeemed. He is coming to take them to be for ever with Himself. He will change them to be like Himself; translate them from this mortal scene and then they will be with Him for ever.

us:

25. Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others;

26. For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

27. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

28. 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.

CHAPTER 10

1. For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.

2. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.

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

4. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.

5. Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, ¹Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me:

6. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure.

7. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.

8. Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law;

9. Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.

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

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

12. But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;

13. From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.

14. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

15. Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before,

16. ²This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;

17. And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.

18. Now where remission of these is, there is no more

¹ *Psa. 40 : 6.*

² *Jer. 31 : 33
Ch. 8 : 10 - 12.*

CHAPTER 10**“GOOD THINGS TO COME” (v. 1)**

This expression occurs in verse 11 of Chapter 9 and now again in the first verse of Chapter 10. It envisages all that God has prepared for those He loves. It is the full store of God's grace of which Christ is the minister to His people.

The Old Testament sacrifices and offerings were but a shadow of what Christ has to offer. These sacrifices could not give the basis necessary for all we have from God, which is “no more conscience of sin” (v. 2).

“WE ARE SANCTIFIED” (v. 10)

The basis of our conscience being freed from sin before God, is that “we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all”.

God's people are sanctified. This is by virtue of Christ's shed blood. His sacrifice of Himself atones and sanctifies and He has made that sacrifice Himself. He did it once and He will never have to make another. By the same count His own are **completely** and **eternally** saved and sanctified and **always** have access to the throne and the holy God of the holy place of the heavens.

Here sanctification is not referred to as practical daily sanctification which the believer needs to renew continually to effectively serve and please God in this sense. But he never loses the blood-bought sanctification of the soul which Christ's sacrifice has provided, and He never can lose his right to come to the throne of the holy sanctuary of the heavens.

He has “perfected for ever them that are sanctified” (v. 14).

BOLDNESS TO ENTER (v. 19)

The whole teaching of this section of Scripture is that sin has been dealt with finally by Christ, and because “there is no more offering for sin” (v. 18) the redeemed have been given and are expected to have **boldness** to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.

They have the right and it is the desire and purpose of God that His people should come to Him **boldly**.

They come by a new and living way. The new way is the humanity of Christ. This is a living way because He is in risen living power as a Man in Heaven. He has consecrated himself thus for us, so that He is the new and living way by which we come. We pass through the veil

offering for sin.

19. Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,

20. By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;

21. And having an high priest over the house of God;

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

23. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)

24. And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:

25. Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

26. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,

27. But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.

⁴ Deut. 32 : 19.

28. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses:

29. Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?

⁵ Deut. 32 : 35.
Rom. 12 : 19.

30. For we know him that hath said, ³Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, ⁴The Lord shall judge his people.

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

32. But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions;

33. Partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used.

34. For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.

35. Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward.

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

⁵ Hab. 2 : 4
Rom. 1 : 17
Gal. 3 : 11.

37. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.

38. Now ⁶the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

39. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

which formerly divided and separated us from God, for we come in and through His holy human person, seen in Heaven as newly slain, but ever living. It is thus that we came through His flesh. He gave the life of the flesh, His blood, in sacrifice, and yet the Man who is our Lord, ever lives. Thus it is that we enter “by Blood of Jesus, by a new and living way”.

We have boldness, also, because He is over the house of God as our high priest. Our Friend, is on the throne and He is there on our behalf. He will speak for us and represent us, and as it were introduce and support and escort us to our place within. He will endow and enrich and honour us with His own wealth and honours as we take our place, within, in Him. He will do this physically in the realms of glory in the days before us. He does it now within the spiritual spheres of faith and service in the spiritual house of God, which is our house, as it is His.

LET US DRAW NEAR (v. 22)

Here the teaching of this long section of Scripture ends. The practical application of the truth is obvious.

We must exercise our privilege, bought for us at such cost. We must return the love lavished on us. Let us draw near.

How do we come?

— In full assurance of faith.

— Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience.

That is, having the realization that Christ has purged our sin and that it is removed and forgotten.

— Having our bodies washed with pure water.

We should have physical cleanliness when we come to worship God and to approach through the veil.

But also a practical washing of the inner man with the water of the Word is figured from the washing of the body of the priests in the tabernacle worship of old. We should wash both our bodies with clean water, and our spirit-persons with the application of the Word of God to our souls.

Then follows a call for fellow worshippers to encourage one another in these things: to hold fast the profession of the teaching of these things: to meet with others frequently: to exhort one another.

“And so much the more as ye see the day approaching” (v. 25).

CHAPTER 11

1. Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

2. For by it the elders obtained a good report.

3. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

¹ Gen. 4 : 4.

4. By faith ¹Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.

5. By faith ²Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

² Gen. 5 : 22 - 24.

6. But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

7. By faith ³Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, 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.

³ Gen. 6 : 13, 22.

8. By faith ⁴Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

⁴ Gen. 12.

9. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in ⁵tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:

⁵ tents.

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

11. Through faith also ⁶Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.

⁶ Gen. 17 : 19
Gen. 21 : 1 - 2.

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

13. These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

14. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.

15. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned.

16. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.

⁷ Gen. 22.

17. By faith ⁷Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son,

18. Of whom it was said, That ⁸in Isaac shall thy seed be called:

⁸ Gen. 21 : 12.
Rom. 9 : 7.

19. Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.

20. By faith ⁹Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning

⁹ Gen. 27 : 27 - 29.

CHAPTER 11**FAITH**

This is the great "faith" Chapter. It follows ten Chapters of close cogent doctrine, because faith is necessary to enable us to appropriate and apply the teachings of Hebrews in our individual experiences.

The apostle has assured us of "good things to come", of an anchor for the soul, and of our undoubted right to enter within the veil by a new and living way. The better covenant is ours and our great High Priest is seated at the right hand of the Majesty on High.

We could well know about these things and not heed the injunction, "Let us draw nigh". Or we could know about these things and not set our hearts on them, and be occupied instead with the physical and material things around us.

Faith is the link, which relates the heavenlies with the lives and persons of mortal men and women. This Chapter is placed strategically to show that this is what is needed to make the things of eternity and heaven, ours now, in present experience and enjoyment. The Chapter then covers the whole ambit of human experience from Creation to the eternal city of God of the future, and shows that all these things have been known and confidently looked for and appreciated, by men of God, by faith.

Indeed verse 6 insists that "without faith it is impossible to please God". And the verse in Romans will be remembered "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin".

That is why the elders (the great men of God of old) obtained a good report (of God and in Heaven), because they exercised faith, believing what was revealed to them by spiritual agencies of God. They set their eyes on the things of heaven and on "the good things to come". They hoped for them expectantly, so that they actually had a present enjoyment of those things. They became theirs, and that is faith. It is substance, though not seen. It is evidence of things not seen. These things are desired and hoped for. The evidence is substance and this is faith.

The requirements basic to faith are set out in verse 6. There must be belief in God, that He exists, and that He willingly rewards and gives to those who apply themselves to find good from Him. This involves a simple belief in all God says, and absolute trust in all God's Word. It means that what God has said is accepted as absolute and certain.

FAITH BEFORE THE FLOOD

Four examples are given. Creation itself, which can only be known by faith in God and in His Word. Abel, who showed by faith, the appreciation of the life and sacrifice that pleased God. He showed his faith and even in his death his faith still stirs the faith of others to believe and act as he did.

Enoch did not die but was translated because in his faith he walked so closely with the God of heaven, that He pleased God, and God

things to come.

21. By faith ¹⁰Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff.

¹⁰ Gen. 48 : 5, 16, 20.

22. By faith ¹¹Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.

¹¹ Gen. 50 : 24 - 25.

23. By faith ¹²Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was ^{12a}a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.

¹² Ex. 2 : 2.

24. By faith ¹⁴Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;

¹³ well favoured.

25. Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

¹⁴ Ex. 2 : 10 - 11.

26. Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.

27. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.

28. Through faith ¹⁶he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first born should touch them.

29. By faith ¹⁶they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians ¹⁷assaying to do were drowned.

¹⁵ Ex. 12.

30. By faith ¹⁸the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days.

31. By faith ¹⁹the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.

¹⁶ Ex. 14 : 22.

¹⁷ attempting.

¹⁸ Josh. 6 : 20.

¹⁹ Josh. 6 : 23.

32. And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets:

33. Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,

34. Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

35. Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance: that they might obtain a better resurrection:

36. And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment:

37. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented;

38. (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

39. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:

40. God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

translated him from this scene to Heaven, without passing through death.

Finally, Noah preached righteousness and believed what God had told him of the coming judgment.

We today should have faith that implicitly accepts only what God has revealed about Creation, and about the coming Judgment. We should live in a world doomed to judgment, witnessing for God, as Noah did. We should accept and act upon the spiritual values of Abel and walk with God to His pleasing, as did Enoch. Some of God's people will pass through death as Abel did. Some will be translated as Enoch was. All God's people will be saved from the judgment that is coming, as Noah and his family were.

THE FAITH OF ABRAHAM (v.v. 8-16)

This section deals with the faith of Abraham, Sarah, Isaac and Jacob, but principally of Abraham. It is his faith, and that of his household. And we are ourselves of his spiritual household, if we have faith like his, as is shown in the Epistle to the Romans.

The family faith of father Abraham related to a city he saw by faith and hoped for, and a son of promise which by faith is not only Isaac his heir, but Isaac's and David's greater son, Jesus our Saviour.

The faith of the Epistle to the Hebrews similarly concerns the City of delight and the promised Son, the Son of Man and Son of God. If there is a delay, in apparent realization, then the end and blessing is always the greater.

THE FAITH OF THE PATRIARCHS (v.v. 17-22)

In this section we have illustrations of individual acts of faith first of Abraham, next of Isaac, then of Jacob and last of Joseph. In each case the acts of faith show prophetic qualities. There is a knowledge revealed of future events and a confidence of fulfilment which is faith.

We should similarly live by faith in the knowledge of the Lord's soon coming to the air for His loved ones, and the pattern of our living based on this, will show our faith.

THE COST OF FAITH (v.v. 23-40)

Faith that is genuine is always tried and tested and refined as gold, for it is indeed the gold of the currency of heaven.

In this section a selection is drawn from the men of faith of the Old Testament from Moses to the days of the prophets. In the last few verses only some are named but many others are referred to. The lesson is that the object of faith involves upholding heaven's and God's righteousness and cause here in this world. That faith is only faith which acts consistently and lives for Heaven and Home, instead of for time and materialism, cost what it may.

CHAPTER 12

1. Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,
2. Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.
3. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.
4. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.
5. And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, ¹My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:
6. For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.
7. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?
8. But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.
9. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?
10. For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.
11. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.
12. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees;
13. And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.
14. Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:
15. Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble

¹Prov. 3 : 11 - 12.

CHAPTER 12

“WE ALSO” (v. 1)

At the end of Chapter 10 Paul declares his confidence that “we are . . . of them that believe . . .” (Ch. 10:39).

Then follows the Chapter on what it is to believe, or to have faith.

Now at the commencement of Chapter 12 the “**wherefore**” enrolls two subjects: (a) Because we believe, and (b) Because we are being watched by the hosts of heaven.

Chapter 11 has shown that all those mentioned there “obtained a good report”, that is, from those who behold from heaven. **Their** faith was seen and rewarded. **Now** in the same way it is our turn to live and walk by faith, and “**we also**” are being carefully observed from Heaven. What is the quality and substance of our faith? Will it obtain a good report?

Wherefore faith being the matter in review, and **seeing** we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses **let us:**

1. Lay aside every weight.
That is, anything that is legitimate but not helpful. We must attend to many things in this life, to do our duty to God and man. But what is more than duty, in say accepting unnecessary obligations which involve us in time and concern in relation to worldly things, is a weight which will hinder the operation of faith in things relating to God.
2. Lay aside the sin which doth so easily beset us. Be vigilant for what is not of faith is sin.
3. Run with patience the race that is set before us. It is a marked course for each of us. It is a set course. It is only as we live within the rules and markers on the course that we can expect approval. Paul was later able to say “I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness”.
4. Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith. Our faith rests in a Person, who Himself has built the whole arena of faith and He has finished it completely, including the setting of the personal course for each one of us. And in making a basis for us to have faith He has Himself exemplified in human life, what faith involves. For He endured the cross itself “for the joy that was set before Him”.

CHASTENING (v.v. 5-11)

We can expect to suffer for faith, but we do not have to suffer as Christ did on account of sin (v. 4). However in our course here we do

you, and thereby many be defiled;

16. Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, ²who for one morsel of ³meat sold his birthright.

17. For ye know how that ⁴afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.

² Gen. 25 : 33.

³ food.

⁴ Gen. 27 : 34.

18. For ye are not come unto ⁵the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest,

⁵ Ex. 19 : 12 and 20 :

19. And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more:

20. (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart:

21. And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:)

22. But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,

23. To the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,

24. And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

25. 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:

26. Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, ⁶Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.

⁶ Hag. 2 : 6.

27. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.

28. Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:

29. For our God is a consuming fire.

come under the Father's rule, and it is part of the course of faith, that as sons in the Father's House we submit to discipline. There is hurt to the flesh in this, but "afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby" (v. 11).

PROFANITY (v.v. 15-17)

Warning is given against various things which militate against faith and God-pleasing which are encompassed by the term "profanity" of which Esau is given as an example. He preferred a morsel of present satisfaction to a priceless spiritual birthright. The test comes to all God's people. It is not what we say we are but what we reveal of ourselves when challenged by the call of things of time and sense.

The churches of Christendom are today full of Esaus who sell truth for friendship and comfort; who sell the faith for ecumenism or for grace and space in the social things of modern Church experience and for acceptance with men, rather than with God; for this world's values, and not heaven's. Such is the gross profanity of our age.

SYSTEMS LIKE JUDAISM (v.v. 18-29)

The whole reasoning of Hebrews is to show that only through Christ may God be approached since He purged sin and took His place at God's right hand. The previous covenant and service of the tabernacle was "done away". It is impossible for any such service to have any effectiveness now Christ has entered in.

Paul here is warning the Jewish Christians of his age that they are **not** come to such a system (v. 18) but to the great tabernacle of the heavens and to Christ Himself.

The same truths apply with equal force to any "system" or ordering of the religion and the worship of men and women. In Christendom today the ritual and masses of Roman Catholicism is a system that is contrary to all that is revealed in Hebrews.

The great Protestant systems now serving Ecumenism and Modernism are similarly defunct and futile. So also is the lukewarm uselessness of Laodicean Brethrenism.

The true son of faith today is **not** called to serve any such system, and he dare not. He is called to serve in the true tabernacle of God in the heavenlies, and Christ Himself.

All other things will be shaken and shown to be overturned of God.

Faith will realise these things, and turning from all such systems and deadness, will "serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear" (v. 28).

"For our God is a consuming fire" (v. 29).

CHAPTER 13

1. Let brotherly love continue.
2. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby ¹some have entertained angels unawares.
3. Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.
4. Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled; but ²whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.
5. Let your ³conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.
6. So that we may boldly say, 'The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.
7. Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their ⁵conversation.
8. Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.
9. Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with ⁷meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.
10. We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.
11. For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned ⁸without the camp.
12. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered ⁸without the gate.
13. Let us go forth therefore unto him ²without the camp, bearing his reproach.
14. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.
15. By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.
16. But to do good and to ⁹communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.
17. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: 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 is unprofitable for you.
18. Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly.
19. But I beseech you the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.
20. Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant.
21. Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.
22. And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation: for I have written a letter unto you in few words.
23. Know ye that our brother Timothy is set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you.
24. Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you.
25. Grace be with you all. Amen.

¹ Gen. 18 : 3.² fornicators.³ manner of life.⁴ Psa. 118 : 6.⁵ manner of life.⁶ many and diverse.⁷ food.⁸ outside.⁹ share.

CHAPTER 13**NO CONTINUING CITY (v. 14)**

Maintaining the character of the Epistle to the end, the “City to come” is held before the readers as the goal of life and faith.

We have no city here continuing as the place of our hope and aspiration, but that that Abraham saw.

Accordingly Paul gives further simple admonitions as to the way people should behave in this world, who live by faith with their eyes on the good things to come. Verses 1 to 9 contain simple directions which need no explanation to those who are heavenly-minded.

WITHOUT THE CAMP (v. 13)

Paul shows simply that Christ was rejected and cast out by the world of His day. He suffered outside Jerusalem as one not considered fit for the society of those who dwelt there. He suffered “without the gate”.

In heaven our Lord is exalted and enthroned. But in the world He is still “outside the camp”. If “Jesus” is found to be popular in the world of men as such, then know that that Jesus is not the Jesus who is the Christ of God, the Saviour of sinners, who was slain at Calvary.

The world rejects Christ and always casts Him out, for Satan is the prince of this world. Christ is outside the world of Satan and of Satan’s subjects. “He is outside the camp”.

Let us then go forth, standing apart from the worldliness of men and of Satan, taking our place with the rejected Nazarene and accepting joyfully the reproach of Christ and the offence of the cross.



THE GENERAL EPISTLES

The so-called "General" or "Catholic" Epistles commence with that of James, and there are seven of them. Hebrews is in a sense a general epistle also, though written by Paul, and is included in the grouping of the epistles, for the purposes of these notes, accordingly.

It is interesting to note that there are 21 Epistles altogether in the New Testament; that 14 of them were written by Paul, and that 7 were from the pens of 4 other writers.

There are two groups of Pauline Epistles of 7 each, in which the main doctrines of the Gospel and of the Church and of Christ are set forth, and the last of these, Hebrews, enters the sphere of the remaining epistles which Paul did not write.

The three groups of seven testify to the divine perfection of the teachings of the New Testament epistles, and to the fulness and completion of those teachings.

There are only eight writers in all the New Testament, and four of them are the writers of the seven last epistles.

In Paul's teaching the aspect is presented of bringing God's people up into the heavenlies. A distinction may be seen in that James, Peter, John and Jude write as from the aspect of bringing God's values to be operated among men on the earth. The two lines of teaching of course always dovetail together and agree.

THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

CHAPTER 1

1. James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting.

2. My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into ¹divers temptations;

3. Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

4. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

5. If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

6. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

7. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.

8. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.

9. Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted:

10. But the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away.

11. For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways.

12. Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

13. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:

14. But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

15. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

16. Do not err, my beloved brethren.

17. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

18. Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

19. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:

20. For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

21. Wherefore ²lay apart all filthiness and ³superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

22. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

23. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:

24. For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

25. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty,

¹ many and diverse.

² put away.

³ overcharge of grossness.

THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

The writer of this Epistle was a brother of the Lord's, in that he was a son of Mary and Joseph. He is referred to in the Acts in several places and also by Paul in some of his epistles. It is clear that although James was not an apostle, he held a position of special acceptance and authority in the Church at Jerusalem in the period referred to.

It was to the Jews of that era scattered abroad that James addressed his Epistle. It was written before Paul wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews.

JUSTIFICATION BY WORKS

A particular feature of James' Epistle is his teaching of the truth of justification by works, and this appears strongly in the second Chapter and all that precedes and follows is consistent with this presentation of truth.

Paul taught in Romans and elsewhere that justification is by faith and by blood and not by our own works. Now James insists on justification by works. The explanation is simply that Paul is speaking about justification with **God** and James about justification in the eyes of men.

Paul carefully allowed for the truth that James teaches. After referring to Abraham as James does, Paul says, "if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory, **but not before God**" (Rom. 4:2).

It can thus be seen that Paul's doctrine of justification is justification "before God", which can only be by grace, by faith and by blood. Now James declares the parallel truth that justification, before, or in the eyes of our fellow men can only be by works. He declares that it is only by what other men will observe in us that we shall be justified and it shall be established as before them that we are what we profess to be.

CHAPTER 1

WISDOM

The wide range of subjects covered in James' writings is suitably introduced by the reference in verse 5 to wisdom. He says "if any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him". The Psalmist had said that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and now James declares that any lack of wisdom may be met and supplied on request from the same Lord God who has the full supply of divine wisdom. He gives liberally and does not chide for the lack of wisdom which the petition acknowledges.

Now wisdom in the sense used here is simply the art and power of right acting, living and speaking here in this scene. This in turn is always that which is the pure will of God for each person. Where God's intention and holy ways are followed, then this is wisdom, and these are the works that will justify a man's profession before his fellows. To state this, is to summarise the effect and teaching of the whole Epistle.

First patience is required (v. 4). There must be the exercise of faith

and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

26. If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.

27. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this. To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

CHAPTER 2

1. My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons.

2. For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment;

3. And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool:

4. Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?

5. Harken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?

6. But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats?

7. Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?

8. If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, ¹Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well:

9. But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are ²convicted of the law as transgressors.

10. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.

11. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law.

12. So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.

13. For he shall have judgment without mercy, that

¹ Lev. 19 : 18.

² convicted.

(v. 3) which will rightly call on God for help (v. 5). But faith must be the faith which will persevere and determine, taught by patience. It is revealed to be no faith, if there is wavering or double-mindedness.

“FROM ABOVE” (v. 17)

That which faith obtains, which is wisdom in the believer, is always “from above”. The wisdom that produces and reveals in this scene here “every good and perfect gift”, is never of the believer’s own natural ability and self, but it is of faith, “from above”. It is from the Father of lights, who has no variableness, and such wisdom is like Him, in that it is constant and sure.

The doing that will justify, is the doing of the new creature which of His own will be begat with the Word of truth (v. 18). These are doings which are thus always in agreement with the Word of God, with His will, and His righteousness (v. 20).

DOERS OF THE WORD (v. 22)

James next emphasises that it is not sufficient to know the Word and will of God, and to give lip-service to it. The test is that the doing does **indeed, in deed**, do the Word and will of God.

PURE RELIGION (v. 27)

A wise doer of the Word and will of God, will be blessed of God and justified in the eyes of men, for the religion he professes is pure religion.

Pure religion is distinguished from the vain religion of verse 26. It will act positively in right acting in relation to persons such as those in affliction, and it will be seen negatively in that it will hold itself unspotted from the world. That is, it will reveal by the character of its doing, that it is the doing of Heaven, and by that which it refrains from doing, and has no part in, that it is the acting of persons who do not regard or value or accept the privileges, wealth or pleasure of the world, for they belong to, and live for that which is above.

CHAPTER 2

THE ROYAL LAW (v.v. 1-13)

In the Epistle of James there is nothing to indicate that the people he was addressing were separated from the Jews of their respective communities, but rather that at that early stage the Christian Jews still attended their synagogues. The reference in verse 2 to “your assembly” means from the form of the expression in the Greek, “your synagogues”, or Jewish centre of worship. The Christian Jews were known as Christians, and no doubt fellowshiped separately together but they also continued to take their place with the orthodox Jews of their areas in the public service and worship of the synagogues. That they were persecuted by other Jews is seen from the reference in Verse 6. This

hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.

14. What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?

15. If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food,

16. And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?

17. Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

18. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.

19. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the ^ddevils also believe, and tremble.

20. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?

21. Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?

22. Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?

23. And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, 'Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called ^{the}Friend of God.

24. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.

25. Likewise also was not ^{Rahab}Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?

26. For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

^d demons.

⁴ Gen. 15 : 6.

⁵ 2 Chron. 20 : 7.

Isa. 41 : 8.

⁶ Josh. 2 : 1.

was before the call had gone out in the Epistle to the Hebrews, "Let us go forth therefore unto Him, **without the camp**, bearing His reproach" (Heb. 13:13).

The rich man of verses 6 and 7 and the man with the gold ring and the goodly apparel of verse 2 would be Jews of the synagogues who were not Christians.

The pure religion of Chapter 1 is referred to in Chapter 2 as "the royal law" (v. 8) and "the law of liberty" (v. 12). The doings of God's people who are employing the wisdom that is from above, will ever uphold the honour and principles of God Himself. Thus as God does not have respect of persons, neither should His people in matters such as those referred to in the early part of the Chapter. Indeed, there will rather be an honouring and respecting of the poor, for the reasons given in verse 5.

Also, there will be no conflict with the purposes of God's holy law, but the very spirit of that law, will be fulfilled in loving neighbour as oneself. This is the royal law, and those who experience the law of liberty that the Christian faith proclaims will prove the reality of their testimony that they are exercising the perfect law of liberty by also exemplifying in act and word and service, the royal law of God. Thus God's people will be characterised by a love that is quick to show consideration and care for the weak and poor.

Similarly they will be no more bound or guided by the worldly claims of the proud and the rich, than their God would be.

THE PROOF OF PROFESSION (v.v. 14-16)

Now if the Christian's profession is that he walks in the law of Christian liberty, he will prove it by the way he lives and acts.

James insists, that "a man may say" (or profess) that he has faith, but that the only proof is whether or not that saying, or professing is shown in right doing and acting.

Knowledge is not faith, for even the demons know the truth. They "believe and tremble".

James insists that if there is true faith, then there will indeed be the fruits of faith; that is, right acting and the doing of the works of faith. If there is indeed faith, then the works will show it. If it is only empty profession, then the lack of works will prove that the profession is the talk only of a vain man whose faith is a dead faith, which is not faith at all (v. 20).

"Faith without works is dead" (v. 26).

ABRAHAM AND RAHAB (v.v. 21-25)

The two illustrations James gives are very revealing. They show clearly that he is not speaking about the manner in which the righteousness of God may be imputed by faith in Christ Jesus. Not justification before God, but the revelation in this world of the effect of faith in the life.

Abraham had righteousness imputed to him, as Paul showed in Romans, long before the incident James now refers to. But by offering up Isaac, Abraham showed to all what God already knew of him, that his faith was real and true. The test published the validity of the testimony he had, that he trusted God.

So it was with Rahab, whose background was that of a sinful worldly city, and she is shown in a setting in which she was still involved in a form of deception in hiding the spies of Israel. But her act showed that she knew in her heart that God was going to judge her city and that the spies of Israel were the messengers to her of the God of Heaven. Her act showed what was in her heart. Her works proclaimed her faith.

CHAPTER 3

1. My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.
2. For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.
3. Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body.
4. Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth.
5. Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!
6. And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.
7. For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind:
8. But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.
9. Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God.
10. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.
11. Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter?
12. Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh.
13. Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good ¹conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.
14. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth.
15. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.
16. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.
17. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.
18. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

¹ *manner of life or behaviour.*

CHAPTER 4

1. From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?
2. Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.
3. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that

CHAPTER 3

THE TONGUE

Faith being the link between the human and the divine and that which brings the things of God to view and to expression in this world, James now turns to give practical admonitions relative to the bringing of life and action here, under the direction and government of Heaven. The wise man of God, exercising the liberty of his faith and so doing the works of faith, will be marked as a man who is Heaven controlled and directed. He will be under authority, and subject to his Lord's governmental dealings.

No man can tame the tongue, but God can do so. He can seal a man's tongue in silence, or He can cause even an ass to answer as once He did. The tongue then is a test and proof of a divinely controlled person. See how our Lord Himself exemplified the perfect man in His right use of the tongue. No man spoke ever, as He did. And He refrained, and did not speak, when the perfect path so required. "He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth". As Peter says of Him who "suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps; Who did no sin, **neither was guile found in His mouth**" (1 Pet. 3:21-22).

The wise man will then be like his Master, and he will follow the example of his Master, in the use of speech, and in all that is involved in expression of thought and attitude before the world, and in relation with others. His whole way of life should be characterised by meekness and heavenly wisdom (v. 13).

The true wisdom that will declare and reveal the works of heaven on earth are described in the last few verses of the Chapter. It is **not** involved in strife and envying; neither is it sensual. It is, on the contrary, first, pure. Then it is peaceable. It is gentle and Christ's true servants are all Christian gentlemen and gentlewomen. It is thus also easy to be entreated. It is kind and warm and merciful and responds to the needs of others with ready activity to give and be spent for and on behalf of those in need. It is full of such fruits of heavenly wisdom, and it serves thus simply, as from the heart, without respect of persons, and sincerely, without any ulterior motive, and with no vestige of self-seeking or hypocrisy. Such are the fruits of righteousness.

CHAPTER 4

WARS AND FIGHTINGS

In this Chapter James dwells first on the issue of sensual godless living and then on some of the dangers to the man of faith. In both this Chapter and the following one, James has the whole community of the Synagogues in view and there are references to those who are not Christian as well as to those of the true Church of Christ.

ye may consume it upon your lusts.

4. Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

5. Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, ¹The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?

¹ Gen. 8 : 21.

6. But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

7. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

8. Draw ²nigh to God, and he will draw ²nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.

² near.

9. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.

10. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

11. Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.

12. There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?

13. ³Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain:

³ Come, now.

14. Whereas ye know not what shall be on the ⁴morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

⁴ next day.

15. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.

16. But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil.

17. Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

CHAPTER 5

1. Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you.

2. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are mottled.

3. Your gold and silver is ¹ranked; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.

¹ rusted.

4. Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth.

5. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter.

6. Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you.

Wars and fightings are the product of the natural man, and thus it is that the world and every society in it is beset with wars and fightings of one sort or another in every age. And as the last days are in view in this passage, we must expect that as the spirit of man operates in a world fast ripening for judgment, wars and fighting will continue with increasing fierceness to the end of the age. This is the age of violence on every side and of wars and rumours of wars.

God's people still have the nature of Adam within them, and the power of the new creation of God within is required to restrain and restrict the working of that within each of us, that is ever ready to engage in warrings and fightings, even among and with others of the family of God.

SPIRITUAL ADULTERY

Related to fightings which are shown to be related to the lust of covetousness and of sensual desire, God's people are warned concerning friendship with the world. To lust after the things of the world which only produce wars and fightings, is for the Christian a form of spiritual adultery. Christ's bride is thus making union with another, so James addresses those who do such things as "Ye adulterers and adulteresses" (v. 4).

How careful the Christian needs to be, living in the world, but not being of it! There is enmity between the world and God, and no one can be the friend of both.

Lust and envy run with the world's camp: grace follows in the train of our God, and God's grace is bestowed upon the humble who submit to Him.

James instructs:

Resist the Devil.

Draw near to God.

It is not just that we must avoid the friendship of the world, but we must **seek** the friendship of God. Christians have the right of access at all times, as Hebrews has shown, but it is necessary to exercise the right. God wishes it, and He will draw near to those who thus draw near to Him. But those who would draw near must come cleansed, with clean hands and pure heart.

"IF THE LORD WILL" (v. 15)

A further indication as to whether a person is living by faith or not is shown in statements of purpose and intention. The man of faith, under authority from above will show at all times that dependence on God which ever looks to Him. His eye is on his Master, and he speaks confidently only within the proper sphere of faith. He is ever subject to the instant command of Heaven, and in all his planning of movements, and in matters of purpose and intention, he is ever ready and happy

to change or deflect from these as he sees his Lord to be directing differently. He is a servant under authority, and loves it so, and all about him will ever know him to be thus. It is not that he is always saying piously "if the Lord will", but it is that that is his constant attitude of heart and life as he proceeds on his way, seeking to please his Lord, and not himself.

The final test is given in the last verse of the Chapter. His objectivity will include all of God-given opportunity for doing good that is shown to him. "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin".

7. Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold the ²husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.

² farmer or orchardist.

³ establish.

⁴ near.

8. Be ye also patient, ³stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth ⁴nigh.

9. Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door.

10. Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.

⁵ Job 1 : 21 and 2 : 10.

⁶ Job 42 : 10.

11. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of ⁵the patience of Job, and have seen ⁶the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

12. But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.

13. Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.

14. Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:

15. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

16. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

⁷ Elijah.

⁸ see Acts 14 : 15.

17. ⁷Elias was a man subject to ⁸like passions as we are, and ⁹he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.

⁹ 1 Kings 17 : 1.

¹⁰ 1 Kings 18 : 42.

18. And ¹⁰he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

19. Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him;

20. Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

CHAPTER 5**PATIENCE**

With humility and absolute dependence on God, patience is developed. Those who would be rich in the world, will find that the lust for riches shall eat their flesh as it were a fire (v. 3). But those who seek for the fruit of righteousness learn patience and find stability of heart (v. 8).

James draws a fine picture of the absurdity of heaping worldly treasure together for the last days. Then he shows that the judge of the saints is "standing at the door", to guide and judge and reward His servants who are seeking to please and serve Him while they wait for their Lord. "Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord".

And as Christ Himself has been patient, waiting for the precious fruit of His sufferings, and of His faithful care and keeping of His own, so also, His people should learn patience. As He will gather richly the rewards of His patience so also in their measure will His servants find a reward for theirs.

PRAYER

Drawing near to God, and submitting to the will of God with humility and patience, provide the conditions for the effectual fervent prayer of the righteous man, which availeth much (v. 16).

Prayer and faith ever run together, for prayer is the very breathing of faith. Everything will be submitted to God, as the man of God submits himself to God. James first refers to prayer for the sick. The particular provision of verse 14 and 15 is something that applied only to the miraculous gifts of the early Church which were still operative at the time James was writing. But the principle of prayer for the sick still applies. God's people will surely pray as well as use the means of God's provision of herbs and proved medical remedies. But as in all matters of prayer requests, God's answer will be accepted whether it is to prolong life and to ease pain and suffering or to give grace to accept otherwise.

Prayer for others is particularly in view, in the last few verses. A special reward is promised for those who by prayerful endeavour are able to assist a faltering fellow-believer back to fellowship with the people of God.

The expression "save a soul from death" in verse 20, refers to physical death, not spiritual, for it is no doubt an erring Christian who is here in view. Such cases of death by judgment upon Christians are to be found in 1 Corinthians 11:30. All through James' epistle, "sinner" does not mean an unconverted person only. But as here, the Christian is included for he is a sinner, though he be a saved and sanctified person. Anyone who sins is a sinner, and as John says, "if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1:8).

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER

CHAPTER 1

1. Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,

2. Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

4. To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,

5. Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

6. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:

7. That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

8. Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:

9. Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.

10. Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: ¹ *He.*

11. Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when 'it testified beforehand ² the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. ² *Psa. 22.*

12. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.

13. Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober,

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER

INTRODUCTION

In the earliest days of the Church Peter was given unique responsibilities. He was entrusted by the Lord with the keys of the kingdom and the first preaching of the gospel to both Jews and Gentiles, was by the apostle Peter.

Later Paul was ordained to special office as "the" apostle to the Gentiles, while Peter held a similar position, "the apostleship of the circumcision" (Gal. 2:8).

It appears that in the period referred to in the latter part of Acts, Peter did not then reside in Jerusalem and at that time James was the leading elder there. Peter however continued from other centres in the Levant to fulfil his apostleship to the Jews who were scattered in many areas as is indicated in the opening verse of the Epistle.

It is appropriate that the apostle to the Jews should declare a change of order in the economy of God which was and is of the greatest significance to all God's people. The main burden of the epistle is to show that the Jews nationally were not now the people of God in this age of the Church. The Lord who had been crucified had now His own people. The peculiar or special people of God are those redeemed and brought into Christ. The Church is the nation of God of this age, and Peter sets this plainly before us and directs those so selected and set apart as to how they should live in this world, as the holy nation of God.

CHAPTER 1

THE SALVATION OF YOUR SOULS (v. 9)

Peter's letter is addressed to Jews of the dispersion, who had found in Christ the salvation of their souls.

He addresses them as "elect" (v. 2), being the subject of the foreknowledge of God the Father. God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are then referred to in connection with their sanctification and obedience. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are revealed to be working together for them, for their holiness and obedience is through "the sprinkling of blood of Jesus Christ".

Those thus saved are "begotten" (v. 3) of God, born again into a new spiritual life having hope and inheritance in the incorruptible riches of heaven. Christ's blood avails to sanctify and the power of His resurrection to activate in spiritual life and service.

No wonder then that those who are appointed to glory and who have "reserved in heaven" unspeakable riches, should in this life here in the world, be "kept by the power of God" (v. 5).

and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

14. As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance:

15. But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of ³conversation;

16. Because it is written, 'Be ye holy; for I am holy.

17. And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:

18. Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;

19. But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

20. Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,

21. Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.

22. Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:

23. Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

24. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away:

25. But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

³ *life.*

³ *Lev. 11 : 44.*

THE PROPHETS AND ANGELS (v.v. 10-12)

Peter now introduces his teaching in a characteristic way. He is saying that such a salvation is something that Israel as a nation never knew. And he says the prophets wanted to know it, but could not properly understand what they prophesied of that salvation as seen from Old Testament times. Similarly the angels “desire to look into” the marvel of that salvation.

What privileges the Christ-redeemed soul has in this day and age, when compared with those of Israel of old, or even with the holy angels of God ! The soul saved through the death of the Christ of God, shares His very inheritance and is His own in a peculiar and wonderful way.

BE YE HOLY (v. 16)

The practical application of truth so great and extraordinary must be given immediately. People so sanctified, set apart for God, and made holy and made fit for His society and presence, must be holy in all their living here below. “Be ye holy for I am holy”, it is written.

REDEEMED FROM VAIN TRADITIONS OF LIFE (v. 18)

Peter’s lead is to show the Christian Jews that they have been redeemed “by the precious blood of Christ” (v. 19), and accordingly they are beholden only to Him. They have been redeemed “from” the manner of life (conversation) they had formerly in Jewish traditions. Those things are done away and should no longer clog and retard the saints of God who are redeemed by Christ, to Himself, from all else. We are reminded of the cost of this redemption. It is **with** the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot that His people are redeemed from the vain traditions of the former way of life.

This teaching should be applied to all who read the Epistles of Peter. To those who are not Jews, the same truth applies. Whatever the manner of the former life, we are redeemed from it, to Christ, at infinite cost. Let us then regard no more, the things from which we have been redeemed, but live for the Holy One who died, but now lives, for us.

CHAPTER 2

1. Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings,
2. As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:
3. If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.
4. To whom coming, as unto a living stone, ¹disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious,
5. Ye also, as ²lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.
6. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, ³Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.
7. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,
8. And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.
9. But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:
10. Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but

¹ *Psa. 118 : 22 - 23.*

² *living.*

³ *Isa. 28 : 16.*

CHAPTER 2

Three similes are used in this Chapter to teach the practical application of Christian truth. “As newborn babes” (v. 2), “as lively stones” (v. 5) and “as strangers and pilgrims” (v. 11).

“AS NEWBORN BABES” (v.v. 1-4)

First, sincerity and guilelessness like that of newborn babes is essential for the Christian faith and life. As a newborn child accepts its sustenance without question or thought of itself, in simplicity and in sincerity, wanting it and having it, only, just so should the Christian of any age imbibe and assimilate the Word of God into his spiritual being. He should **ever** receive it, simply and without philosophy or ulterior purpose, as his simple necessary food. In this sense it is called “the sincere milk of the word”. If he desire it as a babe desires its necessary food, then he will grow spiritually, and he will quickly learn and increasingly appreciate that the Lord is both wonderfully gracious to His people and “precious”. He is precious to His people and as they feed on Him in sincerity His people begin to ascertain something of His own intrinsic preciousness which only the Father can fully know.

“AS LIVELY STONES” (v.v. 5-10)

Christ Himself is a “living stone” (v. 4), and “a chief corner stone” (v. 6). He is “the stone which the builders disallowed”, which is however “made the head of the corner” (v. 7). Moreover He is “a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence” (v. 8). That is, Christ is a cause of stumbling to those who will not accept the Word of God or who are disobedient. He is an offence to them, but to those who believe and who come to know Him, He is precious.

Now just as Christ is Himself “a living stone”, so are we who are His, also made to be “living stones”, each in his place in the great spiritual building in which He is “the head of the corner”.

The building in which the lively stones grow together, or “are

now have obtained mercy.

11. Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;

12. Having your ⁴conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

⁴ *manner of life.*

13. Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme;

14. Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well.

15. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men:

16. As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.

17. Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.

18. Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the ⁵froward.

⁵ *perverse.*

19. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.

20. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but, if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.

21. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:

22. Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:

23. Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:

24. Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

25. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

built up a spiritual house”, is a house which is a holy priesthood “to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ”. By “spiritual sacrifices”, the holy priests — “show forth the praise” of Him, who called them “out of darkness into His marvellous light” (v. 9).

This priesthood and these spiritual sacrifices entirely supersede the Old Testament order of sacrifice. There is no more a daily sacrifice of blood, for Christ has offered up Himself once for all and has purged the sins of His people for ever. But in the temple of His own building, the spiritual sacrifices of a royal priesthood are continually offered. Not just some are priests: not a special group of Christians: but all are lively stones and all are priests.

The Lord’s people today, being all of them new creatures in Christ Jesus, are spiritual beings endued with quickening power. They are together a chosen generation. That is, they are the persons whom God has selected by Himself, in this age and hour. As such they are a royal priesthood, and an holy nation. They are **the** nation of God, distinguished from all the nations of the world. It is a nation chosen from Jews and Gentiles and is distinct from both. It is a nation which is “peculiar” or special for it is God’s nation, chosen by Him, and made holy and preserved in holiness by Him.

“AS STRANGERS AND PILGRIMS” (v.v. 11-25)

God’s people today are distinguishable in themselves, in that they desire the sincere milk of the Word and grow thereby.

They are distinguishable in the heavenlies in that they are part of God’s Holy Nation.

And they are distinguishable in the world, as they move among men here, in that they are as strangers and pilgrims. They are in the world, but not of it, for they are passing through, merely, on the way to glory. They are here to attend to Heaven’s interests, and to honour and obey their Lord.

The code of conduct issued by the Lord for His people in their peculiar role as strangers and pilgrims, is reviewed by Peter in many of its tenets in the last section of the Chapter.

CHAPTER 3

1. Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the ¹conversation of the wives;

¹ *manner of life.*

2. While they behold your chaste ²conversation coupled with fear.

² *behaviour.*

3. Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of ³plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel;

³ *braiding.*

4. But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

5. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands:

⁴ *Sarah.*

⁵ *Gen. 18 : 12.*

6. Even as ⁴Sara obeyed Abraham, ⁵calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any ⁶amazement.

⁶ *terror.*

7. Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

8. Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous:

⁷ *on the contrary.*

9. Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but ⁷contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

10. For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile:

⁸ *pursue.*

11. Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ⁸ensue it.

12. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous,

CHAPTER 3

The directions for strangers and pilgrims are continued in Chapter 3, first having reference to husbands and wives. The adorning and prayers of pilgrim husbands and wives are also touched upon (v.v. 1-7).

Then Peter says “Finally, — be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous” (v. 8), and then he continues further to expound his teaching in clear practical directions.

Comment is offered on two expressions only in the remainder of the chapter:

SANCTIFY THE LORD GOD IN YOUR HEARTS (v. 15)

The subject of persecution is in view in verses 12 to 22 and God’s people are asked “Who is he that can harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?” (v. 13). Even if persecution comes for righteousness sake, the end of such suffering for Christ is great gain.

The condition of this is that the Lord God is sanctified in the believer’s heart. This means that the believer is at all times careful to see that he does not in any way dishonour his Lord in anything he says or does. The Lord’s Name, His honour and His purposes must not in any way be negated or slighted, but be held and supported at all costs. This is to sanctify the Lord God in the heart.

If the heart is so held, then the testimony in the world will agree and such a believer will be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks him, a reason of the hope that is in him, with meekness and peace (v. 15).

THE SPIRITS IN PRISON (v. 19)

The spirits in prison are of course the unsaved dead who wait for the awful judgment of the great white throne.

It is erroneously taught by some that Peter’s reference here indicates a second hope for the unsaved dead. The teaching of Scripture generally is sufficient to show that this is not the meaning here.

The particular dead referred to here are those who refused the truth of God in Noah’s day and who were overwhelmed by the flood.

The teaching here is that Christ testified to these people in Noah’s day, by the building of the ark and by Noah’s own preaching. It was through this ministry, “**by the Spirit**”, that Christ preached in Noah’s day to the people of that generation, who are now in prison.

and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.

13. And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?

14. But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;

15. But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

16. Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good ⁹conversation in Christ.

⁹ *manner of life.*

17. For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.

¹⁰ *made to live.*

18. For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but ¹⁰quickened by the Spirit:

¹¹ *once.*

¹² *Gen. 6.*

¹³ *Heb. 11 : 7.*

19. By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison;

20. Which ¹²sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited ¹²in the days of Noah, while the ark was ¹³a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

21. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

22. Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.

CHAPTER 4

1. Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;

2. That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men but to the will of God.

On the other hand, Noah and those with him in the ark were "saved". And similarly we who are in Christ, are both saved and quickened "by the Spirit".

For further teaching on this section readers are referred to the writer's booklet "The Doctrine of Immortality".

CHAPTER 4

THE REST OF HIS TIME (v. 2)

Continuing further with practical exhortations, Peter refers to the past in mortal life, of the believer, and to "the rest of his time in the flesh". That is the period that remains for each believer here in mortal life in the service of Christ, until the Lord takes him in death or translates him to glory at His coming.

Paul was conscious of the preciousness of this period that Peter calls "the rest of time", and Paul spoke of "redeeming the time".

Only mortals can do the service of God, required in this day and age of the gospel, and God needs men who will live the rest of their time, doing His will and service.

It is now surely only a little while, before the Lord Himself will come, and then will end the rest of time for the church as a whole and for each member of it. That end will open glorious vistas, but the opportunity for service here on earth will have closed.

Right now is the time of this service "in the flesh". Let us each dedicate and commit that time fully to Christ Jesus our Lord who Himself suffered in the flesh for us.

"AS THE ORACLES OF GOD" (v. 11)

The Old Testament Scriptures are spoken of as "the oracles of God" (Rom. 3:2). Accordingly the Scriptures as a whole, Old and New Testaments, are the oracles of God. Now note Peter is not saying here that a minister of the Word is to quote and speak the Scripture only, as the oracles of God. But he says that when a believer ministers or "speaks" he is to do so "as the oracles of God".

That is, the brother who speaks to others of the things of Christ for their profit and admonition, or to the unsaved with the gospel tidings, is to do so with an authority and finality which is as complete as that of the Scriptures themselves.

This is so because he is God's mouthpiece, and God can and will speak in no other way to men. The speaker then must speak on God's behalf and only as he has the witness himself of the truth he is declaring and in consciousness that he is indeed a mouthpiece for the God of Heaven.

God does equip and call men to so speak for him, and no speaking is of any value unless it is such speaking. Ministering, or serving God

3. For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries:

4. Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same ¹excess of riot, speaking evil of you:

¹ *profligacy.*

5. Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the ²quick and the dead.

² *living.*

6. For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

7. But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.

8. And above all things have fervent ³charity among yourselves: for ³charity shall cover the multitude of sins.

³ *love.*

9. Use hospitality one to another without grudging.

10. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

11. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

12. Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:

13. But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

14. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

15. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters.

16. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.

17. For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?

18. And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?

19. Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.

in the flesh, in all forms of service should be similarly activated from a God-given ability and with God-sustained unction only. Then the glory is God's in all things, "through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen" (v. 11). This is the end of all service, for all true service is by Him, of Him and for Him.

JUDGMENT AT THE HOUSE OF GOD (v. 17)

At the time of the writing of these notes, "the rest of time in the flesh" has not yet run its course for all the Church, and it will not do so until Christ Himself returns and calls the Church above.

But "the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God".

God's judgment is a loving kindly judgment, assessing values with His people of His house. How important then that we should each live no longer according to the lusts of men, but to the will of God, and that we should serve to His glory only in all we do. His judgment first begins "at us" (v. 17).

We should have the consciousness always that the Judge is judging us each, ourselves, first, if we are of His house.

Our attitude to the unsaved peoples of the world around us will be conditioned by the salutary realisation that if God so carefully judges and deals with each member of His own House, how awful and severe will be His dealing with "the ungodly" and "the sinner"!

CHAPTER 5

FEED THE FLOCK OF GOD (v. 2)

Peter no doubt always remembered the Lord's personal challenge to him as it is recorded in John 21:15-17. "Feed my sheep", the Lord said to Peter, and now an elderly man, Peter says to others who are elders also, "Feed the flock of God which is among you".

The need for the feeding of the flock of God is now greater than

CHAPTER 5

1. The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:
2. Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;
3. Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ¹examples to the flock.
4. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.
5. Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.
6. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:
7. Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.
8. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.
9. Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.
10. But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, ²stablish, strengthen, settle you. ² establish.
11. To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.
12. By Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you, as I suppose, I have written briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand.
13. The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you; and so doth Marcus my son.
14. Greet ye one another with a kiss of ³charity. Peace ³love. be with you all that are in Christ Jesus. Amen. ³ love.

ever, for there is poison in the pot of Christendom today. Deception and perversions of every kind abound on every side.

The pure Word of God is the food the flock needs and the feeding of the flock requires that the example of the shepherds should agree with their teaching. Only elders, themselves matured by feeding on the Word and having their lives and testimonies in conformity therewith, are suitable to “take the oversight”, and as “ensamples” themselves of good feeding, to feed the flock.

There is a crown for shepherds who do this (v. 4).

BE SUBJECT (v. 5)

Subjection and humility will mark the true servants of God. Whether elder or younger, they will be subject not only to their Lord, but (in the Lord) to one another.

HE CARETH FOR YOU (v. 7)

If Chapter 4 closes with reference to judgment at the house of God and “at us” (v. 17), the next and last Chapter, turns to consolation for the people of God, as they, the holy nation of God, pilgrims and strangers in this world, strive to do the will of God, in subjection to God and one another, in humility.

Peter says “Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you.”

This is the privilege of sons and daughters of God’s house. He is Himself responsible for them, and will always acknowledge it. He is a faithful creator. He is a loving God. He honours those who honour His Son. And if judgment is carefully exercised for the good of His own House and of those who are of it, by the same count, He cares in every way for His people.

Be subject, brother, but similarly cast all your care upon Him. He will undertake. He cares. He cares for you.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER

CHAPTER 1

1. Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:

2. Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,

3. According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

4. Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

5. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;

¹ self-control.

6. And to knowledge ²temperance; and to ³temperance patience; and to patience godliness;

7. And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness ⁴charity.

² love.

8. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

9. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.

10. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:

11. For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

12. Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth.

13. Yea, I think it ⁵meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance;

³ fitting.

14. Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, ⁶even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me.

15. Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance.

16. For we have not followed cunningly devised fables,

⁴ John 21 : 18 - 19.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER**INTRODUCTION**

The same general truths are in view in the Second Epistle as in the first. This Epistle is supplementary, and warns of deceptions and dangers ahead from within the number of the believers themselves. There is a strong prophetic content.

CHAPTER 1**DIVINE POWER (v. 3)**

At the beginning Peter refers to the divine power of Jesus Christ our Lord, which is available to His people. This distinguishes those who are truly His, from the pretenders Peter is later to warn concerning. The power that the Christian has is His divine power. That power has "given unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness". We could not have this of ourselves. He has given it. We could not have eternal life and godliness — a life that is God-pleasing, except His divine power had given it us. But not only the basic spiritual essential of life and godliness. His divine power has provided for us also "exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (v. 4).

Thus by His "divine power", we are ourselves partakers of the "divine nature". It follows from this that with godly diligence, the divine nature that is ours will grow and mature. Thus faith produces virtue or valour — the steel needed to withstand evil, and this in turn produces the other Christian graces referred to in the following verses.

His promises are "exceedingly great" and He will minister these things "abundantly" (v. 11).

The conditioning factor on the Christian's side is that he give "all diligence" (v.v. 5 and 10).

The thing Peter desires to warn against is the infiltration of evil and these are the truths needed to prepare for such teaching. Only the divine nature, and the character it produces by His power, held in a state of diligent awareness, will prepare for the test.

The evil that Peter sought to prepare the people of God to withstand has matured on every side today. These are the latter days and Peter is saying afresh to us, through the Scripture he penned that all diligence is required and the pure godliness of the divine nature sustained by Christ's divine power, to enable us to fulfil our Christian duty in these days of declension, falling away and apostasy.

A MORE SURE WORD OF PROPHECY (v. 19)

In the latter part of the Chapter (v.v. 12-21), Peter refers to other

when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were ⁵eyewitnesses of his majesty.

17. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, ⁶This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

18. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.

19. We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:

20. Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.

21. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

CHAPTER 2

1. But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who ¹privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

2. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.

3. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.

4. For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;

5. And spared not the old world, but ²saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;

6. And ³turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ⁴ensample unto those that after should live ungodly;

7. And ⁵delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy ⁶conversation of the wicked:

8. (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in

⁵ *Matt. 17 : 1 - 2.*
1 John 4 : 14.

⁶ *Matt. 17 : 5.*

¹ *secretly.*

² *Gen. 7.*

³ *Gen. 19 : 24 - 25.*
⁴ *example.*

⁵ *Gen. 19 : 16.*
⁶ *manner of life.*

truths needed to support God's people in days of declension. First he asserted that he and others were eye witnesses of Christ's majesty and he refers to the wonderful scene on the Mount of Transfiguration. Peter gives his personal testimony as an eye witness to verify the great central truths of the faith and he says "we have not followed cunningly devised fables" (v. 16).

Then he refers to the fact that we have the "Word of prophecy". This is a more sure word even than Peter's solid testimony. The prophets of God have spoken, and all that God has declared will be fulfilled in the future, as it ever has in the past.

What is said here of the Word of prophecy is true also of all of Scripture, but it is stated here in relation to the parts of Scripture which are prophetic and reveal the future. We know these wonderful things because "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (v. 21).

Peter thus reminds those facing the questionings and deception of our day, first, that the faith itself is sound and beyond all question: secondly that the sure prophetic word has revealed the future sufficiently to guide us through the dangers which that prophetic Word itself declares will come.

The key to the apostasy is given here. The truth and the prophetic Word did not come "by the will of man". But all that is of evil, of perversion, of deception, of error in this day of ecumenical apostasy and in the Babylon of strange tongues about us, is on the contrary of the will of man. It is man's scheming and doing in all its ways, and the final display of the evil forecast is that it will bear the number of man — 666. (see Rev. 13:18).

A further matter of direction given in handling the Word of prophecy, is that "no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation". Scripture as a whole is understood by reference to other parts of Scripture. So, also, in a particular way there is a harmony in the prophetic utterances, and each such prophecy is to be understood by reference to all the others. Each prophecy relates with all other prophecy for **all** prophecy is from God by the Holy Ghost. We cannot understand any prophecy properly without also knowing the God who gave it.

CHAPTER 2

FALSE PROPHETS

The main purpose of writing is now brought forward. Just as in the Old Testament era false prophets appeared and sought to lead many astray, so also in the Church itself, there would be those who would come forward and deceive Christian people.

The nature of the evil of the false prophet is that he is activated of self-will, and seeks to forward the purposes of man's will, instead of God's will. It always involves teachings which are contrary to God's revealed directions for His people, and it is directed to deflect others

seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;)

9. The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:

10. But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.

11. Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord.

12. But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption;

13. And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you;

14. Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children:

15. Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following ⁷the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;

⁷ Num. 22.

16. But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass ⁸speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet.

⁸ Num. 22 : 28.

17. These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever.

18. For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that ⁹were clean escaped from them who live in error.

⁹ had just escaped.

19. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.

20. For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.

21. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.

22. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, ¹⁰The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

¹⁰ Prov. 26 : 11

from right paths. It leads by deceptions and perversions of truth to divert or turn from or to spoil or mar the will and work of God.

Peter shows in this Chapter that nothing could be more serious, and that God must judge those who so challenge God and malign the truth. He warns that those who listen to and follow such false prophets must share their judgment.

The Chapter then illustrates God's ways of dealing in similar circumstances. The fallen angels are referred to, and also the judgments of Noah's flood and of the cities of the plain. Balaam is brought forward as an example of a false prophet and of the ways of God in dealing with such error.

Peter marvels at the presumption of false prophets. He marvels at their vanity and lust for things contrary to God. He calls them "wells without water" and he says "they allure through the lust of the flesh", and "while they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage" (v. 19).

Peter proclaims that God must judge all the work and retinue of the false prophets of every age, and he warns of the attack to be made on the Church.

MODERN FALSE PROPHETS

We have them all about us today. They are birds of prey who have made their nests in the great tree of Christendom. And there is scarcely a church or a group of Christians that is not under pressure or influence from the pervading wickedness and lust for self-will, of the false prophets of the age.

Behold the "Bibles" of the false prophets, in all the multifarious perversions of texts and translations. Behold the neo-evangelists, and their accommodating worldly-wise gospels! See how the following increases of those deceived by Pentecostalism! What of Ecumenism, Grahamism, and the Cults? Thus it is that Laodiceanism and ease-aplenty charms the nominal Church populace, while Christ repudiates all such as His witnesses and representatives, and God prepares to deal with the awful wickedness that is involved.

The latter part of the Chapter is occupied with the state of those who follow in the train of the false prophets of the age. Vast numbers of people today are informed of much of the teaching of Scripture and of the gospel, but they do not really convert to God and receive the power of a Christ-life, as new creatures in Him. These are easily in their multitudes drawn away by the prophets of the age, and the drift is to ecumenism and Babylon the Great.

The end of the judgment of God is found recorded faithfully in Revelation Chapters 17 and 18.

CHAPTER 3

1. This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance:

2. That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour:

3. ¹Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,

4. And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.

5. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water:

6. Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:

7. But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

8. But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and ²a thousand years as one day.

9. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

10. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

11. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy ³conversation and godliness,

12. Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

13. Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for ⁴new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

14. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.

15. And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you;

16. As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.

17. Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness.

18. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

¹ 1 Tim. 4 : 1
² 2 Tim. 3 : 1.
Jude 18.

² Psa. 90 : 4.

³ behaviour.

⁴ Isa. 65 : 17 and 66 : 22
Rev. 21 : 1, 27.

CHAPTER 3
SCOFFERS OF THE LAST DAYS (v. 3)

Peter's final Chapter is distinctively prophetic, and he peers confidently beyond the millennium to the end of the world and to the new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.

But first Peter refers to a time called "the last days". This is of course the last days of this present era of the Church and of the gospel, and all the many references in Scripture to the last days may be seen in fulfilment in these our own days. These days of ours are the last days. They will end at the coming of Christ, when the Church will be translated above. Thereafter will come "the day of the Lord" which will continue throughout the Millennium and beyond, for in that period the Lord will judge and reign in the earth.

But now in these last days, while His coming is awaited by His loved ones, scoffers mock and say "where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (v. 4).

So modernists deride not only His coming, but they deride His resurrection and His deity. They jeer at the very thought of immortality. The evolutionists and the infidels laugh at the plain teachings of Scripture.

Peter tells us that God does not reckon time as man does and that a thousand years are but as one day to Him. But more than this, there is a reason why the coming of Christ is delayed. It is that God is long-suffering "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (v. 9).

But the promise of His coming will be fulfilled. Just as the unbelievers of Noah's day were overwhelmed by a flood, so will judgment overwhelm this world, for His coming will expose to judgment all who have refused His pleadings and proffered mercy. The end of all judgment for this earth and all its wickedness will be a baptism of fire. For it is "reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men" (v. 7) and "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (v. 10).

"WHEREFORE BELOVED" (v. 14)

- Live holily and godly (v. 11).
- Look expectantly for His coming (v. 12).
- Be diligent "that ye may be found of Him,

**in peace,
without spot,
blameless".** (v. 14).

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN

CHAPTER 1

1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;

2. (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)

3. That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

4. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

5. This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

6. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

7. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

8. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

9. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

10. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

¹ see John 1 : 1 - 5.

CHAPTER 2

1. My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

2. And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

3. And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.

4. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

5. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN

INTRODUCTION

The writer is the apostle John who wrote the fourth gospel and also the Revelation. And all John's writings bear the stamp of the heavenly blue of another dimension. He presents particularly the deity of Christ and the divine life He brings to men. He moves on the plane of the sublime. He leaned on the Lord's breast at the last supper. He was the disciple "whom the Lord loved", and he takes us close to the heart of the One he loved so dearly.

CHAPTER 1

THE WORD OF LIFE

As in the Gospel of John, this Epistle introduces Christ as "the Word". "That which was from the beginning", was the Word of life. That is, Christ as the light and life of men.

"The beginning" in this setting is the beginning of the manifestation of that life to men. "That", is what was from the beginning. The beginning is thus the coming of Christ in the flesh. It is that "which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of Life". He knew Christ as a man. He lived with Him, and looked on Him, touched Him, spoke to Him, and conversed with Him, man to man, and this man, John, was able to certify that that man, Jesus of Nazareth, was God. He certified he was God and Man, Emanuel, the Man, Christ Jesus.

As the Word, He was the manifestation or revealing and making known of God to man. He was more than this, for He was light and life.

LIGHT AND LIFE

He was light and life, and He brought light and life to men. God is light, and dwells in light unapproachable. But Christ came into the darkness of this world and brought light amidst the darkness to those to whom He was revealed. He gave them light in themselves, and access to God, into the light of God. He has brought light within, which light is life. The life is such that it is spiritual and eternal and divine life, and is capable of living in the very light of God, in Heaven itself.

John had fellowshiped with the holy Lord from heaven, in the days of the Son of Man. And John now declares that all with whom His light and life are shared, fellowship together in Him.

Now the test of this fellowship is the light. Those who have the divine life, will exhibit the light of Him who is light. Those who walk in darkness are plainly not of this fellowship of the light and of Him.

of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.

6. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

7. Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning.

8. Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.

9. He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.

10. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.

11. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.

12. I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.

13. I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father.

14. I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

15. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

17. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

18. Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard ^athat antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.

19. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

20. That ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye

^a 2 Thess. 2 : 3.

But nevertheless, while, we are in these mortal bodies there will not be sinless perfection and those who claim such a thing are manifestly deceived, and are not being truthful (v. 8). But the light within those who belong to the Light will immediately reveal the sin for sin cannot live in the light. And “if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (v. 9). He not only forgives but He cleanses from the effect and working of the sins.

CHAPTER 2

KEEPING HIS WORD (v. 5)

Our loved Lord is “**the**” Word. Our privilege is to keep His Word. Not just His commandments, and these are referred to in this Chapter. John asserts that the love of God is perfected in those who keep His Word. To keep His Word, is “to walk even as He walked” (v. 6). Those in the light, love Him, and just desire to please Him, to seek to be like Him, and to act and speak as He would have them. It involves approving all He does and disapproving what He disapproves. It involves a love of the Bible as a whole and complete uniformity with its every teaching.

Thus in writing to the Church at Philadelphia the Lord directs John to say in commendation of that Church “Thou hast . . . kept my Word” (Rev. 3:8).

John’s new commandment of this Chapter is simply that from the position of light into which Christ has brought us, we should keep His Word, seeking only the Word and will of God, and avoiding the contrary love of the world.

ALL THAT IS IN THE WORLD (v. 16)

The lures of this world of darkness, are set out in this verse, and it thus is the summary and sum-total of all that the world has to offer:

1. The lust of the flesh.
2. The lust of the eyes.
3. The pride of life.

Satan, who is the God of this world, offered these things to Eve in the day of the first temptation in the garden of Eden, and she was deceived by them.

Christ was similarly tempted of Satan in the wilderness but He was not deceived and He repulsed the tempter.

The world’s passions are transient, but “He that doeth the will of God abideth for ever” (v. 17).

THE LAST DAYS

John, like all the other writers of the New Testament warns concerning the end age. He says “it is the last time” (v. 18).

know all things.

21. I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth.

22. Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.

23. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.

24. Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.

25. And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.

26. These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.

27. But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

28. And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

29. If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.

CHAPTER 3

1. Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

2. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

3. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

4. Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.

5. And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.

6. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.

7. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.

8. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

9. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because

What he saw in its earliest form in his own days has become fully revealed in ours.

We have not only the world in its most colourful and most deceptive form, but we have the spirit of antichrist. This is spiritual wickedness in high places which sets out to counterfeit and overwhelm the claims of Christ. It concerns teachings and teachers, religious systems and powers which deliberately work toward the defeat of the cause of the true Christ and the true Church.

The spirit of antichrist is in all false teachings and systems. It is in Roman Catholicism, in Ecumenism and will shortly come to its final form in the world Church, seen prophetically as Babylon the Great.

In the period immediately following the translation of the Church a single figure will appear in Christendom who is himself the very embodiment of all that is contrary to Christ and His truth, yet usurping His office and honour. He is the antichrist, and has many other names prophetically as well.

ABIDING IN HIM

Even in the last days, however, those who are truly Christ's who have the light that is from above, are safe and secure in Him. "The anointing which ye have received of Him, abideth in you" (v. 27). Those who have once been anointed in this way, that is, by the Holy Spirit, and have been created new creatures in Christ, remain so, eternally. "Ye shall abide in Him".

But then practical teaching accompanies this. If we have been given an anointing to abide eternally in Him, it behoves us to give expression of it here in this scene, and to live in a manner which is consistent with our heavenly calling and estate.

Accordingly the apostle says directly, "and now, little children, abide in Him, that when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming" (v. 28).

This recalls the Lord's own words in John 15:17-18 "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples".

He has so wrought for us that we shall abide in Him for ever, and He is soon to come for us to take us to be with Himself. Then let us abide in Him, here and now, so that when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him, at His coming.

That coming is very, very, near.

he is born of God.

10. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

11. For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.

12. Not as ¹Cain, who was of that wicked one, and ²slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.

¹ Gen. 4 : 4 - 8.
² killed.

13. Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.

14. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.

15. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

16. Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

17. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his ³bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?

³ heart of compassion.

18. My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

19. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.

20. For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.

21. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.

22. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

23. And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.

24. And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

CHAPTER 4

1. Beloved, believe not every spirit, but ¹try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

¹ test.

2. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:

3. And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

4. Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome

CHAPTER 3

THIS HOPE (v. 3)

The Christian's hope is that His Lord will come and translate him at His coming to be with Him and like Him.

He has the earnest of this, in that the Spirit of God indwells him now and he knows that he is already in the position of sonship, with God the Father. He is in the light and knows he will abide in it eternally. These things are known and although we do not yet know or understand all that God has in store for the future, it can be appreciated that God's provision will befit the manner of the love of God the Father.

"Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as He is pure" (v. 3).

BORN OF GOD (v. 9)

In this Chapter John reaches a zenith of truth, insisting that the new life which we have, which is "born of God", "cannot sin".

The immortal life we have of Christ, is even now, a sinless life as Christ's is. He could not sin, and neither can the Christ-life within us, sin. The sins that afflict our conscience are the product of the old Adam nature and not of that which is born of God.

The true Christ-life within the saved, is even now, like Christ's. As God is love, so is that life within. And if no love is shown, then the Christ-life cannot be there. But if it is there it will manifest itself in pure, sacrificial love for all others of the family of God. Indeed, John does not hesitate to say, that as Christ in love, laid down His life for us, so ought we to lay down our lives for the brethren (v. 16).

Love is the end of the commandment, for if we love our brethren and love our Saviour God, we shall be abiding in Him and only doing those things that are pleasing in His sight. Our heart will not then condemn us, but the Holy Spirit, abiding in us, will confirm us in a quiet but joyful confidence, for His pleasure becomes our pleasure.

CHAPTER 4

"THAT SPIRIT OF ANTICHRIST" (v. 3)

The subject of the latter part of Chapter 3 is continued, and a means of testing that which is false is given.

It should be realised that now we have the completed Scriptures we should be able to test all false teachings from the Word of truth itself. In the era in which John was writing this was not so, for only fragments of the New Testament were available in various places. But it was the era of the miraculous gifts and such gifts as that of prophecy provided something for the early Christians which was later "done away" when that which is perfect was come. The miraculous gifts were all Spirit manifestations.

them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

5. They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.

6. We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

7. Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

8. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

9. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

10. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

11. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

12. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

13. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.

14. And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.

15. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

16. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.

17. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.

18. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

19. We love him, because he first loved us.

20. If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

21. And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

CHAPTER 5

1. Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.

2. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.

3. For this is the love of God, that we keep his

John here teaches the saints to distinguish between that which is of the Holy Spirit of God, and that which is a demon counterfeit, "because many false prophets are gone out into the world".

The test is, "Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God".

And apart from the question of miraculous gifts, all false prophets of every age may be revealed against this test and plumbline. All false doctrine concerning Christ stems from or concerns the suggestion either that Christ was not God, or that He was not truly Man. So the test is that it be confessed:

- (a) That He existed in glory as God from eternity — "that He is **come**" (from glory).
- (b) That He is come "**in the flesh**" (that He became man).
- (c) Not just that He **came** but that He "**is**" come. He is risen and having come in the flesh, He lives on in glory as the Man, Christ Jesus.
- (d) His power is in His people, for He is come in the flesh, and continues as God on their behalf, for "He is".

HE THAT IS IN YOU (v. 4)

That spirit of antichrist which rejects the truth concerning Christ, is in the world. But Christ who is indeed come in the flesh, is God and as God who is omnipresent, He is in a peculiar and special way "in" His people. He indwells them through the Holy Spirit who is elsewhere called "the Spirit of Christ".

This is the sublime height of John's teaching, that Christ is "in you". He has given His own divine life to His own and that life cannot sin. So no matter what the challenges of mortal life for Christ's loved ones, "greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world".

In these closing days of the dispensation or day of Grace, when the spirit of antichrist is everywhere abroad "in the world" and is in complete control "in the world", how important it is that Christ's own today should have that quiet confidence, come what may, that Christ is "in you", in all His power and divinity and holiness. There may not be any effective testimony to the world, today, held as it is by the spirit of antichrist. But at least those in whom He is, may quietly live in Him, abide in Him, and wait for Him and seek to be not ashamed before Him at His coming.

The remainder of the Chapter requires that those who claim such truth should indeed live in the light of it, and purify themselves even as He is pure.

John shows that God is love, and that the proof of God in the life is love to others as God loves. This is the holy love of God which will not compromise with unrighteousness or evil or anything false or contrary to the truth and will of God.

The practice of divine love makes perfect in love, for it is God working in the life.

commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

4. For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

5. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

6. This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.

7. For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

8. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.

9. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son.

10. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.

11. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

12. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

13. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

14. And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:

15. And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

16. If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.

17. All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.

18. We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.

19. And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.

20. And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.

21. Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

CHAPTER 5

OVERCOMING THE WORLD

In Romans there is the statement that without faith it is impossible to please God. John now says concerning faith that it is “the victory that overcometh the world” (v. 4). That is, the faith of those who believe that Jesus is the Christ are able by faith to overcome the world. This is due to the fact that those who so believe in Jesus are born of God.

Those born of God, love God, and that means that whatever God wishes or desires, they seek to do. “This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments”.

Thus it is that the world which is at enmity with God, and does not seek to please God, but chooses self-will and pride and lust, rather than the will of God, has no drawing power for those who are born of God and love God. It is by faith that Jesus is known to be the Christ, the Son of God. Thus that faith is the breathing and life of those born of God, who thus become the sons of God. By that faith and power the sons of God love God, and overcome the world.

THE PROOF OF FAITH

That faith in Christ is fully secure is verified on earth by the Holy Spirit, and the evidence here of Christ’s death, is the water and the blood which flowed from His body. The Holy Spirit within the sons of God confirms the fact of Christ’s death and that they are indeed saved thereby and are born of God and made to be sons.

In heaven there is a corresponding record for the confirmation of faith, for He who died is risen and revealed to be there at the right hand of the Majesty on High. There are **three** in heaven, who are **One**.

Further, God has given us a witness in the very life that we have within ourselves, that we have eternal life, and that that life is in His Son. “He that hath the Son hath life”. We cannot have one without the other and God testifies of both.

John records finally that his purpose in writing is to attest and verify the truth of these wonderful things that belong to those who believe on the name of the Son of God.

The sons of God have still further proof of faith and of Him available to them at all times in asking and receiving from the Father. Only of course as behoves those who love God and who overcome the world, the asking will be only in accordance with the will of God (v.v. 14-15).

With characteristic loving care John concludes his epistle with simple words of warning: “Little children, keep yourselves from idols” (v. 21).

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF JOHN

1. The elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth;
2. For the truth's sake, which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever.
3. Grace be with you, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.
4. I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father.
5. And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another.
6. And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it.
7. For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.
8. Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.
9. Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.
10. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed;
11. For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.
12. Having many things to write unto you, I would not write with paper and ink: but I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full.
13. The children of thy elect sister greet thee. Amen.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF JOHN**LOVE AND TRUTH**

The second Epistle follows the same doctrinal teaching set forth in the First Epistle, and we have love as the fulfilment of the commandments and will of God. The emphasis is however that truth is basic to love. There is no love where truth is not held. Grace, mercy and peace are “in truth and love” (v. 3). And the subject matter to follow maintains this character.

RECEIVE HIM NOT (v. 10)

This letter is not to a Church. It is not addressed to officials of a Church, but it is sent to “the elect lady and her children”. It is to a saintly lady and her household. John says at the end that there are many things he would like to discuss, but that they could all wait until he was able to come and speak face to face. There was however one thing of great importance that made the letter necessary.

This was to tell this honoured lady, to be aware of false teachers who did not bring the true teachings of Christ. He knew of the danger and he warned the elect lady, not to receive such false workers into her house. More than this, she was to refuse them and not to wish them God-speed. That is, she was to keep her house clear of all such and she was not to allow herself to be identified with them as a wellwisher in their evil work.

Note that John did not write to a local Church to direct in such matters. This is a grass-roots directive. It is for all who have a house and a testimony. What John said to the elect lady he says through her, and by the Spirit of God whose words he penned, to all the people of God in every age of the Church. He says do not let them into the house, if they do not bring the true teachings of Christ, and be careful not to approve them or help them, in any way.

It is not that they had taught any particular evil doctrine, but simply that they did not teach the truth that is in Christ.

The true work of God can only be done by people who are prepared to act thus, severely, in refusing all association with people who have not the truth. It is because this directive has been forgotten by so many today, that ecumenism and Laodiceanism have won the day in Christendom and in all denominations in these the last days.

But some elect ladies and some elect gentlemen may still be found who love the Lord sufficiently to put truth first and who will obey the commandment of this Epistle.

THE THIRD EPISTLE OF JOHN

1. The elder unto the well-beloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth.
2. Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.
3. For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth.
4. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.
5. Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers;
6. Which have borne witness to thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well:
7. Because that for his name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles.
8. We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellowhelpers to the truth.
9. I wrote unto the church; but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not.
10. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church.
11. Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God.
12. Demetrius hath good report of all men, and of the truth itself: yea, and we also bear record; and ye know that our record is true.
13. I had many things to write, but I will not with ink and pen write unto thee:
14. But I trust I shall shortly see thee, and we shall speak face to face. Peace be to thee. Our friends salute thee. Greet the friends by name.

THE THIRD EPISTLE OF JOHN

TRUTH AND LOVE

The third epistle of John is written to a brother, one Gaius, of whom John says "I love in the truth". We thus have the same combination of love and truth but this epistle presents a different aspect of truth and another test of love.

DIOTREPES

John's concern centres around this man "who loveth to have the preeminence". He acted as though he was the Lord of the flock of God. The ministerial system of the clergy in the state churches and denominations and of rule by council and committee among other modern groups of churches contains the same evil that John decries in verses 9 and 10.

The mode of service which John applauds in the matter of ministry, is set out in verse 7. He refers to those who "for His Name's sake", "went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles". They had no stipend. They were not "on the list" of any mission or special fellowship. They were not beholden to any who knew not the Lord they served. They served only "for His Name's sake". Their eyes were to Him alone, and they served with absolute singleness of purpose. They did not serve for a mission or a denomination or a class or grouping of churches. They served the Lord Christ and Him only.

THE EPISTLE OF JUDE

The twenty-one epistles of the New Testament provide teaching for the whole period of the Church from the apostle's day to the coming of the Lord, when He will call His Church to be for ever with Himself.

Jude's short epistle of 25 verses is the last of the epistles and appropriately it has particular reference to the last days. The subject of Jude is the apostasy which would come.

We are now living in the period of that apostasy and the Church's time on earth will shortly cease, for the Lord is coming quickly. Jude's exhortation is "that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (v. 3).

THE EPISTLE OF JUDE

1. Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and ¹brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called:

¹ *Luke 6 : 16.*
Acts 1 : 13.

2. Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied.

3. Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

4. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

5. I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, ²afterward destroyed them that believed not.

² *Num. 14 : 29 - 37.*

6. And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

7. Even as ³Sodom and Gomorrhah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

³ *Gen. 19 : 24.*

8. Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.

9. Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, ⁴durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.

⁴ *dared.*

10. But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves.

11. Woe unto them! for they have gone ⁵in the way of Cain, and ⁶ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of ⁷Core.

⁵ *Gen. 4 : 5.*
⁶ *Num. 22 : 7, 21.*

⁷ *Korah.*

12. These are spots in your ⁸feasts of charity, when

⁸ *love feasts.*

Even in the days of the apostles, the inroads of error was such that it was necessary to contend for the faith. Throughout the whole period of the Church, it has been under assault from the enemy of souls by every foul means and it has always been necessary for God's people to contend for the faith. But never has there been a day when error and false teachings have been so widespread, so full and diverse, and held with such world-wide acceptance. This is indeed the apostasy, the base falling away from the faith of those whose profession it is to hold it. God's true people today will only be known in the world by the stand they take as they contend for the true faith, standing against the whole stream of the error and wickedness of the apostasy.

Note that in verse 3 the faith was "**once delivered** unto the saints". There is only "one faith". That which the Spirit of God delivered to the early Church, and which is enshrined in the completed Scriptures, is the one and only faith. Modernists and they of the apostasy generally today allege a change of faith with the passing of the years. They seek to tailor their faith to their own ideals and susceptibilities. The true faith however is still exactly the faith honoured by Paul and Peter, James, John and Jude. That faith is to be contended for, for the "common salvation" relates to that faith only. It is necessary to contend for it for the honour of the Lord.

THE APOSTASY

In this epistle Jude takes pains to show that in every period of God's dealings with men, men have in the end, always turned away from God in rank ungodliness. Men have always turned from a patient God who has sought in mercy to warn and turn the peoples to Himself.

He lists in this connection the children of Israel whom God delivered from Egypt, but who afterwards departed from Him in the wilderness and were destroyed.

Similarly God had to judge at Sodom and Gomorrha.

Even the angels that sinned are referred to: "He hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day" (v. 6).

Thus apostasy has been recurrent throughout the universe, and the message is that judgment must ultimately follow.

The clear implication is that even in the era of the Church, in which men have been sought with divine entreaty and a message of a Saviour's love, the end will still be the same, for the heart of man is still the same, and the force of evil in the universe is still the same, especially while Satan is the God of this world. The apostasy would come, and the judgment of God must follow in consequence.

they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots;

13. Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.

14. And ⁹Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, ⁹ *Gen. 5 : 18 - 24.*

15. To execute judgment upon all, and to ¹⁰convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. ¹⁰ *convict.*

16. These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage.

17. But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ;

18. How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts.

19. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.

20. But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost,

21. Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

22. And of some have compassion, making a difference:

23. And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.

24. Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,

25. To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

ENOCH'S PROPHECY (v. 14)

Enoch was translated to heaven before the flood came, bringing God's judgment on the world of men who had turned in an ungodly apostasy from the faith and knowledge of God.

But Jude tells us that before his translation Enoch was given to see this day and age of ours, and just a little beyond our day, to the time when the Lord "with ten thousand of His saints" will come "to execute judgment" on the ungodly. Like Enoch, the true Church will be translated before the judgment falls, but that judgment will surely fall on all that is anti-Christian or that is Christian only in name.

MOCKERS OF THE LAST DAYS (v. 18)

The apostles at the first prophesied it would be so, and so it is that there are "mockers", in these the last days. They have all the characteristics portrayed by Jude, and the apostles and Jude and Enoch are all proved to be true prophets for their prophecies are being fulfilled before our eyes.

There are mockers who scoff at the resurrection; at immortality; at the coming of Christ; at the atonement; at the virgin birth of Christ; at the verbal inspiration of Scripture. They preach the Darwin evolution theory or any other theory, and mock at the Scripture account of creation, and at the God of creation.

The apostles and Jude have warned "that there would be mockers in the last time", and behold, it is so.

JUDE'S EXHORTATION

In these the circumstances of the last time, Jude first exhorts that God's people "should earnestly contend for the faith" (v. 3).

But now, at the end of the epistle, he speaks to the beloved of God of the last time, and he offers a particular word of direction and help : —

"Keep yourselves in the love of God" (v. 21).

He directs further that this will be achieved by the following means : —

1. **Building up** yourselves on your most holy faith.
2. **Praying in** the Holy Ghost.
3. **Looking for** the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

Brother, while others around will mock and scoff, let us build up ourselves, on our most holy faith; pray; and look up.

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