





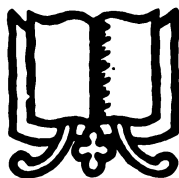


# Studies in the Epistle to the Hebrews

By

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# PREFACE.

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THE following are, strictly speaking, "Studies," not a continuous commentary. In writing them, no attempt has been made to remove every little difficulty; and yet there has been no conscious evasion of graver problems, but rather a prevailing desire to contribute help where help was believed to be most needed.

The whole of the Sacred Text has been given, mainly according to the Author's "Emphasised" Version, with such occasional modifications as seemed likely to advance the principal object, namely, that of successful exposition. It is hoped that, by thus giving prominence to the Epistle itself, detailed comment will be found to be the less required.

Following this Preface will be found an "Introductory Note" on the Authorship of the Epistle; and some notes of comparison with the conclusions of others regarding various points are given in an Appendix.

If the joy and inspiration afforded to the writer of these "Studies" be in fair measure shared by those who read them, devout thankfulness will be the result, and praise be given to Him to whom alone it is due.

J. B. R.

*June, 1906.*



# INTRODUCTORY NOTE

ON

## THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

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WHEN, nearly thirty years ago, the present writer's attention was first especially directed to the style of this Epistle, he became firmly convinced that the Apostle Paul was not its author: that, unless we could suppose a miracle in violation of all known mental law, suddenly clothing the mind of the apostle with habits of thought and expression foreign to him, it was psychologically impossible that he could have penned or dictated this unique Epistle. And now, after this long interval, and after some months of renewed and continuous study, not merely for the purpose of translation, but for the different and in some ways deeper design of exposition,—the old persuasion has returned with more than redoubled force, extending now to the definite conviction that the mind that thought this Epistle composed the words in which alone its thoughts could be expressed.

That there is a *general* agreement between the thinking of Paul and that of this Anonymous Writer, may be admitted; but what does that prove? Let the student ask himself by way of illustration, in view of the *possibility* that Apollos was the writer, whether there must not have

been, in any case, a general affinity between the conceptions of Paul and Apollos, as to the Old Testament in general and the newly accomplished facts of Redemption in particular? How else could they have laboured together in the Gospel so harmoniously as they manifestly did?

But the agreement itself must not be over-pressed. *Rendall* has made out a case, with learning, industry, and skill, which would go to show that the Epistle to the Hebrews was written by some accomplished man whose precise cast of Christian thought was more closely in accord with that which distinguishes the Apostles of the Circumcision (James and Peter, particularly the latter) than that which characterises the writings of the Apostle to the Gentiles; and in particular, that the Writer of this Epistle wrote *after* the Roman armies had begun to encircle Jerusalem: daring, in that fateful crisis, to say things to which he could not have hoped to gain attention at an earlier date. If, however, in spite of the plausibility of this view, we should still lean to the persuasion that Apollos was the author, that might possibly draw to itself as much of likelihood as may be discovered in Harnack's conjecture—that the Letter may have come from Priscilla and Aquila, the former being the actual writer. Well, yes; and a very pretty picture it makes: Apollos, dictating; Priscilla, writing; and Aquila highly and heartily approving. This would admirably account for the singular changes from “us,” “we,” “ourselves,” to “I,” “I” in chapter xiii. 18, 19.

It should not be forgotten that the sure result of foregoing the Pauline authorship of this Epistle is a permanent enrichment of our thoughts regarding the literary output of the primitive age, while as yet the illuminating gifts of the

Holy Spirit were richly enjoyed. If Paul did not write this eloquent treatise, then the shadow of a Great Unknown, of transcendent spiritual gifts, is thrown across our path. We are richer than we thought !

The one point which for myself remains firmly settled is the purely negative one: that whoever wrote this Epistle it was not the Apostle Paul. In holding fast to this conclusion, I find myself in excellent company. Professor *Peake* says: "Nothing is so certain with respect to the authorship as the negative conclusion that it was not written by Paul . . . . For centuries the whole Western Church refused to recognise it as Paul's. . . . These differences not only preclude Pauline authorship; they show conclusively that Paul can have had nothing to do with the Epistle directly or indirectly. It is in no sense a Pauline Epistle, and only in the loosest sense can it be spoken of as Pauline in theology."—"Century Bible—Hebrews," pp. 28, 33. "A more detailed inquiry," says *Westcott*, "shows that these [differences of style] cannot be adequately explained by differences of subject or circumstances. They characterise two men, and not two moods or two discussions."

Again, let us reflect that by this negative conclusion we are no losers. Anonymity throws us absolutely upon contents and quality, on spiritual perception and general enlightened consent. In the fine words of *Westcott*: "If we hold that the judgment of the Spirit makes itself felt through the consciousness of the Christian Society, no book of the Bible is more completely recognised by universal consent as giving a divine view of the facts of the Gospel, full of lessons for all time, than the Epistle to the Hebrews."





# STUDIES IN THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

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## STUDY I.

### THE STANDPOINT OF THE EPISTLE.

REPEATED studies in the Epistle to the Hebrews having convinced me of the great importance of gaining the right point of view for interpreting this important Christian document, the object of this "Study" is to shew what that point of view is.

I. It is plain that the writer places us *at the close of the Levitical economy*. He does this by the use of a significant phrase in his opening sentence, which, when interpreted in the light of the entire Epistle, sets this matter at rest. He tells us that it is at "the end of these days" that God has spoken to us in his Son. As the temple was still standing, its priests were still ministering, and its sacrifices were still being offered—and yet these things were ready to vanish—it is clear that the phrase "at the end of these days" denotes the close of the Levitical economy.

This clause,—as it appears in the A.V., based upon a less exact Greek text, namely "in these last days,"—might have made a different impression,—might have suggested that "the last days" of the world's history had already come. The revised Greek text makes no such suggestion; but merely intimates that, "at the end of these (then

current) days," God had spoken in the manner described ; leaving us perfectly free to conclude from the whole tenor of the Epistle, that "the end of these days" is equivalent to the close of the Levitical age. This is a great point gained.

II. It is equally plain that the writer sees *another order coming*. This order he describes in a variety of ways, to the separate and combined force of which we must now give our best attention. He speaks of:—

- a. A "world" or "habitable earth" to come—i. 6 ; ii. 5.
- b. A "salvation" to come—i. 14 ; ix. 28.
- c. A coming "subjection of all things" to "man"—ii. 9.
- d. A "sabbath-rest" to come—iv. 9-11.
- e. An "age to come"—vi. 5.
- f. A "covenant" to be made with Israel and Judah—viii.
- g. A manifestation of the way into the holiest—ix. 8.
- h. Good things to come—ix. 11 ; x. 1.
- i. The Coming One himself—x. 37.
- j. A shaking of heaven and earth—xii. 25-27.
- k. A kingdom immovable—xii. 28.
- l. A city that will abide—xiii. 14.

These collective representations obviously go to the root of the matter, indicating what is the nature of the new order of things which it was intended should supersede the old. As we study them, however, two divergent impressions are made upon our minds. The *first* is, that the coming things are near at hand, at the time of writing the Epistle : the *second* is, that some of the most important of them have not even yet appeared. Let us look patiently in both directions.

FIRST: *The Coming Things seem to be NEAR AT HAND.*

1. Naturally, if they are to replace the obsolete order, which is on the point of departing, we should expect them soon to set in.

2. This first impression is *distinctly confirmed* when we observe *how deep a foundation* has already been laid on which the new order is to rest. Sin has been effectually dealt with, so far as sacrifice is concerned. The great salvation thereby secured has been spoken by its Author, confirmed by his immediate hearers, and divinely attested by miraculous gifts sent down from heaven. The representative Man has appeared—been tested—approved—crowned. Heaven itself has been entered by a priest after the superior order of Melchizedek. A new covenant for Israel and Judah has been guaranteed and ratified. Eternal redemption has been discovered. A new class of worshippers, with perfectly cleansed consciences, has commenced its services through a new and living way of approach unto the Divine Majesty.

3. And at length, in the twelfth chapter of the Epistle, a note of triumph is struck by a magnificently sublime and sweeping enumeration of compassed blessings that would seem to invite the conclusion that the entire new order has been definitely and finally established,

But we must hasten slowly ; for now :—

SECOND : *Some of the most important of the Good Things to Come, would seem to have* NOT EVEN YET APPEARED.

1. *Certainly* “all things” are not yet seen to be subject to Man ; or at least were not when the Epistle was written, for the writer himself explicitly says so ; and we have only to use our eyes to be just as sure of it to-day. *Certainly*, our High Priest has not yet returned from within the veil ; or at least no trustworthy information has reached us that he has done so. *Certainly*, we still have here no abiding city : we are still footsore pilgrims, seeking our way to the city that is to be. Here are *three* of the Things to Come of which we can be quite sure that they have not yet arrived.

2. *Probably* the coming habitable earth has not yet appeared. For our Epistle speaks of the introduction into it of the First Begotten as a re-introduction : “ whensoever he may introduce him ”—not that he has already done so, intimating, in truth, the Second Coming rather than the First. Besides, the Ninety-seventh Psalm, which summons the “ gods ” or “ messengers ” to worship the First Begotten, is a Psalm of the Kingdom yet to come. Harken to its key-note :—

||Yahweh|| hath become king,  
Let the earth exult',  
Let the multitude of coastlands rejoice'.

And see how unmistakably the manifestation of that kingdom, here on earth, is indicated :—

The heavens | have declared | his righteousness,—  
And all the people | have seen | his glory.

*Probably* the way into the Holiest has not yet been manifested in the sense of the writer where he speaks of the continued standing of the “ first tent ” as an obstacle in the way of such manifestation. It was never contemplated that the first or outer *literal* tent should be taken down, leaving the second or inner *literal* tent standing alone, with an open way into it. Therefore, we are compelled to resort to the symbolic meaning of that double tent, as intimated by the allusion to “ the veil ” of Christ’s “ flesh ” ; and, so regarding the matter, as a figurative description of our double human nature, with its psychic or soul-state now existing, and its pneumatic or spirit-state yet to come,—we find the meaning to be : That, while our present psychic state continues, we cannot personally enter into the very presence of God ; and that, therefore, we too must, like our Forerunner, enter into the holiest “ through the veil ” of our “ flesh.” *Probably, this* is the laying open of the way into

the holiest which the Holy Spirit signifies in the remarkable passage here alluded to; and therefore, I say advisedly, "probably" the Spirit is pointing to the transformation of our personal condition, as necessary to our actual admission into the presence of God.

*Probably*, also, the shaking, not of earth only, as on occasion of the Divine Appearing on Sinai, but of heaven also,—with still more decisive effect, even the removal of all removable things, — probably, I say, this tremendous shaking has not yet been brought into fulfilment. At any rate, the kingdom of the heavens, as it appears in the Judicial Parables of Matthew xiii.—and in the so-called Christian World—seems to have much doubtful and temporary matter clinging to it which must inevitably be shaken from off it, in order that *that only* which *cannot be shaken* may remain ; which is the only kingdom we are receiving. Besides, the prophet Haggai, from whom the prospect of such an antitypical “ shaking ” is derived, plainly forecasts a shaking such as has never yet occurred—such as only the Messiah’s Second Advent can satisfy. Observe that he duplicates his prediction, and note its strong points. First he says :—

|| Yet once || | a little | it is, —  
 And I' am shaking,  
 The heavens and the earth, and  
 The sea and the dry land ;  
 And I will shake all the nations,  
 And the delight of all the nations | shall come in |, —  
 And I will fill this house with glory,  
 Saith Yahweh of hosts.  
 Mine' is the silver      and Mine' the gold,  
 Declareth Yahweh of hosts :  
 Greater' shall be the last glory of this house than the first,  
 Saith Yahweh of hosts, —  
 And < in this place > will I give prosperity,  
 Declareth Yahweh of hosts.

When was this fulfilled? No single part of it has yet been made good! Admitting that it looks as though, when fulfilled, the temple as then to be rebuilt would be standing—standing when this greater glory should come; yet this is scarcely an insuperable difficulty, seeing that in the A.V. itself, and still more clearly in the Revised and the Emphasised, the temple is regarded as *one* in its various conditions of original erection and subsequent restoration. Better, therefore, assume a yet further restoration of the temple in Jerusalem, than suppose a final dishonour to the prophetic word. In no case has this first prediction been fulfilled:—The elements have not been shaken with a Supra-Sinaitic force; the nations have not been shaken so as to bring the delight of all nations into the temple; and neither has the greater glory appeared, nor “prosperity” been given “in this place.” The second passage in Haggai is almost equally decisive:—

Speak thou unto Zerubbabel, pasha of Judah, saying:—

I' am shaking the heavens and the earth;

And I will overturn the throne of kingdoms,

And will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the nations,—

And I will overturn the chariots and them who ride therein,

And horses and their riders |shall come down|, every man by the sword of his brother.

On that day>

Declareth Yahweh of hosts,

will I take thee, O Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel—my servant,

Declareth Yahweh,

And I will set thee as a signet-ring;

For <thee> have I chosen,

Declareth Yahweh of hosts.

If Daniel is to “rise and stand in his lot” in the Messianic consummation, so also we may be sure, will Zerubbabel, thus signalled and encouraged by name. No student of prophecy needs to be told that such an over-

turning of the warriors of the nations is just what we are led to expect on Messiah's Return.

III. We are now probably in a position to state more definitely what the Standpoint of this Epistle is. That the writer realised that he and his first readers were at the close of the Levitical Economy became evident at the very outset of our inquiry. That *he* was looking—and would have *them* look—for a new order of things far surpassing the old was also plain. That a solid foundation had already been laid by the first advent and its immediate results in the resurrection and ascension of the Messiah for such new order was seen to be beyond dispute. But it was soon discovered that it would require the promised Return of the Ascended Christ in order to the final establishment of the coming age with its fulness of blessing. And, to be as precise as possible, the present interval between the two Advents was seen to correspond to the solemn moments which, in typical days, elapsed between the disappearance of the High Priest within the Second Veil and his re-appearance to bless the people. And so, although so many centuries have elapsed since the entrance of our High Priest into the Divine Presence above, yet would we still seem to be under the spell of that “little while” of waiting (antitypically extended) concerning which we are assured that, after all, it will not be unduly protracted.

IV. The one objection to the above attempt to settle the point at issue is, that it necessitates the protraction of a short time into a long one. Theoretically the Delay ought to have been short, historically it is proving to be long beyond all we could have expected. Let us not shrink from realising the full force of this objection. Let us put the case in all its strength by alluding to the Destruction of the



Temple by the Romans, and by admitting how convenient it would have been, for simple and straightforward exposition, if the Christian Interpreter had been in a position to say: "That famous event (the destruction of Jerusalem) is the dividing line between the typical and the antitypical dispensations: it was then that the vanishing things vanished and that the coming things came." Of course he *cannot* say this. How can he? The vanishing things vanished—perhaps! although it is a little awkward that ever since then synagogue worship has continued, and passovers and great days of atonement have been kept. But certainly the lingering Good Things did not then cease to linger. To see this, we have only to ask a few pointed questions:—Did the new Habitable Earth appear then? Was the subjection of all things to Man witnessed then? Was the way into the Holiest thrown open then, as it had not been for forty years before? Did the Coming One come then; and, ceasing to wait above, come down below to put his enemies under his feet? Did the heavenly Jerusalem descend then, to take the place of the earthly, which was thenceforward to be trodden down of the Gentiles? Since these questions must be answered in the negative, it is impossible that we can accept the easy exegesis suggested. We prefer, therefore, to let the objection stand for the present in all its weight. The little while has proved to be a long while. The Second Advent has not followed with the promptness that might have been desired and that would have been so convenient for interpreting the Epistle to the Hebrews.

V. Let us now attempt a Solution of this difficulty—the difficulty of Delay. If we succeed, our gain will be immense; for the entire Epistle will be thrown open to our edification, enjoyment and practical application to saints

and sinners as it scarcely could be, so long as this difficulty remained unsettled ; and the solution found satisfactory here will certainly more or less apply to both the Gospels and the Pauline Epistles.

1. Let us first of all remember that “ long ” and “ short ” are relative terms. Under some circumstances half-an-hour appears to be an intolerably long time, while, under others, a few years appear short. All depends on the scale, and this again depends upon the nature of the events to which the terms “ long ” and “ short ” are applied. Some years ago, on occasion of a political scare as to a supposed danger in Asia, a late eminent statesman advised the alarmists to quiet their fears by procuring *larger maps*. Let students of Prophecy take the hint and enlarge their maps. Let them apprehend the large scale on which the great facts of Redemption are transpiring.

2. Let us next remember that the Law was only a Shadow of the Coming Good Things and not the very Image of them. Hence the shortness of the period of the High Priest's disappearance within the veil on the great Day of Atonement, must not be too strongly pressed. No priest ever entered into the Holiest to sit down within that sacred shrine ; but our High Priest has done so : “ from henceforth expecting ”—from henceforth “ waiting ”—until his enemies be made his footstool. The very fact that a time of “ waiting ” is assigned to him there, and that the time of waiting is, in another view of it, a time of reigning and not of inactivity, may well familiarise us with the idea that a not inconsiderable time may elapse between his disappearance and his return.

3. But chiefly let us note that, just where—in the Epistle—speedy fulfilment seems most confidently anticipated, there, if we go back to the original prophecy quoted, some

considerable delay is very carefully provided against, lest it should unduly depress. The Epistle shews a lively hope :—

For <yet a little while, how short ! how short !>  
|The Coming One| will be here, and will not tarry.

But the prophecy of Habakkuk, here referred to, is most sober and carefully balanced, as witness its words :—

For yet' is the vision for an appointed time  
Still, it presseth towards an end,  
And will not deceive,—  
<If it tarry> wait thou for it,  
For it ||surely cometh||,—  
Will not be too late.

The whole passage is full of life and movement, of energy and restraint, of urging on and holding back. There is an appointed time, very likely consisting of concurrent events rather than a mere stroke of the clock. There is a great end to be attained, and one greatly desired, towards which divine forces press, controlled and impelled by the determination that the result shall ultimately satisfy. Nevertheless, delay is supposed to be so possible, or probable, that a consequent duty is laid down : “wait thou for it.” And, finally, there is the hint given that the delay may be continued until the last moment. The great fulfilment may arrive only just in time to prevent falsification. Such are the balanced bearings of this great passage in Habakkuk—the fine point of which is needlessly blunted both in the A.V. and the R.V., though a little less in the latter. Delay is so distinctly deemed possible that duty is based on that contingency. It seems only fair to urge this feature peculiar to the prophecy, especially because it is the original and fuller utterance. Nor need we admit any real contradiction between Habakkuk and Hebrews, since

the longest waiting may, after it is well past, appear but as a dream.

VI. The sum of the matter then is this: The Epistle to the Hebrews places its readers just at the junction of Two Ages—an outgoing and an incoming. These Two Ages naturally overlap each other—the outgoing has not yet finally departed, and the incoming has not yet fully set in. These Two Ages, in some measure, answer to each other—the earlier foreshadowing and paving the way for the later. But the resemblance must not be exaggerated; nor must the second be regarded as the mere product of the first. In other words, the contrasts between them are greater than the resemblances. The Two Ages lie not on the same plane: and are far from being precise counterparts. The Levitical Age was shadowy, typical, ethnic or national, earthly, temporary; the New Age is substantial, anti-typical, cosmic or world-wide, heavenly and earthly combined, and permanent. The former, therefore, cannot be a perfect picture of the latter. The latter cannot be restricted to the former. This is not only true in fact and in detail, but is enunciated by this very writer as a controlling principle which faith grasps and on which faith rests:—

||By faith|| we understand the ages to have been fitted together  
||by declaration of God||,—

To the end that |not out of things appearing| should that  
which is seen ||have come into existence||.

There is the principle. Creation as well as evolution goes into the constitution of the ages. Christ is greater than Moses—the Melchizedek priesthood superior to the Aaronic—the Coming Habitable Earth vaster and more enduring than Palestine—the reign of the Messiah loftier and more penetrating than the reign of David or Solomon. These conclusions govern the whole question of interpreta-

tion. We must enlarge our maps. We must make way for God's Creative word. Hence we must beware of straitened rules of exegesis. We may allow for figures of speech; but we must not contract the predicted facts to the small dimensions of the figures which foreshadowed them.

## STUDY II.

### THE INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

(Chap. I. 1—4.)

1. <sup>1</sup> Whereas <in many parts and in many ways of old God spake unto the fathers |in the prophets|>  
<sup>2</sup> ||At the end of these days||  
    He hath spoken unto us |in a Son|,—  
    Whom he hath appointed heir of all things,  
    Through whom also he hath made the ages ;  
<sup>3</sup>   Who <being an eradiated brightness of his glory  
    And an exact representation of his very being,  
    Also bearing up all things by the utterance of his power,  
    ||Purification of sins|| having achieved>  
    Sat down on the right hand of the Majesty in high places :  
<sup>4</sup>   By |so| much becoming superior' |to the messengers|,  
    By |as| much as, going beyond them, he hath inherited a  
    more distinguished ||name||.

THIS magnificent Introduction is the keynote to the Epistle, and as such invites our patient attention. It may be considered grammatically, logically, and rhetorically.

1. *Grammatically.*—It consists of 74 words in the original and 107 in the Revised Version, which are firmly compacted by participles and pronouns into a single sentence. Some translators have broken it up into two or three sentences ; but it would appear to be safer and more reverent to preserve its unity intact.

Its central word is “Son” ; for to that word all that goes before leads up, and from it a commanding force is carried forward into all that follows by the three words “whom,” “whom,” “who” ; the third of which—“who”—conducts the sense triumphantly to the close.

Its leading verb is "hath spoken"—"God hath spoken in a Son"; and its second leading verb is "sat down"—the which "Son,"—"being," "bearing up," "having achieved,"—"sat down."

Up to the Son the first leading verb conducts; from the Son the second leading verb flows: "God hath spoken in a Son—who hath sat down."

2. *Logically*.—"Son" stands in the centre of the whole thought, as well as grammatically in the central position among the words. For no sooner is "Son" named than *heirship* springs out of it: "a Son,—whom he hath made heir of all things," *heirship* coming out again in the grand climax—"hath INHERITED a more distinguished Name." Thrown into the form of a single proposition, the logical backbone of the whole passage may be thus expressed: That the Sonly method of Divine Speech surpasses the Prophetic; the Prophetic having been fragmentary and unequal, whereas the Sonly possesses a far larger element of completeness and uniformity.

3. *Rhetorically*.—The logic of the passage is enforced by two fine strokes of rhetoric: the first consists in bringing the two great adverbs *polymerôs' kai polytrópôs*, "In many parts and in many ways," to the very front, thereby making them strongly emphatic, and by contrast suggesting, "NOT THUS when Divine Speech came Sonwise;" and the second consists in withholding the word *onoma*, "name," to the very end (which the Emphasised Version has been at some pains to imitate);—and so—radiant with Divine Sonship and consequent Divine Nature—the word "Name" crowns the edifice of this most noble Introduction to the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Notwithstanding the conviction already expressed, that in *translation* it is better to preserve the whole of this Introduction intact as a single sentence,—it is readily

granted that, for the purposes of *exposition*, it may be helpful to educe, from the one sentence, the various propositions which it enfolds : their number may well cause us to admire the skill and the power with which they have been welded into one compound sentence. They are as follows :—

- I. That God has spoken to man—to the fathers in the prophets, to us in a Son.
- II. That in two particulars—completeness and uniformity—Divine Speech in the Son surpasses Divine Speech in the prophets.
- III. That the Son has been made heir of all things.
- IV. That the Son has been employed to make the ages.
- V. That the Son, with fulness and precision, makes God known.
- VI. That the Son sustains all things.
- VII. That the Son has achieved a purification of sins.
- VIII. That the Son has taken his seat at the right hand of God.
- IX. That the Son has become superior to messengers by the measure of his more distinguished Name.

## **I. God has spoken to man—to the fathers in the prophets, to us in a Son.**

As this is assumed rather than asserted, we need not dwell upon it. God's words should be their own witness ; but they need a congenial soil on which to fall. Only let men hunger for fellowship with their Maker, and they will surely recognise his voice. Yet is it well that they should get some insight into the methods of his communications. If they look for the same fulness, directness, and explicitness of Divine Revelation in the Old Testament as in the



New, they will be disappointed; and, stumbling at the threshold, may too easily be deterred from going any further. Note well, therefore, the next point.

**II. In two particulars—namely, completeness of matter and uniformity of manner—does revelation by the Son surpass revelation by the prophets.**

Both particulars are suggested by way of contrast. *In many parts of old*—but now in one continuous outpouring. *In many ways of old*—but now in the one direct way of familiar personal teaching.

“In many parts;” intimating, what we otherwise know, that the most abiding truths of the ancient teaching were conveyed by a hint here, and then again—after a time—by another hint there: the disconnected hints being enigmatic for awhile, and needing to be collected with care and connected with skill, in order to decipher their meaning. That was one disadvantage “of old.”

“In many ways;” in that the ancient teaching came through varieties of manner which, though invested with some charm and utility, yet had many drawbacks. At one time the revelation came by dream or vision, at another by symbolic action, at another by verbal communication. The speech of one prophet was florid and full; of another, plain, brief, abrupt. One prophet, dealing chiefly with current events and wants, only with momentary abruptness darted forth into the future; while his fellow, soaring aloft at once, saw the future in perspective like a vast landscape, his visions demanding an instructed and cultured eye to decipher them. Sometimes several difficulties of manner clogged a single prediction. Nathan, to David, spake—one

moment—as if of royal children needing chastisement, and—the next—as if of a Son who needed none. David, in Psalm Sixteen, begins with an experience truly his own, and then imperceptibly passes into an experience entirely beyond himself: in Psalm Seventy-two he begins, as if of Solomon, yet lo! “a greater than Solomon is here.” “Jerusalem,” in the prophets, though linked with the sins and sorrows of old, as if on purpose to prove that the historical city is meant, yet is anon beheld so glorified as to tempt the unskilled reader to deem it, not the earthly Jerusalem at all, but a heavenly. Such are some of the difficulties growing out of the “many ways” of ancient Divine Speech in the prophets; and which—it is suggested by contrast—do not characterise the communications of the Son.

It would be easy to name many subjects whose Old Testament treatment is beset with *both* difficulties, such as the Divine threatening of death, with the exact nature and incidence of that death; the promise of life, whether entered upon in part at death, or only after resurrection; the seed of the Woman, of Abraham, of David, whether fleshly or spiritual; the reason and meaning of sacrifices; the relation of Israel to the Gentiles, whether temporary or abiding; the threatenings and promises of God, how far conditional and how far absolute; times and seasons, how far positively fixed and how far contingent on human and Satanic action. Suffice it to say: That the closer our acquaintance with both revelations—the Hebrew and the Christian—the more vividly shall we realise the immeasurable superiority of the latter, on the score both of completeness of matter and uniformity of manner.

It may safely be granted that the superiority is only one of degree; that, even in the teaching of the Son, there are

“many parts and many ways” to exercise our care and skill. Nevertheless, the broad fact of an immeasurable superiority remains undeniable. In the teaching of the Son the “parts” were not far separated from each other, being all compressed into about three short years; and the “ways” were not very divergent,—plain speech, easy metaphor and simple parable being the chief, while allegory and fable were conspicuous by their absence, and of symbolic actions there were almost none; and, as to the parables, it may be said that many of them were simply homely illustrations of principles, instantly luminous when spoken, and that those of them which were more difficult because they were prophetic were either at once publicly explained or else their interpretations, though judicially hidden for a time, were afterwards blazed abroad and have come down to us side by side with the parables to which they relate.

Of this alleged superiority of the Sonly revelation over the prophetic, you can judge for yourselves. The comparison can easily be made. The old communications in the prophets and the new communications in the Son have been collected and printed side by side in that one-volumed library which we call our “Bible.” A candid comparison of them will undoubtedly prove how readily the several “parts” of the teaching of the Son coalesce, with such readiness, indeed, that even the unique line of the Fourth Gospel entwines itself about the story of the Synoptics so naturally that the average Christian mind becomes conscious of only One Christ and one body of teaching emanating from Him.

But now the crowning point is this:—That the undeniable superiority of the later revelation grew naturally out of the closer relationship to God borne by the Son than that sustained by the prophets. *He* could speak with such

completeness and such plainness *because he was a Son*. The Greek of this great opening clause dispenses with the definite article before the word "Son," presumably on purpose to set this point in bold relief: "hath spoken unto us *en huiō*=in Son=Sonwise"="in and through One whom He delights to call 'Son.'" By the term "Son" the appeal is carried to the universal heart of man, seeing that everywhere the relation of father and son is perfectly familiar; so that all men are able, in a measure, to apprehend how a Divine Father could speak by a Divine Son as he could speak by none other. A son is in his father's confidence; a son knows his father's principles, purposes and ways; and, when the relationship is perfect, the interests of father and son coincide and are one. Such then is the relationship which is here used for carrying this commencing half of our Introduction to its commanding climax. In such a one—in a Son—hath God now spoken. What, then, of transcendent force and fulness, light and love may we not expect in Divine communications so made?

But *who was* this Son in whom God had lately spoken? It is a stroke of rhetorical art that the Writer does not at first say. He will tell us that later on. He will identify him beyond dispute:—as being a partaker with us in blood and flesh; as praying in distress with strong crying and tears; as learning obedience by the things that he suffered; as having his blood shed without the gate of the city, after being thrust forth as unclean outside the camp of Judaism. He will not shrink from acknowledging the shame of the "Cross." And even before he comes to that he will boldly combine the bitterly reproached name of identification, "JESUS," with the title of highest honour, by saying—that it is "JESUS THE SON OF GOD" of whom he is writing.<sup>a</sup> But meantime he must prepare the way for

<sup>a</sup> Chapter iv. 14.

that explicit avowal, and therefore as yet avoids mentioning the name "Jesus." At first he only implies that God has a Son, whom to send to us, in whom to speak to us as he had never spoken before. Yes, so it is, that in this well-calculated Introduction, the Writer takes care to go no further than to build up the honour and proclaim the achievements of the new Ambassador from heaven. And though even here in these opening verses, he evidently has the "Cross" in mind, yet does he not mention it, but only weaves its blessed result, as "a purification for sins," into his garland of praise.

And as at present he does not identify the Son, so neither does he *define the Sonship*. He does not say Eternal Son, or Son by Virgin Birth, or Son by Resurrection. He does indeed at once shew the profound meaning he attaches to the term "Son": he is plainly thinking of a Divine Son, possessing a Divine Nature, and consequently invested with ability and commission to speak as man had spoken never before. The office he here prominently attributes to him of uttering Divine Speech, and the honours which he here breathlessly heaps upon his head clearly reveal that it is a Divine Son of whom he is thinking. Moreover, the references he makes to the Sonship as he unfolds his argument are in perfect harmony with this weighty beginning. He deems it wonderful that, being a Son, he should have to learn obedience by suffering.<sup>a</sup> He counts the Sonship a splendid equipment for the Priesthood.<sup>b</sup> And, finally, he regards the Sonship as peculiarly dishonoured by Apostates from the faith: they are again crucifying to themselves THE SON OF GOD<sup>c</sup>—he says with dismay; yea, they have trampled underfoot THE SON OF GOD—he exclaims with horror.<sup>d</sup> But although we thus perceive what an exalted perception he had of the Sonship, yet does he not formally

<sup>a</sup> v. 8.<sup>b</sup> vii. 28.<sup>c</sup> vi. 6.<sup>d</sup> x. 29.

or exactly define it. And *our* wisdom is to imitate *him*; to approach the Sonship with adoring wonder, but taking good heed lest we lose its warmth, lest we miss its fellowship with our own sonship, lest we fail to grasp how our Manhood finds place in the person of the Divine Son, and how the Son lifts up our Manhood into the effulgence of God.

### **III. The Son hath been appointed heir of all things.**

*Whom he hath appointed heir of all things.*—Here the word “appointed” is worthy of notice, as suited to something unique. In ordinary cases of heirship, the words would have naturally run: “In a Son, who was also (or therefore) his heir.” Why, then, “appointed”?

This significant word at once makes me think of Jesus—the Man—the Crucified—the Disowned. And from this point of view the conception becomes in the highest degree exhilarating. My Jesus—my Brother—my Saviour—is appointed heir of all things! He who had not where to lay his head is now placed in possession of the Universe. All material things, all intelligent beings, are acknowledged as belonging to him by virtue of his Divine Sonship. How the life of Jesus on earth is glorified by his inheritance of all things. As I read the story of his lowliness I exclaim with admiring love: So toiled, so suffered he who now, by Divinely admitted right, is Lord of the universe!

### **IV. The Son has been employed in making the ages.**

*Through whom he hath made the ages.*—“Ages” rather than “worlds” should be understood, both here and in

chapter xi. 3.<sup>a</sup> It is mainly a question of exposition ; for if these two passages can be well explained by referring them to “ages,” there can be no good reason for making of them the only exceptions to the general rule—which is, to distinguish in translation between *æon* “age” and *kosmos* “world.” The one real difficulty springs from the unfamiliarity of the subject ; but by time and perseverance this difficulty may be overcome. And I am not without hope of being able to shew that “ages” is truer to the language and more honouring to the Son of God than “worlds.” Let us begin quite simply, and advance little by little.

An “age” is, popularly, *a long period of time* ; as when we say of a building, “It will stand for an age” ; or of the coal beds, “They were deposited long ages ago.” More precisely, an “age” is *a long period of time, bearing a certain character* : as “the dark ages,” “the age of the printing press,” and in the N.T. “the present evil age.” Still more especially, an age is *a long period of time bearing a certain character, impressed on it by divine ordering or control* : then we call it a “dispensation” ; as for instance the Mosaic or the Christian. It is interesting to note that a long age may include several shorter ; as the Hebrew Commonwealth may be regarded as administered by priests, by judges, by kings ; and the great Christian age may be subdivided into the Church age and the Kingdom age. One very important feature in *a Divine Dispensation* is, that each dispensation has its especial laws, and consequently its especial duties. Love to God is due from his intelligent creatures in all dispensations alike ; but in one age this principle may make circumcision binding, because there is a divine law to that effect ; in another, baptism,—by virtue of a special command. And here we note two things ; namely, first, THAT NO LAW CAN BE OBEYED BEFORE IT IS

† See App. (1).

GIVEN; and, secondly, THAT NO LAW NEED BE OBEYED AFTER IT IS ABROGATED. Another very important point with regard to all “ages” properly so called, including those we call Divine Dispensations, is—That they are not commonly, if ever, begun in an instant and ended at a stroke; but overlap each other, so that one is ending while another is beginning. Even Christ went on obeying Moses at the very time he was giving little by little a new constitution—a new covenant—a new dispensation.

Perhaps we have already gone far enough to be able to see that it redounds quite as much to the Son’s honour to say that through him “the ages” have been made, as to say that through him “the worlds” have been formed.

Are there more worlds than one? There may be; but I believe that the Bible knows nothing of them by that name—at least, when the original or a uniform translation is consulted. We do know that there are “ages,” and “ages of ages;” and is it nothing to be told *they* are made by the Son of God?

But let us advance to chapter xi. 3, of our Epistle. I submit that the language there used better suits “ages” than “worlds.” “By faith we understand the ages to have been fitted together by declaration of God; to the end that not out of things appearing should that which is seen have come into existence.” I repeat, It has yet to be shewn that the Bible knows anything of a plurality of worlds (*kosmoi*); but be that as it may, and without denying that the term “fitting together” *might* apply to them if they could be found; what I claim is that this beautiful artificer’s word does most admirably suit the overruling and controlling and adjusting of the “ages.” Indeed, I feel inclined to modify the familiar words of the hymn—

’Twas great to speak a world from naught  
But greater to redeem—



by saying—'Twas great to speak into being a world in space, but greater to speak a world in time into its place, with its new commencement, new energies, new developments ; to provide for and order the gradual passing away of one age, and the gradual introduction of a new one.

And our interest in such new creative developments is all the keener when we grasp the second conception conveyed by the words of chapter xi. 3 : That a current age goes far beyond any promise that may have been perceptible in its predecessor. With all the foreshadowings of the Levitical age, and all the prophetic hints contained in the prophets, how truly creative the person and work of Christ appear as we now view them in the history of the New Testament ! And so with respect to the next impending "age"—say the Millennial—how little appearance, shewing promise of it, as yet meets the eye ; and yet how little this matters to faith ! The "Coming Age" will not be a mere development of what we see at present : the newly commencing creative word of God has to be taken into account.

And therefore we say : How sublime the conception that "the ages" have been "framed," "fitted together," "adjusted" by the Son of God ! What fellowship with the Eternal Mind it implies ; what foresight of the action of created wills ; what provision for contingencies foreseen only by the Infinite ; what outgoings of love and holiness, of wisdom and power ! \*

## **V. The Son, with fulness and precision, makes God known.**

**WITH FULNESS :** *Who being an eradiated brightness of his glory.*—Of course 'this language is figurative ; but it is very beautiful and expressive. The natural prototypes of

\* See Appendix (1).

the figure are the lamp in the house and the sun in the heavens diffusing their rays. All men—in such ages as gave birth to this figure—used the lamp by night, and all men were illumined by the sun by day; and hence all were sufficiently schooled by the incidents of their daily existence to be able to distinguish between the centre of light and its circumference, the light-giver and the light given. They naturally observed that opaque objects interposed and hindered the diffusion of the light-giver's beams; and they soon discovered that the irradiation of light might be hindered where the central light was not extinguished. The lamp might be put under a bushel and hid, without being instantly put out; and even the sun naturally became invisible in the caves of the earth. And, in any case, the alternations of day and night sufficed to educate every eye, since the departing sun left his lingering rays on the clouds and the returning sun bathed the hill-tops in glory before he revealed his own face.

It is thus, by such public and efficient teachers as these, that men are taught the intimacy of the relation between God and the Son of God. The Son makes the Father known. Wherever the knowledge of God exists, there the mediation of the Son is in exercise, whether recognised or not.

At this point the harmonies of Scripture ravish the instructed ear. We are reminded how Paul describes the Son as the "image of the invisible God"; how John declares that "GOD (HIMSELF, in his essence, in his central potency) hath no man seen at any time: God only-begotten he hath declared (or interpreted) him." Yea, even before he came in the flesh he "was in the world," though the world "knew him not." And so, step by step, we are carried away back to the prophet Micah, who, in telling us that the Messiah would come forth out of Bethlehem,

seems to have been suddenly borne up as on eagle-wings to add with sublime daring and significance: "Whose comings forth have been from of old, from the days of age-past time."<sup>a</sup> Aye, and the deepest harmony of all is sounded when we are reminded of the almost certain significance of Deity's one proper Name, as YAHWEH, THE BECOMING ONE—becoming present—becoming known—becoming recognised—becoming Man—becoming glorified.<sup>b</sup>

"Who, being an eradiated brightness of his glory." It is in deference to this figure that I have used the word "fulness," feeling all the while how feeble is any abstract word we can use. How much more than fulness is suggested:—what force, what fire, what life, what joy, what simultaneous life-giving and yet consuming energy! Still, "fulness" is prominent in the figure. The lamp lights all the house: the orb of day floods the heavens. Obstructions there may be—shutters of prejudice—midnights of unbelief—caves of ignorance. But this at least is the mission of the Son of God: to flood the world with the knowledge of the Father; to illumine the thoughts of men, to warm their affections, to fire their imaginations, to kindle their activities, to fill them with abundant life and joy.

WITH PRECISION: that is manifestly the force of the second figure, *and an exact representation of his very being*. The Son of God is the *character* of his *hypostasis*, the latter term denoting that which supportingly stands under—which underlies—all qualities, activities, manifestations; and, therefore, equivalent to "substance, nature, essence," or "very being"; and the former—*character*—being "that which is cut in or marked, the impress or stamp on coins, seals, etc." From the nature of the case and the context, we may perhaps venture this very simple out-

<sup>a</sup> Micah v. 2.

<sup>b</sup> See Intro. to Emphasised Bible, chapter iv.

working of the term, by saying: As a seal on wax gives forth its exact image, so is the Son the exact image or representation of Deity. In any case precision is implied—exact representation, and no better comment can be desired than Christ's own words: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

## **VI. The Son sustains all things.**

*Also bearing up all things by the utterance of his power.*—All created being has been made to depend on him. It hangs upon his word. His word is with power. He speaks, and it is done. The ceaseless potency of his word sustains all things. His all-sustaining power is "uttered" power—spoken power—the expression of creative will. He wills it; and all creation holds on its destined way; stars shine; heavenly ministers worship and wait; messengers go and return; men live. So says this clause. It is marvellous; it is astounding. We are merely measuring, as far as we can, the meanings of the severed clauses. We are not just now estimating their credibility. We are not, for the present, even linking them together—in their connected and collective cogency.

## **VII. The Son has made purification for Sins.**

*Purification of sins having achieved.*—Let us try to understand what this means.

"Purification" presupposes defilement: defilement is a consequence of sins. According to this Epistle, it is mainly the *conscience* that gets defiled by sins.

And no wonder; for a sin is a wrong, and conscience is that within us which knows and condemns the wrong we do.

A wrong done can never be undone. As committed against God, no man can make amends for committed sin ; simply because no man can do more than his present duty—no man can do more than “love God with all his heart, mind, soul and strength, and his neighbour as himself.” Moreover, even against our fellows, many are the wrongs for which no compensation can be made : injuries once inflicted have a tendency to cry out for ever for a redress which they can never, in the nature of things, receive.

But “conscience” is not the only thing that becomes defiled by sin. The contamination works outwardly as well as inwardly : sin works outwardly—as example, and example is contagious ; sin creates precedents and companionships in evil ; sin taints the moral atmosphere and tempts others to rebellion. If sinners could enter heaven, they would defile heaven. This, indeed, seems to be the meaning of the symbolic purifying of the altar and the tent ; it was because sinners had been allowed to enter there, leaving a typical defilement behind them. This also appears to be the significance of the asserted need of “the heavenly things themselves,” to be cleansed by a nobler sacrifice than those which were sufficient for merely conveying the symbolic lesson.\*

Who then can say that it was not a stupendous achievement, to “make purification” for sins ? Who that ponders the inwardly and outwardly defiling power of sin can doubt the greatness of the task ?

But, incredible as at first it might appear, the Son of God has accomplished it.

Is that incredible after due consideration ? I submit that it is not. Consider !

\* Chapter ix. 23.

The worth of the Person of the Son of God—according to this description of it in the Hebrews—is incalculable.

The Spotlessness and Beneficence of his Life are undeniable and immeasurable.

The Surrender of that Life possesses a value as inestimable as the combined Willinghood and Obedience and Love that prompted it.

And, finally, the High Priestly presentation to God in heaven of that Surrendered Life, has in it elements which in vain we seek for elsewhere !

No Animal ever went to the death in conscious and purposeful Love for others. No Man, purposely dying for others, ever came back to a second life to present the finished first life unto God. The Son of God did both. He was first, on earth, the spotless and infinitely precious Victim. He was next, in heaven, the Priest, offering Himself. The connecting link was welded by infinite piety, infinite wisdom, infinite power.

We are not dreaming when we thus put the case, but are closely following the lead of the gifted Author of this Epistle. Jesus our Lord, “by an eternal spirit”—“an age-abiding spirit”—offered himself without spot unto God. The most simple and natural interpretation of this remarkable clause in the ninth chapter, is that which takes it to allude to the human spirit of Jesus ; which—instead of being evanescent, as it would have been in unstayed, unmitigated death, losing any further personality and simply returning to God who gave it,<sup>a</sup> to be merged thenceforth in him,—was piously committed to the Father’s care

• Ec. xii. 7.

and keeping,<sup>a</sup> and doubtless not in vain. Being quickened<sup>b</sup> (it may be by virtue of its personal union with the Eternal Word), and faithfully preserved through the brief period of death in the bosom of the Father; he, Jesus, was then constituted by Resurrection the “First-begotten from the dead;”<sup>c</sup> constituted High Priest “after the power of an indissoluble life.”<sup>d</sup> Ascending,—above all the lower heavens, and in and through those heavens, as along a new “path of life”<sup>e</sup> shewn to him by the Father, into the very presence of God,—he there “appeared” in our behalf; offering—what?—offering his “body;” himself, his perfected and ended, his triumphantly surrendered earthly life. He entered “through means of his own blood,”<sup>f</sup> which simply stands for that perfected and surrendered Life, which as we know, was terminated by violent bloodshedding. That is how he entered. Nothing could bar his way. No flaming sentinel could forbid his access to the innermost sanctuary of the Divine Presence. Yea, with that price in his hand—with that plea on his lips—no law, no power could stay his progress; upwards “above all the heavens” he still ascended; inwards, and still further inwards, he penetrated; until, coming in before the Uncreated Light, he was once for all and for ever accepted.

He—there and thus and then—“discovered age-abiding redemption.”<sup>g</sup> He “found” it. So the Greek says, and why should we tone it down? why should we dilute it? Why should we shrink, by saying merely “obtained”? Nay, *eurisko*; the verb that has given us *eureka*! He “found” it. He had been seeking it all his life of humiliation and toil and shame; and now he “found” it. The ages had been seeking it, from the time man fell; the

<sup>a</sup> Lu. xxiii. 46.

<sup>d</sup> Chapter vii. 16.

<sup>f</sup> Chapter ix. 12.

<sup>b</sup> 1 Peter iii. 18.

<sup>c</sup> Ps. xvi. 11.

<sup>e</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>g</sup> Col. i. 18; Rev. i. 5.

priests of all ages, with their blood-streaming victims, had been seeking it; but could not discover it. But, now, here, in heaven, before the throne, Jesus our Lord the Son of God "found" it!

Well might the eloquent Writer of this marvellous Introduction place his verb, *poieo*, in the middle voice, and thus warrant our rendering it "achieved," as affirmed of an act redounding to the credit of him who dared and did it, constituting it an "achievement" to be for ever after celebrated in story and in song.

### PURIFICATION OF SINS HAVING ACHIEVED!

Of course, the "purification" was the fountain-head, or summary, sacrificial *provision* of purification, once for all secured when the peerless sacrifice was offered and accepted. It was not and could not be the individual application of the purifying potency to the consciences of men yet unborn. That was impossible with regard to consciences not yet in being, and therefore necessarily not yet defiled. But it is important to grasp what actually lies before us in the words: The purification—that is the sacrificial provision and potency of purifying guilty consciences—was then once for all completed.

The Greek is singularly careful to make this quite clear. For whereas this is the third great participle flowing out from that great pronoun "who" that was to carry the grand burden of thought to a climax, this third participle is in a different tense to the two preceding it. They are "present" or incipient participles, whose force runs on indefinitely; but this is "aoristic," rounded off, complete, preparing the way for the next movement, forming a firm step for the next verb to rest on. Read the passage thus: Who *being and remaining* the eradiated brightness of his



glory and the exact representation of his very being ; (Who) *bearing up and continuing to bear up* all things by the utterance of his power :—both participles being inceptive ; but now with a change : “Purification of sins having there and then completely achieved,” he then did the next thing—“he sat down.” For nice precision, and for an open and effective march of thought, it is not easy to see how language could go further : unless by that larger amplification which we find in the body of the Epistle. Keep this in mind : *being, bearing up, having achieved—sat down.* To this last named and final act, we must now advance.

### **VIII. The Son has taken his seat at the right hand of God.**

(Purification of sin having achieved) *sat down on the right hand of the majesty in high places.*—The act thus expressed is unique in the history of redemption. How far it is figurative language is a question of no importance so long as we look straight through it to the thing intended, to the principle involved. It simply and forcibly expresses the bestowment of the highest conceivable honour.

We read in the Bible of nothing like it, until later on we behold four-and-twenty Elders sitting on thrones ; but, interesting to note, they appear as men. We read in the Psalms of ministering attendants, and in the Revelation of ten thousand times ten thousand messengers round about the throne, but they are never represented as seated. “Purification of sins having achieved, age-abiding redemption having discovered, the Son sat down on the right hand of the majesty in high places,” “at the right hand of the throne of God.”

The Seeker of Redemption, having at length discovered it, in triumph “sat down” !

The Son, welcomed of his Father, “sat down”!

The Son, finding himself at home in the Eternal Light,  
“sat down”!

We never read of a High Priest under the old economy sitting down in the Most Holy place. Everything quite the contrary. None of his brethren could enter with him. Only on one day could *he* enter, and only twice on that one day for a few moments of solemn suspense each time, first for himself and then for the people.

But our High Priest, ministering in the power of an indissoluble life, offering one sacrifice for sins for evermore, and being once for all accepted, sat down; from “henceforth,” or “as for the rest,” as though along that line of activity there was nothing more to be done, “as for the rest, waiting until his foes be made his footstool.”<sup>a</sup>

This last statement,—found in the tenth chapter, amplifying and confirming that which we have already found in this summary introduction to the whole Epistle,—shews clearly the mistake of those who represent the heavenly High Priest as offering himself with a perpetually continued presentation. Not so. With the utmost precision in the first chapter, and with a most satisfactory amplification in the ninth and tenth chapters, our Author says, No! the one offering was offered once for all—offered and accepted—and then he sat down.

It is true that the one offering has a perpetual voice; that the once-offered blood still speaks according to the twelfth chapter,<sup>b</sup> but that suffices not to alter the verdict of explicit statement, previously given, that the offering *was* made once for all.

And if not repeated and continued in heaven, then certainly not repeated or continued on earth, no matter how

<sup>a</sup> Chapter x. 13.

<sup>b</sup> Chapter xii. 24.

many humanly constituted priests and solemnly celebrated masses may proclaim the contrary.

**IX. That the Son has become superior to messengers by the measure of the more distinguished name which, as Son, he has inherited.**

*By |so| much becoming superior |to the messengers|,*

*By |as| much as, going beyond them, he hath inherited a more distinguished ||name||.*

It will be observed by the thoughtful reader that there are, in this final clause, three movements ; one implied, and two expressed. It is implied that messengers are an eminent order of beings ; it is expressed that the Son of God has become more eminent ; and further expressed that his pre-eminence is according to the measure of his inherited name.

1. The eminence of the rank of beings called "messengers" is here, by our Author, assumed. We perceive clearly that the object of the Writer is to exalt the Son. In proportion, then, as the messengers are themselves of high rank, it amounts to an extolling of the Son to say that, high as they are, he has become higher still. And this fully accords with the whole tenor of what the Holy Scriptures teach respecting the *angeloi*, "angels," "messengers." This their name is expressive of their office, which office is so distinguished that their official name makes needless any other. We know them by no other. They are simply "messengers," but, in all such contexts as this, it is implied that they are holy messengers, heavenly messengers, God's messengers. As such, they are great in power and might and personal dignity ;<sup>a</sup> their faces are

<sup>a</sup> Ps. ciii. 20 ; 2 Peter ii. 10.

striking to behold;<sup>a</sup> their knowledge, though not unlimited, is nevertheless vast;<sup>b</sup> their numbers are overwhelming — “myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands”;<sup>c</sup> their access to the Divine Presence seems to be near and constant;<sup>d</sup> and finally their work is of the most varied and constant character—in executing which they can be swift as the winds, formidable as fire-flames.<sup>e</sup> They are spirits; but it would be too much to say they are disembodied or unembodied spirits. They appear to be insusceptible of death.<sup>f</sup> Although their home appears to be heaven; yet have they such intimate relations with this world that in one place the Apostle Paul speaks of them as a part of it, although distinguished from men: “a spectacle to the world, both to messengers and to men.”<sup>g</sup> Leaving for notice later on what this Epistle tells us about these heavenly messengers, the above gleanings from other parts of the Bible abundantly suffice to confirm the assumption underlying the statement at present under consideration. God’s heavenly messengers are of eminent rank.

2. But the Son is of higher rank—he has become of a rank superior to theirs. It is implied that he was once inferior,—at least for awhile as man. “*Tanto melior . . . effectus*,” says the Latin Vulgate. “Being made so much better,” says the “Authorised.” “Having become so much better,” says the Revised, English and American. “Being made as far superior,” says Weymouth. “Becoming superior,” says the Emphasised (if I may say so), with the greatest amount of neatness and precision: as if implying,—as by an undertone,—“there and then becoming superior.” All agree in regarding the superiority as acquired or bestowed. It is not merely “being superior,” as if by

<sup>a</sup> Acts vi. 15; Judges xiii. 6.

<sup>d</sup> Mt. xviii. 10.

<sup>f</sup> Lu. xx. 36.

<sup>b</sup> 2 Sam. xiv. 17; Mt. xxiv. 36.

<sup>e</sup> Ps. civ. 4.

<sup>g</sup> 1 Cor. iv. 9.

<sup>c</sup> Rev. v. 11.

primordial divine right; but “becoming superior” or “being made superior,” as if by means of honour conferred.

3. And now, finally, we observe that the superiority of the Son over the messengers is expressed as by a proportion or measurement. How much superior? As much superior as his inherited name is a more excellent name than any that was ever bestowed on them.

But *what* “name” is it that is intended? Is it simply the name of relationship itself, namely “Son”? Or is it rather (as seems more natural) what perhaps we may presume to term the Son’s patronymic, that is, the name which as Son he derives from his Father, so that as the Father is named “God” so also is the Son named “God”; or, still more significantly, that as the Father is designated “Jehovah” (“Yahweh”), so likewise does the Son now bear that most august and jealously guarded Name?

Now, in looking for an answer to this question, the interesting and satisfying thing is:—That, in the verses immediately following this Introduction, all three names are attributed to him who having achieved purification for sins sat down on the right hand of the throne of God: he is spoken of as “Son” in two quotations from the Old Testament, as “God” in one, and really though not quite obviously as “Jehovah” in two more. So that the natural answer appears to be correct. To make clear that the most sacred name of Deity known to the Hebrew nation is here attributed to the Son would be to anticipate a further “study.” But assuming that such an appropriation of the Highest Name to Jesus the Son of God will be satisfactorily evinced, it only remains to add: That, according to this, it appears that the Man who despised the Shame of the Cross has been exalted immeasurably above all the holy and heavenly messengers who wait upon the Majesty on high.

## STUDY III.

### A CLUSTER OF QUOTATIONS.

(How readest thou?) Chapter I. 5—14.

- <sup>5</sup> For |unto which of the messengers| said he at any time—  
*||My Son|| art |thou|,*  
*||I|| this day have |begotten| thee?*  
 and again—  
*||I|| will become |his' father|,*  
*And ||he|| shall become |my' son|?*
- <sup>6</sup> But <whensoever he again introduceth the first-begotten into the  
 habitable earth> he saith—  
*And let all' God's messengers worship him!*
- <sup>7</sup> ||Even as to the messengers|| indeed, he saith—  
*Who maketh his messengers |winds|,*  
*And his ministers of state |a fiery flame|;*<sup>a</sup>
- <sup>8</sup> but ||as to the Son||—  
*Thy throne, O God, is unto times age-abiding,*  
 and—  
*||A sceptre of equity|| is the sceptre of his (or thy) Kingdom,*
- <sup>9</sup> *Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated lawlessness,—*  
*|For this cause| hath God, thy God, anointed thee with the oil*  
*of exultation |beyond thy partners|;*
- <sup>10</sup> and—  
*||Thou|| |by way of beginning|, Lord, |the earth| didst found,*  
*And |the works of thy hands| are the heavens,—*
- <sup>11</sup> *||They|| shall perish,*  
*But ||thou|| abidest still,*  
*And ||all|| |as a mantle| shall be worn out,*
- <sup>12</sup> *And |as if a robe| wilt thou fold them up,—*  
*As a mantle, and they shall be changed;*  
*But ||thou|| art |the same|,*  
*And |thy years| shall not ||fail||.*
- <sup>13</sup> But |to which of the messengers| hath he said, at any time—  
*Sit thou at my right hand,*  
*Until I make thy foes thy footstool!*

<sup>a</sup> See App. (2).

<sup>14</sup> Are they not all spirits [doing public service],—[for ministry] (being) sent forth for the sake of them who are going to inherit salvation?

WE have here a Cluster of Quotations from the Old Testament, respecting which we may notice—their *number*, their *point*, their *setting*, their *force* and their *conclusion*.

## I. Their Number.

There are seven of them ; as may at once be seen in the Revised, in the Corrected, in the Emphasised, in Modern Speech, and in the Twentieth-Century New Testaments. In the order in which these quotations are made by the Writer of this Epistle they stand thus :—

1. Psalm II.
2. 2 Sam. VII.
3. Psalm XCVII.
4. Psalm CIV.
5. Psalm XLV.
6. Psalm CII.
7. Psalm CX.

## II. Their Point.

The point of them all is the same—which is, to prove the superiority of the Son of God to the heavenly messengers, commonly known, in our conventional speech, as “Angels.” This is done by employing language concerning the Son which is never used about the Divine Messengers. Their office is indeed extolled, but not in the same lofty terms. However great the messengers, they are not by any means so distinguished as the Son. That is the point.

### **III. Their Setting.**

The Seven Quotations are placed within a Setting of Questions. There are four such questions; two at the beginning, and two at the end of the series. Of these four questions, three require a negative answer; and then, in a soothing and satisfying way, the fourth anticipates an affirmative reply. It is half the battle, in attempting to grasp the force of the entire argument derived from these Quotations, to perceive and remember the kind of answer expected. The way is not difficult, since the very form of the questions bespeaks the correct reply.

Question: To which of the Messengers did he ever say this first thing, "Thou art my Son," etc.?

Answer: To none of them.

Question: To which of the Messengers did he ever say this next thing, "I will become," etc.?

Answer: To none of them.

The same reply is indicated as suited to the third question; and then, the actual Quotations being done with, the closing interrogatory is proposed.

Final Question: "Are they not spirits doing public service," etc.?

The final Answer is implied by the very form of the question: "Yes—that is what they are. That suggestion will give them enough honour, and yet not too much."

### **IV. Their Force.**

In the *first* place the force of these Quotations on the minds of the original readers sprang from the fact that they *were* quotations from their venerated Sacred Writings;—which for centuries had been said and sung in their homes



and in their Temple worship, and which they believed had been given by holy men under Divine guidance and inspiration.

In the *second* place the force of these quotations arose out of their contents—out of the striking and suggestive things said in them. Therein the voice of their God is heard addressing One whom he owns as his king enthroned in Zion as his “Son”: “Thou art my Son.” Again, when seeming to be speaking by a Psalmist of the same Coming King, he actually styles him “God”: “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever”—the person so addressed being the hero of the Psalm: whose lips had poured forth grace; who was challenged to gird his sword on his thigh, and to let his arrows be sharp in the heart of his enemies; who had already proved his love of righteousness and hatred of lawlessness, and already received a Divine Anointing as a reward of such noble love and noble hatred. He—this hero—is addressed as “God.” There is the historical fact, engrained in the record, centuries old. Of the Messiah, he says: He will be recognised as a Divine “Son”—as himself Divine. Can this be denied?

That is a long way for the Quotations to carry us; but—in the hands of our Author, in the strength of his teaching insight and authority,—they carry us much further: They bestow upon this same hero King—this Divine Son—the ineffable and incommunicable name Y H W H=“Yahweh,” “Jehovah,” “the Becoming One.” The Ninety-seventh Psalm proves it, and so does the One-hundred-and-second. The former says: “Worship him, all ye Elohim”—“all ye *angeloi*” (as the Septuagint calls them, followed by the Vulgate)—“all ye divine messengers.” We know something of these *elohim*—these *angeloi*,—and we have some notion of the reason why they could occasionally bear the lower title of the Divine Being,

namely as representatives of God, as even the judges are so termed in the Pentateuch.\* But WHO IS IT, ABOVE THEM, unto whom they are here summoned to bow down?

“Worship him all ye *elohim*—*angeloi*—divine messengers!”

Yes, but UNTO WHOM were they thus to bow down? The whole Psalm answers—unequivocally, repeatedly, sublimely. Six times over, in this short Psalm of twelve verses, is the Being before whom the angels are summoned to bow down named “Jehovah,” and with this agree the sublime descriptions of Divine majesty which the Psalm contains. Jehovah is the only lawful object of worship; and unless the Anointed Son and King shares in the name and nature of Jehovah we may not—dare not—worship Him.

Yet here is One, said to be Jehovah—described as Jehovah—to be worshipped by angels as Jehovah; of whom the Writer to the Hebrews says he is the Son, expressly calling him “First-begotten,” telling us that he has been (or is to be) brought by God into this habitable earth. And I can well believe it, especially when this Psalm is applied to the Messiah’s second advent: “Yahweh hath become King. . . . And all the peoples |have seen| his glory.” It is God, as seen in the eradiated brightness of his glory, that we here behold. Need we wonder that the highest known created beings are here commanded to bow down before him?

Of the One-hundred-and-second Psalm the same remarks in substance hold good. In that Psalm the name “Jehovah” occurs eight times. Divine attributes are there attributed to him who bears it, as may be seen from the ample quotation above given from it in the Hebrews. And all this the Writer to the Hebrews assures us is said of the Son: “But as to the Son he saith.”

\* Exo. xxi. 6; xxii. 8, 9, 28.

## V. Their Conclusion.

The conclusion appended to the Seven Quotations has already been stated. It may be described as balanced—inspiring—suggestive. *Balanced*, because it gives high honour to God's heavenly messengers, without making them equal with the Son. They are spirits; they are God's public ministers of state; and they are charged with a noble—useful—loving—holy mission. Still they are merely created beings, and merely servants. *Inspiring*, because this their ministry concerns us; in fact, is a ministry of service unto us. I confess that I am so far daunted against following this path, in consequence of our total experimental ignorance of any such angelic ministry as a service now in exercise, that I have severely questioned myself as to whether I could not be faithful to the teaching here laid down, and yet accept the words in a purely prospective sense: "Are they not all spirits |doing public service| who are GOING TO BE SENT FORTH for the sake of those who are destined to become inheritors of salvation." That is, that when we shall be installed in that lofty position of joint-heirship with Christ and joint-rulership with him over the universe with which our final and complete salvation will invest us,—that THEN they will become our servants; waiting upon us in our attained royal estate; and, as such, be executors of our behests in holding in subjection "the coming habitable earth of which we speak." But, though I do not regard such a prospective application of the words as altogether so visionary as probably some readers of them would deem it, yet on the whole I cannot rest in such an interpretation. It may be grammatically possible, and nevertheless be wholly against the spirit and drift of this remarkable passage,—especially when we recur to the obvious circumstance that the writer refers to such

angelic ministry as something familiar and undeniable, as though, for instance, based on ancient recorded incidents, the like of which had been again realised in these Apostolic times. Accepting this as a fair and final adjustment of the question as one of exegesis, I have no choice left but to take the particular word in question as bearing this meaning, namely: Which spirits ARE BEING FROM TIME TO TIME sent forth for the sake and benefit of those who, like ourselves, are destined to become inheritors of salvation. And, being so persuaded as to the legitimate force of this particular passage, and deeming it unlikely that our heavenly Lord—under whose command these heavenly beings now are—has wholly withdrawn this ancient merciful ministry,—I comfort myself with the conclusion that, as sometimes in ancient story, so likewise now, heavenly messengers are oftentimes near us and helping us even though we know it not.

In proportion as we can accept this solution, we cannot fail to draw a most joyful inspiration from the confidence thence arising. Of course, God himself is ever nigh; the Holy Spirit dwells within us; Christ is head over all things to his Church. But when God is pleased to rescue us from misfortune and ills of any kind, he has always the means of interposition at his command. And is it nothing that amongst those means is a numerous order of holy and heavenly beings, strong of arm and swift of wing, who delight to do the behests of our merciful and faithful High Priest now enthroned in heaven? Said we not rightly it is an inspiring thought?

But it is *suggestive* as well—of practical obligation. It already is seen to magnify the salvation of which we are heirs. Other magnifying facts are almost immediately to follow in the notable “Exhortation” which breaks up the current of the Writer’s great argument; for he has more to

say about these wonderful heavenly messengers. He is going to set their destined relative inferiority to man in a new and striking light. But meantime he cannot proceed until he has unburdened his mind by uttering burning words of caution. What is it that thus interrupts the flow of his great argumentative discourse? It is this: That a heavenly order of beings are from time to time receiving commission to help us in our arduous upward way to glory; and ought we not, therefore, ourselves to beware—watch—pray—contend—persevere?

## STUDY IV.

## HOLD FAST! AN EXHORTATION.

(Chap. II. 1—4.)

2. <sup>1</sup> |For this cause| it behoveth us |with unwonted firmness| to be holding fast unto the things that have been heard, lest, at any time, we drift away. <sup>2</sup> For <if the word through messengers' spoken became firm and |every' transgression and disobedience| received a just' recompense> <sup>3</sup> how shall ||we|| escape, if |so great a salvation as this| we have neglected,—|which| indeed, <having received |a beginning| of being spoken through the Lord> |by them who heard| unto us' was confirmed', <sup>4</sup> God |jointly witnessing also| both with signs and wonders and manifold' mighty works, and with distributions of Holy' Spirit' |according to his own' will|?

THIS Exhortation consists of two unequal portions. The first and shorter, simply urges a *duty*, in view of a *danger*—the duty of holding fast to what has been heard, in view of the danger of drifting away. The second and longer portion enforces the duty and enhances the danger by an *extended comparison* between the ancient Hebrews and those now addressed. The fathers were laid under solemn obligations: their children, now warned, have been laid under obligations still more solemn. Such is the scope of the whole passage,—which is united by a *connecting link* with what has gone before.

Note, first, this CONNECTING LINK: “For this cause”—for what cause? Because God has now spoken in a Son who is immeasurably superior to all heavenly messengers; and because those heavenly messengers are themselves appointed to minister to those who are called to the inheritance of the great salvation which the Son has announced and procured.

For *this* cause ought we to beware lest we drift away: surely the cause is ample and potent!

Observe the DUTY which is based upon this cause: it is that with greater firmness than we should use to keep our choicest earthly treasures, we should be unremittingly holding unto the things which we have heard and believed, and which have constituted us heirs of such salvation. That is the duty.

Look at the DANGER: that of drifting away by slow and insensible degrees from the anchorage of our hope, until we are caught by the strong current of apostacy and become powerless to turn back even if we would.

Now comes the EXTENDED COMPARISON: "If the word through messengers' spoken became firm, and every' transgression and disobedience received a just recompense. . . ." What "word" was this? Through what "messengers" was it spoken? The correct answer comes through careful attention to the exact expressions employed. The words "every' transgression and disobedience" naturally suggest the Mosaic Law, with its multitude of prohibitions and injunctions. The peculiar phrase "became firm" is precisely fitted to point rather to the detailed outworking of the Law, than to the Ten Commandments themselves, which being solemnly announced by direct Divine Voice and enjoining primal duties of self-evident obligation—*were* "firm" from the first and did not merely "*become* firm." Furthermore, the very phrase "just recompense," following the detailing and ramifying expression "every' transgression and disobedience," just as naturally indicates the graded penalties of Leviticus rather than the leading Covenant words of Exodus. Then—in support of this interpretation—comes the crowning reflection, that these were the very details which were undoubtedly spoken by "messengers" in contradistinction from the word spoken by God himself

on Sinai's summit: details which were *not* directly proclaimed from heaven; so that, indeed, the people knew nothing of them, save as they were spoken and written and repeated by such "messengers" as Moses and Aaron and Joshua and the heads of tribes and houses—all of whom would be needed to bring word of them to the ears of all the people. And this conclusion brings out the Writer's point in this part of his Exhortation, which is:—That notwithstanding an inferior mode of communication, yet the word so spoken became firm, binding, solemnly sanctioned by pains and penalties.

Of course this exegesis, which appears to be unanswerably just, sets aside (as less suited to the context) any reference, just here, to that loftier ministry of heavenly messengers which still undoubtedly did find place in the delivery of the primary law on Mount Sinai.<sup>a</sup>

And again, of course, the interpretation just advanced shews the importance of adhering closely to the literal meaning of words; as, for instance, in this place, of keeping the rendering "messengers" well to the front, with its easy freedom of application to either heavenly or earthly messengers. In the first chapter the allusion is plainly to heavenly messengers; as it is again, later on, in this second chapter. But just here, if we were to limit the reference to that application, we should be baffled in working out the meaning of the particular clause on which we have been dwelling. In other words, we are unable to discover any part taken by heavenly messengers in *speaking* to Israel either the Ten Commands from Sinai's summit or the numerous subordinate commands communicated at Sinai's base.<sup>b</sup>

Resting then, as we clearly must, in this interpretation,

<sup>a</sup> Deut. xxxiii. 2; Ps. lxviii. 17; Acts vii. 53; Gal. iii. 19.

<sup>b</sup> See App. (3).



we have only to gather up its force, and so proceed to the second part of the comparison :—If it is so, as none can deny, that a Law for the more part spoken by mere messengers became firm,—was placed under divine sanctions which none could disregard with impunity ;—how shall we, whose position is superior to theirs, escape punishment, if we neglect,—if we do not care to prize and hold fast,—not a law, not a ritual,—but—so great a SALVATION as this ; whose greatness has already been indicated by two marked characteristics—ministered by a Son so august, and whose heirs are being ministered to by heavenly messengers so exalted ;—and the greatness of which is still further commended by the considerations that follow : that it was first spoken by the Lord himself, then confirmed unto us by those who heard the Lord, and all the while additionally witnessed to by God-given signs, wonders, diversities of mighty works and actual distributions of Holy Spirit freely bestowed on the newly-made heirs of salvation ? To neglect so great a salvation as this—what folly, what crime !

The several ministries here mentioned, as employed to make known the great salvation, are familiar to us and need little comment. We all know how the Lord himself led the way, especially in revealing “ life age-abiding ” ; leaving, as he needs must, the fuller unfolding of the ransom of his own blood to his chief apostles after that precious ransom had been paid. We further know the important part taken in making the great salvation known by the Lord’s earthly messengers, repeating by word of mouth what they had heard from their Master’s own lips, and adding such fuller explanations and expansions as the Holy Spirit revealed to them. In every way, the word spoken by the Lord was *confirmed* by those who heard him. They were agreed about it, and repeated it, and handed it

on : no man contradicting—no one apostle having left behind him a discordant note. John himself could not say of the portrait drawn by Mark : “That is not the Lord I so devotedly loved.” Paul, it is true, had “not known Christ after the flesh ;” but the risen Christ whom he adored was the same Jesus whom his senior brethren had familiarly known on earth. They doubtless all greatly *exalted* the same ascended Master. But those who had heard him confirmed his word spoken on earth.

You will note how the divine attestation is superinduced upon the apostolic testimony as something at once concurrent and additional, as the beautifully compounded Greek word *sun-epi-marturoides* indicates. As an incidental illustration of the weaknesses besetting very free versions, perhaps we may withhold approval of the limit suggested in “The New Testament in Modern Speech,” to the effect that it was solely the apostolic word that was confirmed by Divine corroboration. Surely, as the Lord himself seemed ever to delight to refer to his Heavenly Father’s works in confirmation, we can scarcely go wrong to regard such approval as taking in both the original word of the Lord and the added word of his messengers.

The chief thing that remains, to make our exposition measurably complete, is to discriminate the rich variety of terms here applied to the methods in which the Divine attestation was given.

Supernatural works throughout are intended, but with different shades of meaning discoverable in the terms employed to denote them. The word “signs” marks the significance of such interposition : generally as making evident the finger of God ; and particularly according to the appropriate teaching of the several interpositions—one being a revelation of power, another of knowledge, another of wisdom, another of mercy, and so on. “Wonders” again

characterises such doings as causing astonishment, instilling fear, and the like. "Mighty works" or simply "powers" speak for themselves: here their diversity is signalised as remarkable; and anyone familiar with the four Gospels and the Acts can fill in the details: supernatural acts on the mind, on the body, on evil spirits, on the elements of nature; those which were beneficent, as by far the greater number were, and the few that were punitive and admonitory—as those on the swine, the fig-tree, and Ananias and Sapphira; even the raising of the dead showing a diversity, as a grappling with death in the house,<sup>a</sup>—on the road,<sup>b</sup>—in the grave!<sup>c</sup> Finally, we have distributions of Holy Spirit—for such is the literal rendering, against which there can hardly be any valid objection.<sup>d</sup>

It only remains to say that here we touch matters of fact, well-known to the first Christians. In the lofty flights of the great Introduction there are grand ideas which to some minds will appear only as lofty words, although to others their very conception will seem to be proofs of their divine origin. It is equally true that the fulfilment of those Old Testament passages in Christ will not equally affect all minds. Hence it is well to rest for a moment on the more historical reminiscences here made. None can successfully deny that these signs were shown, these wonders gazed upon with awe, these diversities of healing wrought, these endowments enjoyed. We are chiefly called upon to note and admire the fair structure of this primitive epistolary building; but here, for a moment, we are permitted to observe that it rests securely on the rock of newly accomplished fact.

• Mt. ix. 18.

• Lu. vii. 12.

• John xi. 38.

<sup>a</sup> See note on "Spirit—Personality of," in E. N. T. Appendix.

## STUDY V.

### NOT MESSENGERS, BUT MEN.

(Chap. II. 5—18.)

- <sup>5</sup> For |not unto messengers| hath he subjected the coming habitable earth of which we are speaking ;
- <sup>6</sup> But one somewhere hath borne witness, saying—  
*What is man, that thou shouldst make mention of him ?*  
*Or the son of man, that thou shouldst put him in charge ?*
- <sup>7</sup> *Thou hast made him less, some little, than messengers,*  
 | *With glory and honour* | *hast thou crowned him,—*  
 [ *And hast set him over the works of thy hand ;* ]
- <sup>8</sup> | *All things* | *hast thou subjected beneath his feet.*  
 For <in subjecting [to him] the all things>  
 |Nothing| left he, to him unsubjected ;  
 But |now, not yet| do we see, to him, the all things subjected ;—
- <sup>9</sup> But |Jesus| we do behold,—  
*Made some little less than messengers,*  
 Because of the suffering of death,  
 | *With glory and honour* | *crowned,*  
 To the end that, by favour of God,  
 |In behalf of every one| he might taste of death.
- <sup>10</sup> For it was becoming in him—  
 For the sake' of whom are the all things,  
 And by means' of whom are the all things,—  
 <When ||many' sons|| |unto glory| he would lead>  
 ||The Princely Leader of their salvation|| through sufferings' |to make perfect|.
- <sup>11</sup> For |both he that maketh holy, and they who are being made holy|  
 Are ||all|| of One' ;  
 |For which cause| he is not ashamed to be calling them |brethren|
- <sup>12</sup> saying—  
*I will declare thy name unto my brethren,*  
 | *In the midst of an assembly* | *will I sing praise unto thee ;*
- <sup>13</sup> And again—  
 | *I* | *will be confident upon him ;*  
 and again—  
*Lo ! |I| and the children which, unto me, |God| hath given.*

- 14 <Seeing therefore |*the children*| have received a fellowship of blood  
and flesh>  
||He also|| |in like manner| took partnership in the same,—  
In order that |through death|—  
He might paralyse him that was holding the dominion of death,  
That is the Adversary,—  
15 And might release these—  
As many as |by fear of death| were all their lifetime liable  
||to bondage||.  
16 For |not surely of messengers| is he laying hold,  
But |of Abraham's seed| he is' laying hold.  
17 Whence he was obliged ||in every way|| |unto *the brethren*| to be  
made like,  
That he might become a merciful' and faithful high-priest,  
|In the things pertaining unto God|,—  
For the making of propitiation for the sins of the people.  
18 For <in that |he| suffered |when tested|>  
He is able |unto them who are being tested| ||to give succour||.

OBSERVE that one great conception governs this entire section, and it is this:—THE PARTNERSHIP OF THE SON OF GOD WITH THE SONS OF MEN. Observe further: That under cover of this major conception, THE DIFFICULTY OF DEATH IS MOST SKILFULLY SET FORTH AS DIVINELY DEALT WITH. And no v note: That these great thoughts are introduced by a proposition partly negative and partly positive in character. That proposition may be stated as follows:—THAT NOT TO MESSENGERS (OR ANGELS) UT TO MEN HAS GOD (IN PURPOSE) SUBJECTED THE COMING HABITABLE EARTH. This introductory proposition will doubtless prove as helpful to us as to the first readers of the Epistle. To it, therefore, let us first give such attention as may fix it in our minds as really intended by the Writer; working our way backwards to the second and then to the first positions just mentioned.

I. As already intimated, this proposition is partly negative: “Not to (heavenly) messengers (or angels) has God subjected the coming habitable earth:”—which negative, being expressly stated in the text, needs no comment at present, save as it leads us to ask, With what object is that

negation made? Why does the Writer *deny*, but because he wishes to affirm?

Passing on, then, to the affirmative side of our proposition—"Not to messengers BUT TO MEN has God subjected the coming habitable earth,"—it is worth while to analyse the method by which the writer conveys this affirmation; observing that he does so by (1) emphasis, (2) quotation, (3) admission, and (4) pledge.

1. By EMPHASIS. To emphasise a negative is to suggest an affirmative. "Not to *me* did he bequeath his estate"; well, then, to whom did he bequeath it? It appears probable that you know, and are about to tell us. So here: "Not to messengers"; well, then, to whom has he subjected the coming habitable earth? We are led to expect that the Writer is about to tell us.

2. By QUOTATION. The quotation from the Eighth Psalm advances to the affirmative, it says: ".Not to messengers BUT TO MEN," for notice the "but" with which that quotation is introduced; "Not to messengers hath he subjected the coming habitable earth. BUT one somewhere hath borne witness, What is man?" and then follows a pretty full extract—all about man: an extract which has no relevancy, but as supplying the information for which the negative has prepared us. It is to man, then, that God has subjected the coming habitable earth.

3. By ADMISSION. The Writer admits that we do not yet see realised this subjection to man of the coming habitable earth. But this, of itself, implies that we are to see it—it is to be!

4. By PLEDGE. But though we do not yet see the full realisation of this Divine intention, yet we do see something—in Jesus—of the nature of a pledge that the whole will ultimately be brought to pass.

Putting these four suggestions together, then, as clearly

revealing the intention of the Writer, we conclude that, although, it is true, he does not express his affirmation in so many words, yet does he most clearly and strongly imply it. He intends us to understand him as teaching that the coming habitable earth has, in Divine purpose, been subjected to Man as Man! The Psalm predicts it; Christ pledges it.

The only *objection* to this which springs out of the actual words before us is, that the Eighth Psalm does not at first sight appear to refer to the coming habitable earth at all; but rather to the present earth, or (say) the past earth, as it was placed under man's dominion at the beginning; for, that the Eighth Psalm itself again refers back to the first chapter of Genesis is undoubted. And that being so, it might have seemed more natural had the Writer of the "Hebrews" said, rather "We no LONGER see it," than "We do not YET see it"; in other words, more natural, if he had referred the Psalm to a dominion lost, rather than to a dominion not yet gained. But, in truth, this difficulty is very slight; for as soon as we assume that in this, as in so many other Divine appointments, the principle holds good that "the gifts and callings of God are without repentance"; and that, therefore, the dominion once decreed must ultimately be realised—however it may for a time be lost or held in abeyance;—no sooner do we assume this than the difficulty at once disappears. And, indeed, I am inclined to regard the words "held in abeyance" to be quite as applicable as the term "lost"; since I know of no positive proof that man in paradise fully entered into his regal inheritance. Moreover, the way in which the Psalm places in parallelism "Man" and "the son of man" inclines me all the more to think of a *race destination* rather than an *individual installation*;—which race destination, indeed, is plainly hinted at by the original charge to man,

to "fill the earth and (so) subdue it." Be that as it may, and conceding the dominion to have been at least seriously damaged and "lost" for a time, it is surely easy to conclude that the loss was only temporary; and that the original investiture has been authoritatively clothed with the significance of a standing prediction. It is a dominion yet to be realised; and is to be realised in "the coming habitable earth," which, as we have seen,<sup>a</sup> means the earth as it is to be ordered under Messiah's reign.

Some, perhaps, may find in the Eighth Psalm this further difficulty; namely, that, even conceding the prophetic character of that composition, the dominion which it describes appears too limited to suit the grandeur of the coming reign of Yahweh over the earth. It seems to carry us no further than the dominion of man over the animal creation.

For the present it must suffice to say: That such is the manner of the ancient word, as we saw when studying the opening lines of the Epistle concerning the "many parts" and the "many ways" in which God spake in the prophets: their communications were ever more or less fragmentary. Other snatches in other parts of the prophetic writings contribute further particulars concerning Man's coming dominion; and for the present we had better perhaps acquiesce in that wider view of "the coming habitable earth" which our divinely illumined Writer undoubtedly entertained.

II. Taking so much on trust, our more immediate duty is to endeavour to do justice to the context before us; more especially as it revolves around the conception regarding THE DIVINE DEALING WITH THE DIFFICULTY OF DEATH,—for observe, it is just here, in chapter ii. 9, that the perplexing

<sup>a</sup> See *ante*, p. 49.



subject of DEATH is first introduced into this Epistle : consequently the manner in which that is done should be closely observed ; and, may I say that, the more I ponder that manner the more am I impressed with the wisdom and skill with which it is accomplished.

1. The important thing to note is that Death is first named under the form of a comment on the Psalm. Fail not to notice that five or six connected lines of quotation from the Psalm are first given ; and then—after a general remark on the universality of the dominion assigned to man—a line from the Psalm is recalled and a comment offered upon it ; then a second line, and a comment offered on that. To perceive this is to lay hold of the key which opens the Writer's method and argument.

We see Jesus—

*Made some little less than messengers,*

says he, quoting from the Psalm ; adding, by way of comment,—

Because of the suffering of death.

We see him—

*With glory and honour crowned,*

he continues, quoting another line from the Psalm ; adding by way of comment on that,—

To the end that <by favour of God>

<In behalf of every one> he might taste of death.

To perceive that this is the Author's method is to have cleared up the construction of a sentence which otherwise appears exceedingly involved, and which has led some translators and expositors to endeavour to remove the difficulty by resorting to a desperate inversion of the clauses. No inversion is needed ; but every clause is found most aptly and beautifully to fall into its place—

when once the Writer's way of handling his Old Testament quotation is observed.

Let me now state more particularly that the grave difficulty which has confronted us has been this: That the Writer appeared unaccountably to postpone his statement of the design of Jesus' death until after he had advanced to crowning him with glory and honour. Or, to put it in another way: He has seemed to say that it was the crowning of Jesus which imparted to his death its great object; and inasmuch as we have looked upon the crowning as exclusively *following* the death, we have wondered how the *after crowning* could impart an intention to the *prior death*. It is by *first* attending to the *mosaic* structure of the sacred text; *then* by noting the *generality* of its first reference to death as the liability and doom of the race rather than an individual; and finally by connecting more closely the *crowning of the individual man Jesus with the Psalm and with Genesis*—in other words, *with the crowning of the race, Man*; it is thus that the whole difficulty is swept away; and while, on the one hand, the structure of the text becomes clear and simple, on the other, the ideas it sets forth are seen to be at once orderly, progressive, and grand.

(1) The MOSAIC STRUCTURE of the text has already been sufficiently stated; and nothing more can be needed to secure for it acceptance than to observe how it conduces to the luminous unfolding of the whole passage.

(2) Next, as to the GENERALITY of the first reference to death—in the commenting words “Because of the suffering of death”—I am, in part at least, indebted to Dr. Weymouth for suggesting this, in his note on the passage, which runs as follows: “Or ‘because man has to suffer death.’” Without putting it so definitely as this in actual translation, still we may *understand* the clause to point that way; for the Writer, it should be well observed, does

not himself say "Because of HIS suffering of death," but only, more generally, "Because of the suffering of death." And, indeed,—when we couple this generality with the fact of the clause being a comment on the Psalm, which Psalm manifestly treats of Man as Man,—we are emboldened to go back behind the *fact* that Man was made lower than heavenly messengers, to the *reason why* he was so made inferior: It was for the very purpose that he—Man—might be susceptible of death. Heavenly messengers cannot die—awful truth; Man can die—merciful provision, since out of that possibility, in the favour of God, springs the possibility of redemption. The words of our Writer's comment are exactly right, and exactly in place: "Because of—for the sake of—with a view to—the suffering of death"; true of Man—true of the Son of Man.

(3) Now, finally, we have to treat the **crowning** of Jesus **in the same broad spirit**; namely, as catching up the thread of man's original creation and royal destiny. Man—the Race—was "crowned with glory and honour," either actually or in divine purpose: Jesus—the Individual representing the Race—was "crowned with glory and honour." As 'soon as we grasp this close connection between the crowning of Man and the crowning of Jesus, we are on the way to a material modification in our view as to wherein the crowning of Jesus consisted; no longer regarding it so much as *the reward of his suffering* as rather *the perfecting of his manhood*. And this will effect a further modification in our ideas: it will lead us to place the crowning *before* the Crucifixion rather than after—which is exactly what our text requires; since, according to it, the Crowning gives merit to the Death: He was "crowned . . . . that he might taste of death for every one"; not because he had tasted death for every one. And, needless to say, it will bring in the mysterious event of the

TRANSFIGURATION, investing it with a significance it did not before possess : that event being now regarded as the actual “crowning” of Jesus “with glory and honour” — the “glory” of personal transformation, the “honour” of preference over Moses and Elijah, over men and angels.

Going back for a moment to the original “crowning” of Man as celebrated in the Psalm, the alternative was just now suggested that, at his creation, Man was “crowned with glory and honour”—*either actually or in divine purpose*. To the present argument it does not matter which. If he was then actually crowned with a halo of glory and honour, giving majesty to his person, and calling forth the instinctive reverence and obedience of all his subjects throughout all his dominions,—then we can only conclude that the crown soon fell from his head. If, however, as I rather think, he was himself first put under discipline and training, expressly that his manhood might be perfected before it was visibly crowned,—even then it will practically come to the same thing so far as Jesus is concerned. In other words : Adam either lost his crown, or failed to win it. The crown of perfected and glorified Manhood was, in any case, won by Jesus ! I do indeed incline to the view that in Adam Man never fully entered upon his royal inheritance ; and, for this conclusion, I have already given some reason from the very language used in the First of Genesis. But the main thing here is to regard the Crowning of Jesus as the Divine acknowledgment of his trained and perfected Manhood, won before the Cross was reached, and investing the Cross itself with a merit it would not otherwise so clearly be seen to possess. He was “crowned with glory and honour” that it might be seen that for himself he needed not to die—that there was no reason why he should die at all, except for the sake of others.\*

\* See App. (4).

Yet, even so, we must not be too rigidly logical in attempting to interpret our Author, nor seek to confine his meaning within too straitened a channel; otherwise he will burst open and sweep down our banks. For he is everywhere rhetorical, and as such very apt to reveal an overflow of thought that will not be pent up within narrow bounds. As for instance here, Jesus was already crowned with glory and honour before he came up to the Cross; which means, that his manhood was morally adorned with every grace by devotion and fidelity and obedience even before he suffered, and so that he was well fitted to be physically adorned, as we know he practically was on the holy mount. Nevertheless we know, from this very Epistle further on, that Jesus *went on* learning by his sufferings a more painful, a more complete, a more heroic obedience up to and upon the very Cross itself. This we can allow for without retracting what we have said about the preliminary crowning that preceded his death.

2. So far, we have studied the death of Jesus in its relation to the possible and actual death of MAN. Next, we have to note its relation to God, in so far as that is glanced at in this context. Was it derogatory to God to permit his ever loyal and obedient Son to die? Far from that, says this Christian Author: it was a "becoming"—"suitable"—"beseeming" thing for him to do. For he had a worthy and noble end in view; namely, that of "leading many sons to glory"; and, by giving his First-begotten permission to lay down his life, he endowed him with the capacity of becoming a yet more accomplished leader of those other sons; equipped with an experience of suffering, and a patience in suffering, and a schooling through suffering which even he could not have otherwise possessed. In this way does our Author thus early, namely in verse 10, lay a foundation for those final solacing words

with which in verses 17 and 18 he winds up this entire section. Jesus knows by experience what suffering is: he knows its stern power to put the sufferer's obedience to the test: hence pity fills his heart, and he becomes not only a "faithful" High Priest, which in any case he must have been, but emphatically "merciful" withal. Moreover, he thus acquires an ability to bring prompt and effectual succour to those who are passing through the fiery ordeal which only experience could impart. Yes! God is vindicated: "it became him" by such means to secure such ends. Therein lies the Divine justification—namely, in producing and setting before us such a Leader. Let us follow him, through obedience, up to glory, dominion and age-abiding renown!

3. Once more: note the relation of Jesus' death to the ADVERSARY, as set forth in this section (verses 14 and 15). To appreciate what is here said at its proper value, we have to consider the nature of that "hold" of death which is here conceded to belong to Satan. He has, or had,—not exactly the "power" of death (*dynamis*), nor the "authority" of death (*exousia*), but the "grasp" or "hold" (*kratos*) of death. This points to the Adversary as the accuser of the brethren.\* He tempts men to sin; and then, when he has succeeded in enticing them into it, he accuses them of it before God; and, as it would appear, challenges the Most High to vindicate his law and truth by inflicting death on the offenders. If this be correct, we see what sort of "hold" he has of death: it is the "hold" of a simulated zeal for law and order—which according to the counsels of Divine wisdom, must be effectually met. He invokes Divine Justice on offending Man. "Thou hast made him of an inferior order to ourselves, on purpose that it might be possible for him to suffer death. Thou hast

\* Rev. xii. 10.

ordained that Death shall, in his case, be the wages of sin. He has sinned : fulfil thy threat ! ”

If this be the nature of Satan’s “hold” on death, we begin to see how Jesus’ Death affects him. It answers him. It silences him. It paralyses him. It brings to naught his murderous machinations. It reduces him to powerlessness (*katargein*). For the Son of God, in becoming Man, assumes the Astounding Office of Redeeming Kinsman, of becoming the rich, strong Partner, who can save the Human Firm from Bankruptcy ! Besides, the new Creature, Man, though liable to Death, is a composite being, the elements of whose personality can be temporarily dissolved without necessitating its instant and absolute destruction. His Redeeming Partner demands that Death itself shall be resolved into two deaths—the first and the second—Death partial and temporary, and Death final and absolute ; that, in the meantime, after the first death, there shall be a “judgment.” Our Hero Saviour becomes Sinbearer to the Race, offering his own life as a ransom. What can the Adversary say to this ? Nothing ! He is dumb. He is beaten. He has compassed the Death of the Son of God—and thereby compassed his own undoing. And so it is emphatically through the Death of the Redeemer that Satan loses the only “hold” on Death that he had. This great redemption has been long in coming ; but it has come at last :—long in coming, hence the provision of the Underworld, the world of waiting spirits, not yet finally denuded of their “souls” or “personalities” ; hence for ages the looking forward to Hades with fear and even dismay ; the best of men being all their lifetime liable to bondage through fear of it. But Redemption has come at last ; and spoils must be taken from under the Enemy’s hand. The spirits of the captive righteous must be at once set free ; and so we find that henceforward they are, if

actually not in, at least in association with, the heavenly Jerusalem.<sup>a</sup>

But the one thing worthy to be sounded out above all else, so far as yet appears, is, that this aspect of victory comes emphatically through the Redeeming Partner's own death;—and therefore not primarily by physical force put forth against the Adversary. We can scarcely doubt the power of the Creator to destroy whatever he has created; even though destruction should come in some way other than death. But here it is no question of destroying Satan's being; but rather that of vanquishing his schemes—undoing his works.<sup>b</sup> Why the adversary should have been held in being so long, it is not perhaps for us at present to know. But this at least is worthy of deepest pondering, that it is only of the present redeeming activities of God that our Author is here speaking in verse 16 (*epilambanetai*, present tense twice). What he may do for angels in the future we are not here informed. All that he here says concerns the present range or order or dispensation of Divine dealing,—that which culminates in the death of the Son of God. This, he says, is not being directed to the laying hold of and helping messengers fallen or unfallen; but is being directed to the laying hold of and helping the seed of Abraham—the laying hold of and helping *men*, no doubt; but only in as far as they can be converted from aliens and enemies into “sons”; only so far as they will consent to fall into line with the Princely Leader of their salvation, and follow him through obedience and suffering to glory; and, therefore, only so far as they can be included in the spiritual family of the father of the faithful, and so also included in the believing, loving, holy family of God.

### III. All that remains in order to complete this “Study,”

<sup>a</sup> Chap. xii. 23.

<sup>b</sup> 1 John iii. 8.



is to endeavour to draw to a focus the rays of the master-truth of the entire section, namely :—**The Partnership of the Son of God with the sons of men.** This may be done within the compass of a few sentences. Were they made lower than heavenly messengers? So was he. Was the design of this inferiority, in their case, to render possible the suffering of death? So was it in his case. Did the possibility of death become actual with them? So it did with him. Was the possession of human nature (blood and flesh) in their case a partnership involving responsibility for others? So it was in his. Were men designed for wielding dominion? So was he. Were men to be trained by obedience and suffering for such dominion? So was he. Were men designed to attain bodily glory? So was he. (Compare the Apostle Paul's teaching, that there is in the Divine plan of human nature, a psychic body and a pneumatic body—1 Cor. xv. 44.)

This final aspect of the section should not be dismissed without a notice, however brief, of the remarkable way in which the fellowship of the Redeemer with his people is illustrated by quotations from the Old Testament. Not only do the sweep and variety of the quotations surprise us, but the principle of selection and the terms of application make us ponder. The first quotation, being taken from the Twenty-second Psalm, is easily seen to be Messianic; for in that composition the Great Sufferer is portrayed with as much vividness as in the Fifty-third of Isaiah; and therefore, when the terrible crisis of suffering is passed, we who believe that the Crucified Messiah rose again from the dead are not surprised though we are delighted to hear the Delivered One's exultation, "I will declare thy name unto my brethren," etc.; and, indeed, from John xvii. 26, we were prepared for the jubilant announcement. The second quotation is probably taken from 2 Sam. xxii. 3 (=Ps. xviii.),

which is on the face of it a Davidic composition ; and is notable as shewing how the experience of the Shepherd King is intensified until it beseems the Son of David : the start and colouring being Davidic, but the scope and outcome Messianic. The third quotation is from the eighth of Isaiah ; and startles us with the suggestion it makes of a parallelism between Isaiah and his “ children ” and the Messiah and his Disciples : both alike being designed to serve as “ signs and wonders in Israel,”—how truly such the latter will yet be, can be clearly foreseen by those who look for the revelation of the Church in glory along with its glorified Head at the very time when the Ancient Nation is brought into allegiance to Jesus of Nazareth as their own Messiah. The point of all three quotations is the one conception of fellowship between the Son of God and the sons of men. In one place (verse 11) the term “ brethren ” is singled out for notice ; in another (verse 14) the word “ children ” is specified ; and then again (verse 17) the name “ brethren ” is once more brought up for observation. Probably the difference between the two terms should not be insisted on ; since, obviously, in handling quotations some allowance should be made for the circumstance that they *are* quotations ; in citing which it is natural that the general sense should be that which attracts a writer’s attention. Messiah’s “ brethren ” are naturally of his own “ blood and flesh ” ; the Davidic Descendant again is of the same blood and flesh of his illustrious Ancestor ; and Isaiah, as a type of the Messiah, is of the same blood and flesh as the two sons whom he takes by the hand that he may significantly march in procession with them before the eyes of the people of Israel. Perhaps the most significant thing in the making of these quotations is the way in which they are introduced : he is not ashamed to call them “ brethren—saying ” : so that, in the opinion of our Author,

it is his voice we hear in the Psalm, and in the prophecy. Thus are Galilean Fishermen—and myriads more who believe through their word—brought into the endearing bonds of being designated Brothers of the Son of God.

The practical outcome of this whole “Study” is :—That, as the Son of God has entered into fellowship with us, so must we enter into fellowship with him, willingly, gratefully, savingly ; that we must trust him, obey him, suffer with him : that we may be also glorified together. “He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit.”<sup>a</sup>

• 1 Cor. vi. 17.

## STUDY VI.

### THE DIVINE HOUSE, THE PROMISED REST, AND THE LIVING WORD.

(Chap. III. 1—IV. 13.)

- 3<sup>1</sup> Whence, holy brethren, |partners| in a heavenly calling',  
Attentively consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession—  
||Jesus' ||
- 2 As one |faithful| to him who made him :  
As |Moses also| in [all] his house.
- 3 For |of more' glory than Moses| hath ||this|| one been counted  
worthy—  
By as much as more' honour than |the house| hath ||he that  
prepared it|| ;
- 4 For |every' house| is prepared by some' one,—  
But |he that prepared all' things| is ||God||.
- 5 |Even Moses| indeed, was faithful in all' his house,  
|As an attendant| ||for a witness of the things which were to be  
spoken|| ;
- 6 But ||Christ|| as |a Son| over his house,—  
Whose house are |we|—if |the freedom of speech and boast of  
the hope [throughout, firm]| we hold fast.
- 7 Wherefore,—  
According as saith the Holy Spirit—  
*To-day < if |unto his voice| ye would hearken>*
- 8 *Do not harden your hearts,—*  
*As in the embitterment,*  
*In the day of testing in the desert,*
- 9 *When your fathers tested by proving,*  
*And saw my works forty' years.*
- 10 *Wherefore I was sore vexed with this generation,*  
*And said, Always err they in their heart ;—*  
*Howbeit |they| learned not my ways :*
- 11 *So I swear in mine anger—*  
*They shall not enter into my rest !—*
- 12 Be taking heed, brethren,  
Lest at any time, there shall be in any one of you  
A wicked heart of unbelief,  
In revolting from a Living God.

- 13 But be exhorting one another, |on each' successive day|,—  
 While the *To-day* is being named !  
 Lest any from among you *be hardened* by the deceitfulness of sin.
- 14 For |partners of Christ| have we become,—  
 If, at least, |the beginning of the confidence, throughout, firm| we  
 hold fast :
- 15 So long as it is said—  
*To-day <if |unto his voice| ye would hearken>*  
*Do not harden your hearts,—*  
*As in the embitterment.*
- 16 For ||who|| |though they heard| *caused embitterment* ?  
 Nay, indeed ! did not all' who came forth out of Egypt through  
 Moses ?
- 17 But ||with whom|| was he *sore vexed forty years* ?  
 Was it not with them who sinned, |whose dead bodies fell in the  
*desert* ! ?
- 18 But ||unto whom|| *sware he*, that *they should not enter into his rest*,—  
 Save unto them who were obstinate ?
- 19 And we see they were not able *to enter* |because of unbelief|.
- 4 <sup>1</sup> Let us therefore fear, lest at any time,  
 Although there is left behind a promise *of entering into his rest*,—  
 Any one from amongst you should be deemed' |to have come short| ;
- <sup>2</sup> For we have had delivered unto us the joyful message, just as even  
 |they| ;  
 But the word that was heard did not profit |them|,  
 They not having been blended, by faith, with the things heard.
- <sup>3</sup> For we who have believed |are to enter into the rest|,  
 According as he hath said—  
*So I swear in mine anger*  
*They shall not enter into my rest ;*  
 And yet |the works| from the foundation of the world' |had been  
 brought into existence|,
- <sup>4</sup> For he hath spoken, somewhere, concerning the seventh [day] thus—  
*And God rested, on the seventh day, from all his works ;*
- <sup>5</sup> And in this again—  
*They shall not enter into my rest.*
- <sup>6</sup> Seeing, therefore, that it is left over for |some| *to enter into it*,  
 And |they who formerly' had delivered to them the joyful message|  
*entered not in by reason of obstinacy,—*
- <sup>7</sup> Again he marketh out a certain day,  
 ||*To-day*|| |in David| saying—after so long a time as this,—according  
 as it hath been said before :—  
*To-day <if |unto his voice| ye would hearken>*  
*Do not harden your hearts.*
- <sup>8</sup> For <if ||unto them|| Joshua' had given rest>

It had not in that case |concerning another' day| been speaking  
|after| these things.

<sup>9</sup> Hence there is |left over|

A Sabbath-keeping for the people of God.

<sup>10</sup> For |he that hath entered into his rest|

||He too|| *hath rested from his' works*,—just as *from his* own ||God||  
[rested].

<sup>11</sup> Let us, therefore, give diligence *to enter into that' rest*,

Lest anyone fall into the same' example |of obstinacy|.

<sup>12</sup> For ||living|| is the word of God, and |energetic|,

And more cutting than any knife with two edges,

And penetrating as far as a dividing asunder of soul and spirit,

Of joints also, and marrow,—

And able to judge the impulses and designs of the heart ;

<sup>13</sup> And there is |no created thing| can be secreted before him,

But |all things| are naked and exposed to his eyes :—

As to whom is ||our discourse||.

I. It seems almost an abuse of words to call this portion of the Epistle a “section”: it is rather a *layer* than a section. “The household of God”—“the Rest that remaineth for the people of God”—and “the life and power of the Word of God”—may be said to inlay the Messianic Priesthood. For it is evident that it is to this we are coming: it was first caught sight of in chapter ii. 16—18; then again is named here in chapter iii. 1; and, though postponed for the present, will be resumed and more fully considered at iv. 14 and onwards, until “priesthood” and “household” are combined at x. 21. We may perhaps thread our way into our present extract thus:—the kinship suggests the priesthood—the priesthood introduces the household—the danger of losing our place in the household is enforced by the dangers and the losses of them “of olden time” who were denied entrance into Canaan. One “if” suggests another: “Whose house we are—IF.” “To-day IF unto his voice ye would hearken!” The dangers of the past are living warnings still!

II. Several VERBAL DETAILS are worthy of notice:—

1. "Partners" (iii. 1)—a far more expressive and adequate word than "partakers," or even "fellows." Compare the three occurrences of this delightful designation, as found in i. 9; iii. 1, 14 and its cognate verb in ii. 14, with the fountain head of them in Ps. xlv. 7.

2. "Heavenly calling" (iii. 1)—much more than a call coming from heaven. Nay! rather a calling to the heavenly glory and honour (ii. 7, 9, 10) of dominion over "the coming habitable earth" (i. 6; ii. 5).

3. "Attentively consider" (iii. 1)—worthy of note as occurring in this Epistle elsewhere only at x. 24. Fixed and prolonged attention, amounting to earnest study, is the least it can mean when directed to "the Apostle and High-priest of our confession." What a careful consideration of each other, then, it must enjoin in the latter passage. Without such study, we may, with the best intentions, move to anger where we would only "provoke to love."

4. "Confession" (iii. 1)—deeper and more serious than "profession." It is the courageous refusal to "deny," when challenged. "Profession" is cheap: "confession" in spirit prepares for martyrdom.

5. "House" (iii. 2—6)—no doubt, in this connection suggesting "household." Nevertheless the metaphysical sense clings so closely to the physical or literal, in English as well as in Greek, that it seems needless to vary the translation. The accompanying verb *kataskeuazomai* plainly alludes to the supplying of a house with vessels, utensils, furniture; and thereby, in this connection, conveys the closely related ideas of building a house and making it completely ready for habitation. To translate *oikos* "family" here and "house" in x. 21—as "The Corrected New Testament" has done—is to withhold from the English reader a helpful comparison of texts.

6. "If ye will hear his voice" (iii. 7, A.V.): "If ye shall

hear his voice " (R.V.).—The difference between "will" and "shall" in this connection is considerable. "Will" applies to the disposition of the hearer: as much as to say, "If to-day ye will hearken to his voice, as ye ought, with a genuine desire to know and do his bidding, then be careful not to harden your hearts against his leadership; but see that ye turn your vague and general wish into specific performance." But the English auxiliary "shall" puts another and very different complexion on the clause, by referring not to the disposition of the hearer but to his opportunity, in reference to a matter of fact which may or may not occur to-day: "If to-day ye shall, as a matter of fact, hear his voice"; which is the same thing as to say, "If to-day God shall be pleased to speak; for instance, by sending a prophet with a message;—then mind that ye receive the message with tender and responsive hearts." In this case (with the "shall" of eventuality), it is regarded as uncertain whether God will or will not speak to-day. With the term "will" in it, this introductory line forms an essential part of the exhortation, the next line merely sustaining it; whereas, with "shall" substituted, the words point to the possible occurrence of a fact: should it happen then the exhortation is tendered as expressed in the words that follow. It is observable that the O.T. revisers, in Ps. xcv. 7, have not so much as alluded to such a rendering, even as an alternative; and the opinion is here hazarded that neither Hebrew nor Greek favours so important a change.

7. "Rest" (iii. 11, etc.).—It should be easy for the intelligent reader to rise above the idea of "rest" here as mere relief of weariness (which as applied to God is repugnant, Isa. xl. 28) and grasp the higher conception of cessation from good work well done, with implied satisfaction in the finished product—a conception suitable and acceptable. A



notable thing it is, that God's own works are so "good" that they need no after-mending. He "rests" in what he has done, and proceeds to new working on a higher plane; rising from creation to providence, from providence to redemption: with the notable but undoubted result that, of necessity, the "rest" itself is thereby heightened and intensified. The most wonderful thing of all, however, is: That the infinite God should so rejoice in the works of his own hands as to crave the fellowship of his intelligent creatures with him in that joy;—so intensely, indeed, that, though the invitation to share it remains unresponded to for centuries, the effect is merely the pushing of the horizon further on, meantime renewing the invitation:—the "rest" is only "left over"; for "some must enter it." The Father's house must be filled with guests. It is not unworthy of being added, as an observable thing, that God should call his people's rest (Num. x. 33; Deut. xii. 9) his own. Moreover it would appear to follow from iv. 10, that Christ first, and we after him, are to rest from OUR works, as God from "his own." What an incentive to do our work well. Even in our poor labours, it is good to know when to leave off, and "let well alone." Disturbed roots do sometimes refuse to grow.

8. "Whom"—"with whom"—"unto whom"—(iii. 16—18).—It is an acceptable suggestion, made by the "Speaker's Commentary," that these questions are designed to impart an encouraging tone to these otherwise stern warnings: as much as to say, "THEY deserved their chastisement; but such things need not befall YOU, unless ye bring them on yourselves; therefore, Beware!"

9. "Seem" (iv. 1, A.V., R.V., and others)—a most unfortunate rendering. The changed version in the 2nd Ed. of the 20 Cent. N.T., "even appear to have missed it," is only a little better. It is, perhaps, a slight improvement.

inasmuch as it supposes that, at the time of "appearing," the "short-coming" or "missing" has become an accomplished fact: which of itself might have led the reviser to recall the circumstance that the Greek word is occasionally found as a law-term. Everything, surely, depends upon how our conduct "seems" or "appears" to our Judge. Granville Penn, therefore, was justified in translating the word, "should be judged"; as Dr. Weymouth also was in rendering it, "should be found to have fallen short of it." Alas! the "slothful" are unlikely to be alarmed by such a suggestion as, That though they may SEEM to have missed the prize, they will not REALLY have lost it. The above translation, "should be deemed," may have been suggested by the well-known fact, that, in the Isle of Man, JUDGES are called "deemsters." Seriously: as our "Deemster" will be our "Doomster," "let us take heed," "let us fear," "let us attentively consider one another," "let us exhort one another," while the inviting sound of "To-day" is heard; for the living and penetrating word is coming to search us through and through.

10. "With the things heard," lit. "With them who heard" (iv. 2).—If we might take "them who heard" as referring to them who first heard, believed, and reported the "good tidings" concerning the promised land (say Caleb and Joshua), then that would yield the most feasible explanation of a passage made difficult by divergent "various readings," which seem, indeed, in the opinion of experts (as Westcott and Hort), to indicate some early accident to the text. The general sense would then be: "Did not profit them, because they (the people in general) were not united by faith with the believing spies who brought them the good tidings."

11. "Are to enter" (iv. 3).—The occasional prospective force of the Greek present tense being well known, it seems

better to make that meaning at once evident in this text by the above rendering, rather than risk the conveyance of the wrong sense by our English form "do enter," which is apt to mean, to the casual reader, "do (at once) enter into rest,"—which, most decidedly, is *not* the Writer's intention, as the context abundantly shews.

12. "If they shall enter" (iv. 3).—The R.V. has done well to remove this Hebrew idiom of swearing from the text in this place, as it is distinctly misleading to English readers. It may be doubted whether either A.V. or R.V., in Psalm xcv. or here in Hebrews, has done wisely to retain it in the margin; as, even there, it can do nothing save suggest a doubt which does not really exist.

13. "Knife" (iv. 12).—This surely is more suited to the dissector's hand than "sword."

14. "Soul and spirit" (iv. 12).—On its merits, this hint is well worthy to be added to our materials for constructing a Biblical Psychology. Ordinarily, in the Bible, man is bi-partite; being constituted of either "body and soul" or "body and spirit." Occasionally, however, he is regarded as tri-partite, composed of "body," "soul" and "spirit"; and then the question naturally arises, What is the precise relation between "soul" and "spirit"? And, from scattered Biblical hints, the answer suggests itself: That the relation between them is so intimate, that they may often be practically treated as one and the same; so that, for example, if the persecutor cannot destroy the "soul" proper, neither can he touch the "spirit." If the body without the spirit is dead, that is because "spirit" carries "soul" with it. Man's sharpest knife cannot sever "soul" from "spirit": God's knife can. Hence, before we say that either "soul" or "spirit" or both are absolutely indestructible, we had better think again. Broadly, it would seem that God claims it as his own sole prerogative

—to create and to destroy. And it may even be, that just here we have a hint as to the process by which man may be destroyed ; namely simply by the severance of “soul” and “spirit.” If we are right in regarding “spirit” as primarily an emanation from Deity,<sup>a</sup> and “soul” as the realised and generally self-conscious individuality of that emanation ; then we may not be far wrong if we further conclude that “soul,” uninformed by “spirit” because severed from it, cannot continue to exist ; and that “spirit,” disrobed of “soul” and no longer “bounded” by it, would naturally be re-absorbed in God. Thus “spirit” *as* “spirit” might in a sense be indestructible, and yet personality be finally lost, and man as man be for ever destroyed. If it be suggested that here, in Heb. iv. 12, we are more likely to have a practical allusion to the diverse sources of “the thoughts and intents,” or “impulses and designs” of the heart, than a severely exact analysis of man’s constitution,—the reply is obvious, that there is no necessary conflict between the two interests ; and that it is characteristic of the sacred writers to adduce more than is absolutely necessary for the enforcement of present lessons. It may well be that the main point here is that, whether the activities of mind take the form of direct intuitions of the “spirit,” or are coloured by the likes and dislikes of the personality—of the “soul,”—in any case the word of God is able to sift them and sit in judgment on them ; and yet it may remain true, that the Divine Dissector’s knife, and it alone, can resolve man into his constituent elements. At all events, it would seem that this passage stands absolutely alone in its penetration and suggestiveness. It cannot, therefore, be tied down to parallels which do not exist.

15. “Joints also and marrow” (iv. 12).—Quite possibly

<sup>a</sup> Gen. ii. 7 ; Eccl. xii. 7.

this is a mere analogical enrichment of the thought already expressed ; as much as to say : “ As penetratingly and unerringly as the human dissector can sever from each other ‘ joints and marrow,’ so penetratingly and unerringly can the Divine Dissector make a clear and complete cut between ‘ soul and spirit,’ ” notwithstanding their intimate and manifold inter-relations.

16. “ As to whom is our discourse ” (iv. 13).—Since the Greek here is nearly the same as in v. 11, it seems safer to give of it the same English translation in both places. Moreover, the continuity of the text is thereby made distinctly more evident. How “ great ” must our High-priest be (ver. 14) who knows precisely the quality of the offerings made through him (ver. 13). Resting in these two considerations as conclusive, we are thereby prepared to reflect : That the remarkable transition observable within the compass of verses 12 and 13, is from the Written Word to the Personal Word. Both are living.

III. The COURSE OF THE ARGUMENT through this portion of the sacred text is evident—if we bear in mind that the controlling purpose is to re-ground the Hebrew converts in their faith and to move them to steadfast boldness in confessing it. As to the “ house of God ” ; was Moses faithful therein ? Admitted ! So was Christ—with this difference, That the position of Christ in God’s house is higher than was that of Moses ; and that the house itself is nobler, namely, a “ house ” or “ household ” of living members,—among whom WE have the honour and ‘ responsibility of being counted ; only we must not shrink from filling up our place therein. As to “ the rest ” : that rest in substance still remains for us to enter ; but we must beware of following the bad example of them who failed in olden time. As to “ the word of God ” : it is THAT which keeps

alive these examples, and cuts deep in giving them effect ; which in fact lays bare our inward powers, our current and casual thoughts,—approving itself thus as the living and energetic word of the living and active Son, before whose all-seeing eye all mixed and hidden motives are exposed to view, yea even the deepest springs of unbelief issuing in timidity, disobedience and apostacy.

## STUDY VII.

A PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION OF CHRIST'S  
PRIESTHOOD.

(Chap. IV. 14—V. 10.)

- <sup>14</sup> <Having then a great high-priest who hath passed through the heavens, ||Jesus the Son of God||>  
Let us hold fast the confession.
- <sup>15</sup> For we have not a high-priest unable to have fellow-feeling with our weaknesses,  
But one tested in all respects, by way of likeness, |apart from sin|.
- <sup>16</sup> Let us, then, be approaching with freedom of speech, unto the throne of favour,  
That we may receive mercy.  
And |favour| may find |for seasonable succour|.
5. <sup>1</sup> For ||every' high-priest who from among men' is taken||  
|On behalf of men| is appointed, as to the things pertaining unto God,  
That he may be offering [both] gifts and sacrifices for sins,—
- <sup>2</sup> Able |to have a measure of feeling| for the ignorant and erring,—  
Since |he also| is compassed with weakness ;
- <sup>3</sup> And |for this cause| is he obliged—  
As for |the people|  
So also |for himself|,—  
To be offering for sins.
- <sup>4</sup> And ||not unto himself|| doth one take the honour,  
But when called by God',  
Just as |even Aaron| :
- <sup>5</sup> ||Thus|| |also the Christ| glorified not himself' to become a high-priest,  
But he that spake unto him—  
||My Son|| art |thou|,  
||I|| |this day| have begotten' thee ;
- <sup>6</sup> As also |in a different place| he saith—  
||Thou|| art a priest |age-abidingly|,  
||According to the rank of Melchizedek|| :
- <sup>7</sup> Who ||in the days of his flesh||  
<Having offered up |both supplications and entreaties  
Unto him that was able to save him out of death,

With mighty outcries and tears|,  
 And been hearkened to by reason of his devoutness>  
<sup>8</sup> | Even though he was' a son|  
 Yet learned from what things he suffered, ||obedience||.  
<sup>9</sup> And |being made perfect|  
 Became |to all' them that obey him|  
 Author of salvation age-abiding;  
<sup>10</sup> Being addressed by God as high-priest—  
 ||According to the rank of Melchizedek||.

THIS portion of the Sacred Text so readily lends itself to analysis that the following summary view of its principal contents may be acceptable.

# OUR HIGH PRIEST ATTENTIVELY CONSIDERED.

## I. Absolutely.

- A. *Has won access and acceptance* : iv. 14.
  - a. *Impelling us to courage in confession* : iv. 14.
- B. *Possesses sympathy and sinlessness* : iv. 15.
  - b. *Inspiring confidence in prayer,—*  
*as a passive receiving,*  
*as an active finding* : iv. 16.

## II. Comparatively.

- A. *Compared with Other Priests* : v. 1-2.
  - 1. *Do they represent the people?* So does Christ.
  - 2. *Were they appointed by God?* So was Christ.

Note the passages which appoint him { Ps. ii.  
 „ cx.
- B. *Compared with Himself before he was a priest.*
  - “In the days of his flesh.” { 1. *The schooling* : v. 7.  
 { 2. *The lesson* : v. 8.  
 { 3. *The reward* : v. 9.

I. We are not surprised that now at length the Writer should address himself in earnest to the subject of CHRIST'S



PRIESTHOOD, inasmuch as he has already, twice over (ii. 17; iii. 1), approached it. Nor are we unprepared to find him characterising that priesthood as "great." Everything he has so far advanced concerning "Jesus the Son of God" has suggested greatness: his superiority to heavenly messengers, his superiority to Moses, assure us that if he be a "priest" at all, he must needs be a "great" one. What we are rather surprised at is, the one bold stroke by which the Writer here illustrates that greatness: "Who hath passed through the heavens." He has not mentioned this before, in such a connection; nor does he now seem to be telling it for the first time. The natural explanation of this informality is: That his own mind is full of it, full of the heavenly nature of Christ's priesthood; so that having in the very first sentence of his Epistle seen Jesus seated at the right hand of God as the sign of his having succeeded in achieving purification for human sin, by that very reference there has flashed on him the whole glory of the heavenly priesthood. He has seen it; and now he assumes that we too have seen it; and he would exhort us that, having seen it and become assured of it, we should draw inspiration from it,—such inspiration as shall at once embolden and warn us to hold fast our confession of Jesus with unfaltering and unswerving tenacity.

II. But there is a beautiful BALANCE in our Writer's statements; and so he moves on with circumspection. Forbearing at present to press the greatness of his Lord's priesthood, he adduces its gentleness. Jesus the Son of God is, it is true, a strong priest; but he is at the same time a sympathetic priest. He is, it is true, a triumphant priest, witness the position he has taken in heaven; but he is a tender priest, with the tenderness which he experimentally acquired on earth, and still retains in heaven.

Moreover, the sympathy of our priest is further commended to us by its association with sinlessness. For this, indeed, greatly enhances its value. We might have hastily assumed the contrary; and half wished that Jesus had sinned, as we sin,—imagining that at least, he being thereby brought nearer to us, the helpfulness of his sympathy would have been greater. But this will not bear reflection. The sympathy of sinfulness on his part would have weakened us, not only by reconciling us to failure, but by lessening our confidence in the prevalence of his intercession with God in our behalf. Let us rather say with a thoughtful commentator on this passage: “It is the love which suffers, and not the weakness which fails, that is able to help us.”<sup>a</sup> It is well that we should not be reconciled to failure, lest thereby it should be rendered more difficult for us to repent, and turn, and find mercy; and well that our confidence in the power of his intercession for us should not be lessened, since our faith may easily be tried at any time by a renewed sense of guilt. But, to proceed, let us follow our guide by making a prompt transition from theory to practice. The greatness of our priest inspires us with courage to hold fast our confession: his sympathy helps us to the source of strength--of renewed strength after failure. It invites us to the Throne. It encourages us to come there, even when our hearts are weighed down with despondency and shame. Thus are we led on by a passage of such supreme charm and helpfulness, that its like is scarcely to be found among all the most famous of the sayings of God. Before we give it the separate attention which its intrinsic merits so abundantly deserve, let us reflect a moment on the consummate skill by which our Author thus strengthens his appeal to the imperilled Hebrews. He may argue with them, and fail;

he may exhort them, and fail : but if he can induce them to take into their own hands the weapon of prayer and make proof of its efficacy, the likelihood is that he will succeed !

III. THE THRONE OF FAVOUR. This is not another throne than the throne of the universe. It is the central and supreme royal seat of sovereign authority over heaven and earth, over messengers and men. It is not the throne of Jesus as set over against the throne of the Divine Majesty. Rather, it is the Father's throne, unto which Jesus has himself drawn near, on which, by his Father's side Jesus has himself triumphantly sat down. There would be incalculably less comfort had we to come to a secondary throne, from which there might lie an appeal. No ! it is broadly the throne of God, with all the attributes of a throne : as the symbol of government, the centre of authority, the source of power. It is not even as if God had two thrones—one of justice, the other of favour. No ! it is the one throne of justice, majesty and might, viewed as at the same time a throne of favour, where blessings are bestowed, where mercy may be obtained. Of course it is through Jesus that that central throne is revealed as at once a throne of justice and of grace.

To this throne of favour we are invited to come near. We can get to it. He that sits thereon can hear us : he is omniscient. Our prayers can reach him.

The invitation is thrown into a significant form. It is not, "Let us approach once for all" (*aorist*) ; but "let us be approaching" (Greek present tense), the present tense of continuance and custom. "Let us form the habit of coming near, Let us accustom ourselves to the privilege." And this is well sustained by what accompanies and follows.

We are invited to come "with boldness," or rather "with

freedom of speech." This is boldness shewing itself in a particular way; the freedom of speech that completely unburdens itself, that says all that it desires to say. This may be a very helpful word of guidance, seeing that some good men, from the best of motives, have seemed wishful that we should restrict our petitions to those things which we know to be acceptable to God. But, however much we may press our suit in respect of those things which we know to be most needed and which we are sure God is most wishful to bestow, it is well to perceive that our welcome is not confined within those limits. A child does not need always to know whether what it asks will be granted; and, in fact, it would detract from childlike boldness, never to make an experimental request. Think of Abraham, in interceding for Sodom,—how he kept shifting his ground; and, so to speak, making a further experiment. Think also of our Lord himself, not indeed as making experiment in prayer, but as repeatedly asking for that which it seemed to him as he prayed might possibly not be according to his Father's will. To these examples may be added a reminder that the Apostle Paul prayed "thrice" that the thorn in his flesh might be taken away; and that, in reply, although direct answer was denied him, he received most comfortable assurances. We are, then, to approach the throne of grace "with freedom of speech." At the same time the greatest felt need will naturally most press for utterance; and what is our greatest need but mercy that forgives and succour when danger is near? To these considerations offered as reasons for coming, let us now give brief attention.

"Mercy" we always need: and although we do well to avoid all insincerity in our confessions of sin, and to shun as cowardly such pointed confessions of particular offences as amount to the accusing of others, yet we can seldom do

wrong in asking very humbly for mercy because of sins known or unknown, remembered or forgot.

The familiar clause, in the old rendering, "grace to help in time of need" nearly but not quite expresses the striking force of the original. It does perhaps express it, if stress is laid on the restrictive words "time of need." "Help," of itself, is too general; since we may often be glad of help which we do not urgently and instantly require to prevent disaster; whereas this last-named element is of the essence of this second specified object of prayer. *Boetheia*, from *boee* "an outcry," means the succour needed to avert calamity, as when an army must be quickly reinforced to prevent defeat, or when a beleaguered garrison must receive supplies at once to avert surrender. So *we* may need speedy and specific deliverance to rescue us from the spell of an almost overmastering temptation, or to prevent overwhelming misfortune entailing lasting shame.

Agreeably with these two leading objects to be sought in prayer is the difference between the two words "receive" and "find"—the former being more passive, and the latter more active. Confessing sin, we then have simply the assurance of *faith* that we are heard and that mercy is extended; whereas we "find," we "discover," we "recognise" the seasonable succour, and mark it on our calendar as a memorable deliverance.

This then, in some detail of exposition, is the encouraging invitation based at once on the strength and on the sympathy of our great high priest.

IV. It is a satisfaction to note, as we next do, how Christ's priesthood is brought into relation with PRIESTHOOD IN GENERAL, more particularly as known in Israel as an ordinance of Divine appointment; though at the same time as rooting itself so deeply in human nature as to touch the

priesthood of all believers mentioned in chapter xiii. 15, 16; 1 Peter ii. 5; and elsewhere. A priest is taken from among men, and he officiates in behalf of men. It is true that it is with reference to things pertaining to God that he acts in his priestly capacity. Still the passage does not say that priesthood is to benefit God, but it does strongly affirm that it is for the advantage and blessing of man. We may sufficiently summarise this part of our text by putting the matter thus :

Did those other priests headed by Aaron represent the people and act in their behalf? So does Christ.

Were those priests divinely appointed to their office and not self appointed? So was Christ.

We observe that our Writer sustains the latter assertion by quoting two passages from the Old Testament; namely, Psalm ii. 7 and cx. 4. We shall probably anticipate what he has yet to say about Melchizedek so far as not to feel surprised that he should quote the latter passage in sustaining the Divine call of the promised Messiah to priesthood. But what has the former text to do with priesthood, which in explicit terms it does not mention? On one condition it has everything to do with it; and that condition is, that the "This day" of the verse refers to the day of the Messiah's resurrection from the dead, whereby he became the Firstborn from the dead—an interpretation which seems more suitable to the passage itself, and to have been perfectly familiar to Apostolic minds. Conceding that—and I do not see how it can be seriously doubted—the relevance of that reference at once appears. It was in and through the very fact of his resurrection that he was endowed with that "indissoluble life" which constituted him the one undying high priest of men.

V. It only remains to ask what is the relation to CHRIST'S PRIESTHOOD of the pathetic reference to "THE DAYS OF HIS FLESH" which suddenly breaks in upon us at verse 7?

It is indeed a pathetic reference, and highly suggestive. The very description of the time when those sorrows were borne by Jesus arrests attention: it was "in the days of his flesh"; as much as to say, "in the days of his weakness and humiliation"—a sense to which the term "flesh" lends itself, as every Bible reader knows. But the most striking thing is the decision with which the phrase represents those days as past and gone for ever. He himself continues, still possessing a body; but his present body is a spiritual, a heavenly, a glorious body; one that betokens power, that is invested with majesty. Here, with a keen sense of the contrast, the reference is back to those pre-resurrection days. They were days in which he was physically and mentally susceptible of pain and sorrow, and what a crisis of anguish the Writer puts into those days. Doubtless he refers to the agony in the garden, of which we have vivid and touching accounts in the Gospels. It might be thought that nothing could add to the impressiveness of those stories; the perturbed mind of Jesus, his evident longing for fellowship in his loneliness, and yet his inability to endure too close a witnessing of his anguish, his return to his disciples, his being again torn from them, his broken petitions, his repetition of them in the same words; moving incidents indeed! And yet additional details are here given; he made supplication, he entreated, as we already knew, but here we learn that he did so with mighty outcries and tears! In presence of such violent grief, such loud and sobbing petitions, our instinct is—silence. But we do well to brace up our minds to learn, as well as we can, all that is set before us; and, marking the fresh words which carry us a little beyond the earlier

records, we ask: What was it that called forth such impassioned outcries? What was it that Jesus so much dreaded; from which he thus passionately sought deliverance? There would seem to be but one answer. It was not exactly a nameless terror in presence of impending death—as some have supposed; as if we had to understand that he prayed exclusively that that terror might be taken away, and that when he was answered the terror was removed, and he again looked forward to death with equanimity. There is, perhaps, some truth in this representation; but it does not seem to go quite far enough. Far less does the singular conclusion satisfy us which some have formed: That Jesus was afraid that he should die before the Cross was reached. This scarcely comports with the simplicity of the words before us. For what are those words? They come before us, it is true, in an oblique way; not as a direct and independent statement of what it was that Jesus feared; but in the form of a description of him to whom he addressed his supplication; nevertheless with sufficient clearness to make the object of Jesus' dread apparent. He addressed his supplications and entreaties "Unto him who was able to save him (literally) out of death." The most natural conclusion seems to be, that it was DEATH ITSELF that he feared— not merely the pain and shame of dying—but death; the dissolution of his human nature; the being dead, the remaining dead; the end of his human life. "From death" (A.V.) might easily have meant, "saved from dying." But "out of death" would appear to mean, more naturally than anything else, saved out of death by restoration to life—in a word by resurrection; by the reconstitution of that unique and holy personality that was about to be dissolved. If we accept this view, then we are entitled to claim that Jesus' prayer was in fact and in fulness answered when he was raised from



the dead ; nor are we estopped from adding that an immediate assurance that it should be so may well have calmed our Saviour's breast, and served to bring anew into his perturbed and distracted memory "the joy that had (already) been set before him," and that so he was afresh armed to "endure the Cross, despising the shame."

Such a prayer—such an assurance of a coming triumphant answer to that prayer—such a renewed trust and thenceforth unfaltering surrender—would appear to answer to the words of the sacred text already considered, and besides to those further words which declare that it was thus—by this very triumph of agonised prayer—that Jesus, by the things that he suffered, learned the perfection of obedience.

But what has all this to do, even as a reminiscent background, with the post-resurrection priesthood of Jesus the Son of God ? Plainly, it has everything to do with it in the way of a most thorough preparation for the office upon which he was so soon to enter, and in which he was to abide for evermore. He was first made perfect, and then by resurrection installed in his priesthood. Made perfect : by the sufferings which tested his obedience, and whereby his obedience was perfected, and which obedience being personal and experimental and persistent and victorious, entered into his character, became for ever a part of himself.

And being thus made perfect, he became "author" or (perhaps better still) "cause,"—personal cause, personal justifying and satisfying reason,—for the divine bestowment of salvation age-abiding ; salvation in its largest sense, in its ultimate fruition, the being led up into glory unfading. That men who have been rebellious, wayward, tainted, corrupt, death-doomed, should be ushered into unending life—needs vindication. Here it is ! It is in him. He is the answer to every question ; the eternal vindicator from all gainsaying.

But the bestowment of this boon—even with this Cause attached—is subject to one limitation: The perfected Sufferer became this, “to all them who obey him.” At this we need not wonder, when we remember that disobedience, rooted in unbelief, was man’s one ruinous sin. Salvation must needs be salvation in its own inherent nature. There can be no real salvation which has not a moral root and which does not deliver from self-will.

But who would not obey One who thus himself obeyed; crying out in his last extremity of anguish, “Not my will, but thine, be done”?

Once more our Author rises to the greatness of our high priest, by again repeating the almost mystic formula, which, whatever else it signifies, at least means kingly priesthood, personal majesty, and unbroken continuance in office: “Addressed by God as high priest according to the rank or order or likeness of Melchizedek.”

But here again a sudden and very instructive interruption to the main argument claims attention, to which consideration must be given in our next “Study.”

## STUDY VIII.

THE DANGER OF DULNESS IN DIVINE  
LEARNING AND LIFE.

(Chap. V. 11—14 ; VI. 1—20.)

**Melchizedek :—**<sup>11</sup> Concerning whom—

<Weighty> is our discourse,  
And hard to express in plain words,  
Seeing ye have become ||slow to learn||.

<sup>12</sup> For <even when ye ought to be teachers |by reason of the lapse of time|>

Again' have ye need' that one be teaching |you|  
What are the first principles of the oracles of God ;  
And have become such as have need' of milk, not of strong food.

<sup>13</sup> For ||everyone partaking of milk|| is unskilled in a discourse about righteousness,

For he is ||a babe|| ;

<sup>14</sup> But <to such as are mature> pertaineth the strong' food,—

To them who <by reason of habit> have the organs of perception  
well trained for discriminating both good and evil.

<sup>6</sup> <sup>1</sup> Wherefore <dismissing the elementary discourse concerning the Christ>

<Unto maturity> let us be advancing ;  
Not again' <a foundation> laying down—  
Of repentance from dead works,  
And of faith toward God,  
A teaching—

<sup>2</sup> ||Of immersions||,  
And of laying on hands,  
Of the rising of the dead,  
And of judgment age-abiding :—

<sup>3</sup> And <this> will we do—if at least |God| permit'.<sup>4</sup> For it is impossible—

<In the case of those who have been once for all illuminated,  
Who have tasted also of the heavenly free-gift,  
And have been made ||partners|| in Holy Spirit,  
<sup>5</sup> And have tasted God's utterance to be ||sweet||,  
Mighty works also of a coming age,

- 6 And who have fallen away >—  
 Again' to be renewing them into repentance ;  
 Seeing they are afresh crucifying to themselves the Son of God,  
 And holding him up as an example.
- 7 For ||*land*||  
 <Which hath drunk in the rain thereupon oft-times coming,  
 And which bringeth forth *vegetation* fit for them for whom it is  
 even cultivated >  
 Partaketh of a blessing from God ;
- 8 But <*should it be bringing forth thorns and briars*>  
 It is disapproved, and <unto *cursing*> nigh,—  
 Whose |end| is for |burning|.
- 9 But we are persuaded <concerning you, beloved>  
 The things which are better and which include salvation,  
 Though <even thus> we speak.
- 10 For <not unrighteous> is God to be forgetful of your work and of  
 the love which ye have shewn forth for his name,  
 In that ye have' ministered unto the saints, and are' ministering.
- 11 But we are coveting—  
 That |each of you| be shewing forth the same diligence,  
 Unto the full assurance of hope throughout :
- 12 In order that <not slow to learn> ye may be found,  
 But imitators of them who <through faith and patience> were  
 becoming heirs of the promises.
- 13 For ||when to Abraham God made promise||  
 <Seeing he had no one greater by whom to swear>  
 He *swore by himself*, <sup>14</sup> saying,—  
 |*Truly, if blessing*| *I will bless thee*,  
 And |*multiplying*| *I will multiply* thee ;
- 15 And ||thus|| <being patient> he attained unto the promise.
- 16 For ||men|| <by the greater one> swear,  
 And ||with them|| <an end of all gainsaying by way of confirmation>  
 is ||the oath|| :
- 17 Wherein God <being more abundantly disposed to shew forth unto  
 the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of his counsel>  
 Mediated with an oath,—
- 18 In order that <through means of two' unchangeable things, in which  
 it was impossible for God to make himself false>  
 <A mighty consolation> we might have, who have fled along to  
 grasp the forelying hope,
- 19 Which we have as an anchor of the soul,  
 Both secure and firm,  
 And *entering into the interior of the veil* :
- 20 Where |a forerunner in our behalf| hath entered ||even Jesus||  
 Who <according to the rank of *Melchizedek*> hath become  
 ||A high-priest unto times age-abiding||.

## GENERAL VIEW.

WE now reach a portion of the Epistle which may be described as a **Digression**. It is of considerable length, and touches on several topics of great importance. We may summarise its principal contents by the help of three or four words ; **DIFFICULTY—BLAME—REMEDY—EXHORTATIONS** to apply the remedy ; which exhortations run into the two channels of **WARNINGS** and **ENCOURAGEMENTS**.

The **DIFFICULTY** is one which the Writer feels to be standing in the way of his saying what he wishes concerning Melchizedek.

The **BLAME** for the existence of this difficulty he does not trace to the inherent mysteriousness of the subject, so much as to the fault of his readers : their dull-wittedness, their “want of push and go”<sup>a</sup> in learning the deeper things contained in the oracles of God ; their want of practice and skill in handling those oracles ; their injurious habit of confining their attention to the very simplest things, which is here disparagingly treated as an infantile feeding on milk and an avoidance of strong food ; and from which protracted babyhood he argues such weakness and danger as shew themselves in a want of discrimination as to the good and evil embraced in the Divine word itself, leading them to imitate what they should avoid, and to avoid what they should imitate. And this mischief does not confine itself to the already written word—it extends to the first principles of the New Faith, to the A B C of Christian Teaching. They are confining their attention, too exclusively, to the mere beginnings of instruction concerning the Christ. They are like builders laying a foundation, and then relaying it—doing and undoing and doing over again : how by such means can the building progress ?

<sup>a</sup> So, literally, the Greek word *notōros* means.

So far we might take all this pungent and almost sarcastic remonstrance as merely amounting to a quite bearable reproach for intellectual dulness. But on closer examination we perceive that the blame is meant to penetrate more deeply than that. The reproach of these Hebrew Christians, for being so slow to learn, contemplates a peril—the mortal peril of falling away utterly and irrecoverably from the Christian character and position—from salvation itself. Connect the sentences (especially at the junction of verses 3 and 4) logically together, part to part, and this will become evident: “We WILL dismiss the elements and advance to deeper knowledge, BECAUSE of the impossibility of restoring to repentance those who through such continued babyhood fall away altogether.” ‘This more serious character of the blame becomes further evident when we observe the recurrence of the word *nothros*, first used in chapter v. 11, and then repeated in chapter vi. 12: the Writer is apprehensive that the slowness to learn should not only hinder their progress in knowledge but should imperil the steadfastness of their faith. Such is the blame which he charges on his readers, and which so hampers him in the development of his theme, as that he cannot yet get on with it although he has now returned to it for the third time.

The REMEDY he urges is the obvious one—that, waking up to their unenviable and dangerous position, they should dismiss the elements and advance to deeper and more comprehensive knowledge. To move them to apply this remedy, he warns, and he encourages, at considerable length, through all the remainder of the sixth chapter. He begins to warn at verse four, and to encourage at verse nine; holding on, especially with encouragements, until these rise into a grand chorus of “mighty consolation” which rolls on and on up to the close of the chapter at

verse twenty. His warnings are terrible, his consolations are inspiring ; but they are all directed to the one aim of moving his readers out of infantile weakness into manly strength.

#### PARTICULAR POINTS OF EXPOSITION.

1. It is evident that, in due time after their conversion, all Christians ought to be able to teach others what they have themselves learned. This is in accord with common sense and common experience. It is a duty elsewhere recognised in the Scriptures and is certainly implied here. It has nothing necessarily to do with public speaking, still less with the formal delivery of sermons ; but proceeds upon the obvious principle that what we know ourselves we can teach others—if not publicly, then privately ; if not to both sexes, yet to our own ; if not by speaking, then by writing. And the question is worthy of serious consideration whether, if we find we cannot teach others, the reason is not simply because we ourselves do not know.

2. It is further evident that a new convert's first duty is to learn, and not to teach.

3. It is also manifest that, before we teach others, it may at least be very helpful if we have some one to teach us.

4. It is clearly suggested that the Oracles of God do not run upon a dead level ; they have their elements, and they have their advanced principles ; discrimination is needed to eliminate the elementary from the advanced ; and, to do this successfully, not only are teachers helpful, but time and practice on our own part are indispensable. We must try to teach, even if at first we fail ; and must try again.

5. As with the Oracles of God in general so with Messianic teaching in particular. Even with respect to the Christ there are first principles which should be regarded as settled, and be—not forsaken—but “dismissed” from

continuous insistence, in order to make way for advanced teaching; in which teaching we discover that instruction contained in the Old Testament, even in its Types, should be included.

6. There are, in the portion we are now studying, two remarkable *series* of particulars closely compacted together: one of them has to do with the foundation of Christian knowledge (vi. 1, 2) and the other with the experimental verification of truth involved in being built on the foundation (vi. 4, 5). Those who fall away, lose their hold of the first series and question or deny the second; they therefore lose their faith in the first and forget or deny their knowledge of the second: which latter fact greatly adds to the guilt and shame of apostacy—not only did they believe otherwise than they now do, but they have **known** better. Of this in a little.

7. By the introduction of a various reading from ancient written copies some difficulty has been caused in the interpretation of the first series. The harder reading (*didacheen* instead of *didachees*), which is preferred by the best scholars, may perhaps be explained thus: thereby the word for “doctrine” or rather “teaching” is lifted up into the position of a second heading, answering to the word “foundation” and carrying it forward; so that in the result the sense—instead of being “not laying again a foundation *of* repentance—*of* faith—*of* teaching,” etc., becomes—“not laying again a foundation of repentance and of faith, even a teaching (even a foundation consisting of teaching) concerning immersions,” and so forth to the end. In this way the difficulty due to the various reading is reduced to a minimum; and may be dismissed by observing that the main force of the series remains practically the same. Partly included under the figurative term “foundation” and partly under the unfigurative term



“teaching” there are still six items of which the elementary foundation is constructed: 1. repentance, 2. faith, 3. immersions, 4. laying on hands, 5. the rising of the dead, 6. judgment age-abiding.

8. In any case we have to face the momentary difficulty that the word “baptisms” or “immersions” is found in the plural number: the aptest solution of which is that the Writer (probably Apollos) was familiar with the two baptisms—(1) that of John the herald, and (2) that put into commission by the Lord Jesus himself, this latter comprehending, as it did, the recognition of Christ’s death and resurrection; and that the Writer was himself accustomed to differentiate between them, and perhaps had heard of their being distinguished from each other more frequently than was necessary. To him, with his known antecedents, it would come quite naturally to say: Not for ever repeating instruction so elementary as that every convert to the Messiah must be well grounded in it. This view dispenses with the finding here of any allusion to Jewish ablutions in general, which as such *are no part of the teaching of Christ.*

9. It only remains to admit, with all candour, that a proper interpretation of this series of Christian elements imparts more importance to “the laying on of hands” than is usually attached to it by Nonconformists; though it by no means favours the reservation of so-called baptised infants for confirmation by the hands of a bishop.<sup>a</sup>

10. As to the second or experimental series (verses 4, 5), there is little needing to be said, if only we can succeed in trying to realise what it was to be a Christian in that first age when supernatural gifts were vouchsafed to the Churches of Christ. *Then*, how great was the light with which each convert felt he had been illuminated; each one

<sup>a</sup> See App. (5).

realised that he too had tasted of the heavenly free gift of the Spirit; nay had become a partner in the common but glorious possession of that Spirit which constituted them members of the living Body of the Messiah; how fresh and sweet was the new *rheema Theou* or "divine utterance" which threw new light on ancient oracles and guided into new truths not before revealed; what joy was occasioned by supernatural works, chiefly of healing, done among them on their suffering brethren and neighbours, especially when viewed as foretastes and pledges of beneficent ministries destined to be common in an "age" of healing and health and longevity yet to dawn. The undeniable manifestation of such powers, sent down from the Ascended Son of God, could not but enhance the guilt and peril of such as having seen and felt and known these precious realisations, nevertheless denied their Lord. Well might this Writer point out to his wavering brethren the constructive **cruelty** and **criminality** of such treatment of Him who had bestowed such gifts upon them; they would be virtually saying—**against their better knowledge**—"We have tried him and found him false, and pronounce him a Pretender and a Fraud, who deserved the Cross to which he was affixed, as an example to all coming ages." From this point of view, we see plainly that so to fall away after *such* an experience—*such* a verifying confirmation of faith—would be to commit the unpardonable, the irreversible, the ineffaceable sin.

11. No wonder that our Author suddenly changes his voice, and hastens to indulge in more encouraging strains. In the main those strains can be understood without commentary. It will suffice to point out two or three things which might otherwise escape notice.

A. Abraham, after testing and training, became a *settled heir* of the promises made to him. When the great

promise was first given him (as recorded in Gen. xii. 1—3) it was *conditional*. When, however, his faith had been tried and perfected, then the promise was confirmed and made *unalterable* by Divine Oath (as narrated in Gen. xxii. 1—19). This view enables us to regard as harmonious the disclaimer of chapter xi. 40, that those ancients could not then enter into possession of the promises: they simply became settled and irrevocable heirs.

B. Everything, however, which had been done when our Author wrote in the way of implementing the great promise made to Abraham, as well as all that has since been done, builds up our hope. Abraham's seed has already been multiplied beyond calculation: true of his natural seed, more wondrously true of his spiritual seed. Accordingly the hope of the ancients augments and confirms our own; and this accounts for the imperceptible gliding of our Author (in verses 17, 18) from the ancients to ourselves; so that, before we are aware of it, the "mighty consolation" arising from the two unchangeable things which appeared to be about being set down to the account of the *patriarchs* is made over to *us*: "That a mighty consolation we might have who have fled along to grasp the forelying hope."

C. "Hope" is now the dominant note; and it is interesting to observe how our Writer's perception of its inherent greatness and diversified uses leads him to transcend the ordinary bounds of rhetoric, by passing from one figure of speech to another so rapidly that he reaches forward into a second before he has completely expressed the first: his mixed metaphors simply shewing the strength of his exultation. First our hope is an *ASYLUM* to which we have already fled; then it is an *ANCHOR* by which we are still firmly to hold fast; and then finally it becomes personal and is embodied in a *FÖRERUNNER* who has gone before us, in our

behalf; but whom sooner or later we are to follow, to be where he is already—else our Forerunner he would not be. The first transition involves a complete change of figure, since an asylum and an anchor are distinct things. But the second transition is rather less abrupt. The “anchor” is transformed into a person—into a forerunner; but there is a bond of connection between the two; for an anchor enters within a veil—the veil of water; and it is through a veil that our Forerunner Jesus has entered. The anchor is like Jesus. Jesus becomes an anchor and our Forerunner as well. Or,—to bring out in other words this delightful incongruity of metaphor, which becomes such a sparkling irradiation of blessed truth,—we may say: That the veil of water which hides the anchor and the firm rock in which the anchor holds, suggests another veil—not of water; the veil between earth and heaven; the veil between the earthly stage of our humanity and its heavenly stage; and at the same time suggests and is partly framed upon yet another veil, the inner veil of the symbolic tent, the veil between Israel and Israel’s God. Our anchor goes, not downwards, but upwards; it penetrates a veil, not of water but of sky; our anchor is hid in heaven, it is hid in God: it is as safe and strong and sure as the unchanging truth and grace of God. Behind that veil is the throne of majesty and grace whereon the Eternal sits. Within that veil is held all the power, wisdom, love, holiness from which “the coming habitable earth” is to be unfolded. *There* is the “glory” up to which the sons of God are being led<sup>a</sup> ere they descend and take possession of a ransomed world. Only a veil—only a curtain!—all that lies between our earthly and our heavenly humanity only a veil!—the “separate state” not taken into account, as though it were a mere temporary accident, for certain it

is that Christ is not personally in the separate state or *hades*; he is clothed with his complete, transformed humanity:—only a veil between us and him. He has entered for us. By his accepted atonement he has prepared our way; and by his kingly priesthood after the rank of Melchizedek he is preparing us to follow him.

## STUDY IX.

### MELCHIZEDEK IN HISTORY, SONG, AND ARGUMENT; AND THE PRIESTHOOD OF THE MESSIAH.

(Chap. VII. 1—28.)

- 7 <sup>1</sup> For ||this *Melchizedek*, king of Salem, priest of God Most High,  
Who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and  
blessed him,—
- 2 To whom <even a tenth of all> Abraham apportioned||;—  
<First, indeed, when translated, king of righteousness,  
But |after that| *king of Salem* also, which is King of Peace,—
- 3 Without father, without mother, without pedigree,  
Having neither beginning of days, nor <of life> an end,  
But made like unto the Son of God>  
||Abideth a priest evermore||.
- 4 Now consider ||how great|| this one was, to whom <a tenth> Abraham  
gave, out of the choicest spoils,  
[Yea Abraham] ||the patriarch||.
- 5 And ||they, indeed, from among the sons of Levi' who <the priest-  
hood> receive||  
Have |commandment| to take tithes of the people |according to  
the law|,—  
That is, of their brethren, |although sprung from the loins of  
Abraham|;
- 6 But ||he who deriveth not his pedigree from them||  
Hath taken tithes of' Abraham,  
And <the holder of the promises> hath he blessed.
- 7 But <apart from all gainsaying>  
The less' by the greater' is blessed.
- 8 And ||here|| indeed, dying' men take ||tithes||;  
But ||there|| one of whom it is witnessed |that he liveth|.
- 9 And—so' to say a word'—  
<Through Abraham> even Levi' who taketh' tithes hath paid' tithes;
- 10 For even then' was he |in the loins of his father| when *Melchizedek*  
met him.

11 <If, indeed, therefore there had been a perfecting through means of the Levitical priesthood,—

For the people <thereon> have had based a code of laws>

What further' need that <according to the rank of Melchizedek> a different' priest should be raised up,

And <not according to the rank of Aaron> should be designated?

12 For <seeing there is to be a change of the priesthood>

||Of necessity|| <of law too> a change' cometh.

13 For ||he as to whom these things are said||

<With a different tribe> hath taken partnership,

From which |no one| hath given attendance at the altar.

14 For |it is very evident| that <out of Judah> hath sprung our Lord,—

||Respecting which tribe|| <concerning priests> nothing' did Moses speak.

15 And ||still more abundantly evident|| it is—

That <according to the likeness of Melchizedek> there is to be raised up |a different' priest|,

16 Who <not according to a law of commandment dealing with the flesh> hath arisen,

But ||according to the power of an indissoluble life||.

17 For it is witnessed—

||Thou|| *art a priest age-abidingly,*

*According to the rank of Melchizedek.*

18 For ||a setting aside|| doth indeed take place of a foregoing' commandment,

By reason of its own weakness and unprofitableness,—

19 For the law' perfected ||nothing||;

But [there is] the superinducing of a better' hope,—

Through which we draw near unto God.

20 And <inasmuch as not apart from oath-taking—

21 For ||they|| indeed, <apart from oath-taking> have been made priests,

But ||he|| with' an oath-taking,—

Through him that was saying to him—

*The Lord |sware|, and will not regret,—*

||Thou|| *art a priest age-abidingly>—*

22 <By as much as this> hath Jesus' |become surety| ||of a better' covenant also||.

23 And ||they|| indeed <in greater numbers> have been made priests,

Because <by reason of death> are they hindered from remaining at hand;

24 But ||he|| <by reason of his remaining age-abidingly>

<Untransmissible> holdeth the priesthood:—

25 Whence he is able ||even to be saving to the very end||

- Them who approach |through him| unto God,  
 Since he evermore' liveth to be interceding in their behalf.  
<sup>26</sup> For ||such|| a high-priest ||as this|| <for us> is even suited :  
 Loving, noble, undefiled,  
 Set apart from sinners,  
 And become' ||higher than the heavens|| ;  
<sup>27</sup> Who hath no daily' necessity <like the high-priests>  
 <Beforehand, over his own' sins> to be offering sacrifices,  
 |After that| over those |of the people|,—  
 For <this> he did, once for all, when <himself> he offered.  
<sup>28</sup> For ||the law|| constituteth |men| high-priests, having weakness ;  
 But ||the word of the oath-taking which cometh after the law||  
 ||A Son|| age-abidingly' |made perfect|.

THE best method of dealing with this section will probably be,—first to give a connected view of MELCHIZEDEK as he appears in history, in song and in argument ; and then add a few observations concerning the priesthood of the Messiah which may seem called for by the conclusion of the chapter, and which manifestly goes beyond anything immediately springing out of the Old Testament type.

## I. Melchizedek.

1. Melchizedek in *history* (Gen. xiv. 18—20).—The story in Genesis is very brief, but profoundly interesting and significant—all the more so when it is observed how the king of Sodom fills the background of the canvas on which Melchizedek appears. The iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full, but in four generations more would bring down the vengeance of insulted heaven. Meantime God had not left himself without witness in this land of growing idolatry and corruption. Abraham the monotheist appeared upon the scene, building altars to the true God here and there in the land of his sojourning ; and, prior to his coming, there were already a faithful few who still continued worshipping “the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth ;” the most notable among them being



Melchizedek, king of Salem (probably afterwards Jerusalem), who was a priest as well as a king—priest to Abraham's God, probably offering sacrifice and intercession for a constituency found both within and without his small royal dominions. Whether Abraham, who had taken up his dwelling at Mamre or Hebron only some twenty miles to the south of Salem, ever worshipped at Salem and availed himself of the priestly ministry of Melchizedek prior to the incident to which we are turning, we know not. But these two noble men—brothers in the uncorrupted faith—cannot have been unacquainted with each other; and stirring events were soon to bring them face to face. About equidistant, eastward, from Hebron and Salem lay the rich Circuit of the Jordan, in which the infamous Sodom and Gomorrah then stood; and in the former of which cities Abraham's nephew, Lot, had—unwisely and to his hurt—fixed his abode. Four invading chiefs against whom the five local chiefs had rebelled, had turned against these cities of the plain; and gaining the victory over them, had taken captive a number of the inhabitants, carrying them away to the north with a considerable amount of property. Lot was among the captives; and Abraham, hearing of the startling event, collecting his formidable band of servants—who were practically shepherd-soldiers,—and, joined by his three confederates, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre with similar bands, gave the enemy pursuit, overtook them, and, coming in three divisions upon them suddenly by night on the way to Damascus, vanquished them and rescued the captives, including Lot, in addition to the spoils, which appear to have been considerable. Abraham, having accomplished his purpose, was making his return journey, when there met him two of his royal neighbours, Melchizedek king of Salem, and Bera king of Sodom; and, since Bera is first mentioned, before Melchizedek is introduced, and

then, as soon as the brief story of Melchizedek is narrated, Bera is *again* brought into notice—we cannot be wrong in regarding the two as intentionally brought into juxtaposition, and concluding that the noble Melchizedek is all the better appreciated when Sodom's ignoble king is regarded as a foil to bring the other into bold relief. "Ignoble" Bera certainly was; for he was not only king of the abominably wicked Sodom, but he had cut the sorry figure of having, with his neighbour of Gomorrah, fallen among the bitumen pits of "the valley of the open fields," where the battle between the four kings against five was fought. How long he lay among the bitumen pits we know not: what became of him then, we are not told—whether he joined those who "fled to the mountains" or at once returned ingloriously to Sodom is left to conjecture. But this we know,—he did *not* hasten to join the pursuers, had *no part* in rescuing his own people and goods; for here we find him, instead of coming back with Abraham, actually, unashamed, going out to meet him; with no bread and wine, we may be sure, and probably with no humbler fare to refresh the wearied host. This is that king of Sodom who has to stand aside while Melchizedek performs his priestly functions in welcoming the noble Abraham home. Methinks I see Lot's king, looking on with shame and envy while the grand religious ceremony is being consummated. The Royal Priest acts royally; and devoutly too, with all the solemnity becoming a Sacerdotal Function; for having refreshed the conquering hero, Melchizedek rose to the full height of the occasion. A twofold blessing sprang to his lips:—

Blessed be Abram, of GOD Most High,  
possessor of the heavens and earth;  
And blessed be GOD Most High, who hath  
delivered thine enemies into thy hand:

Abraham had accepted the bread and wine, and now he accepted the blessing. Instead of objecting to be thus a two-fold receiver—first of temporal and then of spiritual good—from the Priestly King of Salem, Abraham gave to his Benefactor a Tenth of all the spoils : thus at once assuming his undoubted right by conquest to deal with the spoils—acquiescing in the thanks to God offered on his behalf—and cordially recognising the priestly calling of Salem's King. And now the king of Sodom reappears. Utterly unable to deny Abraham's right to assume the ownership of the whole of the spoils of war, he nevertheless puts in a plea (virtually a claim) for the "persons," with assumed generosity giving Abraham leave to keep the "goods" himself. The lofty independence with which the victorious chief declined to accept any possible enrichment at the hands of the King of **Sodom**, thus strongly accentuates the wholly different feelings of respect and submission manifested by the patriarch towards the King of Salem—**Melchizedek**.

2. *Melchizedek in song*.—Although in Hebrew history Melchizedek is not again named, in Hebrew song he just once reappears. The Psalm (CX.) in which he is mentioned is wonderfully dramatic and impressive. From beginning to end it celebrates a single mysterious Hero. In verse 1, the Psalmist tells us that Jehovah himself has addressed this unnamed Hero, bidding him be seated at his right hand until he shall put his foes beneath his feet :—

The declaration of Yahweh to my Lord—  
Sit thou at my right hand,  
Until I make thy foes thy footstool.

In verse 2, the decisive moment is anticipated for reducing these foes to subjection :—

Thy sceptre of strength will Yahweh extend out of Zion,  
[saying],—  
Tread thou down in the midst of thy foes.

In verse 3 the Hero's own "people" (whoever they may be) join him, as an army of volunteers, suddenly appearing on the scene in holy beauty and dazzling brightness, like the flashing out of myriad dew-drops in the rising sun :—

Thy people will freely offer themselves, in the day of thine army,—  
 <In the splendours of holiness, out of the womb of the dawn>  
 To thee [shall spring forth] the dew of thy youth.

Then comes verse 4 (which now immediately concerns us), with an oracular utterance, in which the Psalmist indeed leads the way, but only to quote from Jehovah's own lips the words of an oath by which the Hero of the Psalm is Divinely designated to the office of priest :—

Yahweh hath sworn—and will not repent,  
 ||Thou|| [shalt be] a priest unto times age-abiding,  
 After the manner of Melchizedek.

To this verse we must return. In verses 5—7, the description is resumed of the down-treading, by the Hero, of his foes ; culminating in his triumphant return from the pursuit. In these closing verses the Psalmist is again the speaker. The person addressed is Yahweh ; for it was at his "right hand" that the Hero was seated until he received his commission to go forth to the overthrow. The person *of* whom the Psalmist here speaks *to* Yahweh is clearly the Hero himself ; for *to him alone* can the description apply which depicts the shattering of kings, the judging of the nations, the drinking for refreshment of the mountain torrent, and the return with head uplifted in exultation :—

||My Lord, on thy right hand||  
 Hath shattered—in the day of his anger—kings ;  
 He will judge among the nations—full of dead bodies !  
 He hath shattered the head over a land far extended :  
 <Of the torrent in the way> will he drink,—  
 <For this cause> will he lift up [his] head.

So far we have assumed three things only,—the unity of the Psalm—the identity of the Hero throughout—and the culmination of the second movement of the entire Psalm in the CRISIS by which the promise of the opening verse is fulfilled: of which last-named assumption we may feel morally certain, if we can be satisfied with a simple and straightforward exegesis; seeing that the leading terms, “footstool,” “strong sceptre,” “tread down,” “day of thine army,” “day of his anger,” “shatter,” “judge,” “dead bodies,” are thus accounted for in their natural significance as unitedly and amply describing the ultimate and final overthrow of the Hero’s “foes”—manifestly the *motif* of the whole composition.

We have now to affirm that the Hero can be none other than the Son of David—the promised **Messiah**; and that consequently the Messiah was to be a “priest age-abidingly after the manner of Melchizedek.”

That the Psalm is Messianic is of course a foregone conclusion with Christians, by reason of the solemn quotation of it as such by Jesus himself. But, apart from this, its very terms seem to shut us up to that conclusion; since we cannot imagine such an honour, as being invited to sit on Jehovah’s right hand, attributed to any other person known in sacred story or song. No Psalmist could have claimed such a position for himself; and, indeed, the very terms of the opening line forbid it: they are unsuited for such a purpose, seeing that the writer speaks of the hero as his “Lord.” On the other hand, neither David nor any other hymn-writer in Israel could in his most rapt moments have anticipated such an honour to be conferred on any ordinary son or descendant of his, or on any general or leader ever likely to arise. David’s own experience could not so much as have framed such a suggestion; for, so far from *his* sitting on Jehovah’s right hand until his foes were

subdued, he was the banished and hunted one until the time came for him to ascend the throne of his master ; and even on the assumption of a later date for the writing of this Psalm, we know of nothing that occurred later on in Jewish history that could have suggested such a situation to the most imaginative poet, as that depicted in verse 1 of this Psalm. Aided, however, by such companion Psalms as II., XLV., and LXXII., we *can* imagine such an address as this to have been directed to the Messiah ; though, even then, we must await fulfilment, before we can satisfy the wistful wonder thereby created. The Psalm is, then, undoubtedly written in celebration of the promised Messiah ; and the Ascension of the risen Jesus to heaven, abundantly satisfies the mind of every Christian as to the actual fulfilment of the first great movement of the composition. And, as to the second movement, which brings in the crisis of the overthrow of the Hero's enemies,—the very circumstance that we have been led on, naturally, to regard all these graphic incidents as constituting one great crisis, *still unfulfilled*, furnishes us in advance with an answer to any objection, which might otherwise be urged, against a Messianic fulfilment of incidents so warlike and so human. We need not, in any case, assume that these details of assault and overthrow must have a slavishly literal accomplishment according to the narrowest and most earthly view that could possibly be taken of the words ; since the MESSIAH must necessarily be above and beyond any other warrior that ever fought and overcame. But we are bound to follow the natural trend of the description ; and as the simple doing of this lands us, as we have seen, in the conclusion that the whole process of the overthrow of Messiah's enemies is yet future, any speculation as to the precise means which will be employed in bringing these visions into the realm of accomplished fact would be mani-

festly foolish and vain. We plead for a natural, as distinguished from a necessarily literal, exegesis, and the great gain of such exegesis here is,—that we are once for all delivered from any temptation to interpret the processes of down-treading and overthrow as at all consisting of such evangelistic victories as were initiated on the day of Pentecost. In the strength of this gain, then, as rebutting an anticipated objection based on the battle-scene of its close, we may rest content with the broad and immovable conclusion that the Hero of the Psalm is the Messiah.

But if the Psalm is Messianic, then to the Messiah pertains a priesthood after the “order” or “rank” or “likeness” or “manner” of Melchizedek. What this implies may reasonably demand a little consideration; although we should never forget that fulfilment alone can be expected to fill in the details and define the connecting joints of the prophetic word.

What, in general, then, does this oracle (“Thou art a priest,” etc.) mean, as applied to the promised Messiah? Its chief points are obvious:—(1) It is a very solemn and unalterable decree regarding the Messiah’s destiny, as is manifest from its being set forth as a Divine Oath. (2) It destines the Messiah to be and remain a priest from age to age. (3) It likens him in his predestined priesthood to the Royal Priest who met Abraham and blessed him when he returned from the slaughter of the invading kings. To what degree this likeness should be carried, and in what details it should be verified, we cannot perhaps beforehand conjecture. A general resemblance, at least, we may expect to find between the type and the antitype: a resemblance sufficiently marked and significant to be worthy of both the earlier history and the later song; worthy of Melchizedek and worthy of the Messiah.

3. *Melchizedek in argument.*—Here we gladly place our-

selves under the guidance of the eloquent Writer of this Epistle. What is the argument he derives from the combined history and song? Evidently this, in chief: That the Aaronic priesthood was not final: that another and greater was to arise: that the greater would endure. "Here in your history," says our Writer to his countrymen, "you have an account of Melchizedek, who is both King and Priest, and greater than Abraham himself; and here in your prophetic Psalms, after centuries of silence, Melchizedek reappears as a pattern to which your Messiah was to be conformed. And therefore you cannot object when I allege that our Jesus has been conformed to this Divinely provided type."

That our Author sees more than a general resemblance between Melchizedek and Messiah must be frankly admitted: that he sees the likeness verified in a number of details is clear. The very name "Melchizedek" is to him significant. It means, by its derivation from two familiar Hebrew roots, "King of Righteousness"; and Jesus has been exalted as king of righteousness. "Salem" also signifies "Peace"; and Jesus as well as Melchizedek is emphatically king of peace. Nay, the very order of the titles seems to him beautifully significant: Jesus, like Melchizedek, is *first* "king of righteousness" and *after that* "king of peace": suggesting a fundamental principle in the entire divine plan of salvation, according to which righteousness must come first and peace follow after.

But when our Author goes further than this; and specifies a variety of details about Melchizedek, all of which he regards as charged with meaning, then, no doubt, we begin to wonder where we are, and to enquire on what principle of interpretation we are to proceed. The difficulty becomes acute when we look patiently and comprehensively at what follows. For it is said, not only that Melchizedek



was without father, mother, pedigree, beginning of days and end of life, but that he is still living and abideth a priest evermore! Perhaps it is in the very sweep of these details that the true principle of interpretation may be found securely lodged. As for the principle itself: it is, if I mistake not, discoverable in the clause “made like unto the Son of God.” So then, Melchizedek was not himself the Son of God, as some have concluded; since it could scarcely have been said that the Son of God had been made like unto himself—that would have implied, not likeness, but identity,—whereas likeness is the thing affirmed, and moreover a *caused* or superinduced likeness: “*made* like unto the Son of God.” And note that it was not the Son of God who was made like unto Melchizedek, but Melchizedek who was made like unto the Son of God. In the order of time, it is true, the manifestation of the Son of God comes after the priestly blessing of Melchizedek; but this hint intimates that, *in the order of nature and importance*, the Son of God is the original, and Melchizedek is the copy; *and a copy given in advance is the same thing as a type!* Hence Melchizedek is the type, and the Son of God the antitype. Melchizedek is made like unto the Son of God, by being made a type of him. This, I humbly think, is the key to the true exposition. It is an instance of what the Apostle Paul teaches us to call “the foresight of Scripture.” The Scripture, foreseeing the abiding priesthood of the Messiah, conformed the historical picture of Melchizedek to serve this purpose; telling us nothing of his parentage or pedigree or birth or death; the foreseeing Spirit of God projecting on the screen of Scripture the image of a living, acting, officiating priest; and there that image unalterably and abidingly remains. It is thus *typically* “witnessed that he liveth”—*typically* witnessed that he “abideth a priest evermore.” He is typically

made, patterned, shaped, conformed—alike in what is said and in what is not said about him—unto the Son of God. It was remarked a little way back that this principle of exegesis is sustained by the very multitude of details in which it is embedded. And, in fact, it is collectively only, and not individually, that those details help out the likeness between Melchizedek and the Messiah. How, for example, could it be said of Messiah that he was without mother? But, regard these particulars as the parings and mouldings of a Divine Artist, putting in what would *make* the picture and leaving out what would *mar* it for his typical purpose, and then all becomes clear. For what is the result? Why, simply this: That in those three verses in the fourteenth of Genesis, you see the living Melchizedek officiating as priest of the Most High: the very thing which, in this purely literary sense, he has been doing for all the centuries which have passed since the picture was drawn, and will continue to do as long as the record shall endure. Look when you will, and as often as you will, that is what you will see, and nothing else!

The Writer of this Epistle was a better judge than we can be as to the fitness of his artistic presentation of Melchizedek to convince and persuade his Hebrew readers. But, methinks, if we had him here, and revealed to him our difficulties in carrying out his finishing touches into hard and detailed realisation, he would *smile*, and ask whether we also were babes, inexpert in the word of righteousness, and unable to discern between the “good” of a few wholesome strokes of wit and the “evil” of a mad realism productive of a monstrosity of a priesthood for which there could be no conceivable place nor use in all the universe of God.\*

\* See App. (6).

## II. The Priesthood of the Messiah.

There are several other points of resemblance between the priesthood of Melchizedek and that of Jesus the Son of God which we have not formally noticed, feeling that they are perfectly intelligible without comment; but there are two or three weighty matters remaining towards the close of Chapter vii. of the Epistle, which claim from us some further attention.

1. In working out the general truth of the abiding nature of the priesthood of Jesus, and emphasising the prediction of the Psalm,—that the priesthood of the Messiah should be an abiding priesthood, never to be terminated by death and so never needing, like the Aaronic priesthood, to be transmitted to a successor,—our Author uses the remarkable phrase that our High Priest has been constituted “according to the power of an indissoluble life”—evidently referring to our Lord’s resurrection life. As we have already seen, it was in the power of that life that he was constituted priest. On earth he was not a priest. On earth his life was dissoluble, or he could not have died. Now his life has become “indissoluble”; and now he cannot die. How it is that so many translators and revisers have shrunk from this beautifully expressive and apt word “indissoluble” I know not,—unless it has been, as I surmise it has been, owing to an unconscious shrinking from any appearance of favouring a conception of human life which they were reluctant to countenance—that man’s Adamic life—essentially, according to its original constitution, and apart from redemption—is composite, and therefore a dissolvable thing. Certain it is, that the one primary meaning of the Greek adjective *akatalutos* is “indissoluble”—as witness Liddell and Scott and the margin of the Revised Version; and therefore in my judgment it is a wholly unwarranted pro-

cedure to hide this fact by such generalisations as the “endless” of the Revised Versions (English and American) and Govett; the “beyond the reach of death” of the Twentieth Century; the “imperishable” of “The Corrected New Testament;” the “indestructible” of Dr. Weymouth’s “New Testament in Modern Speech,” and of Rendall; and “a life of undying perpetuity” of J. B. McCaul. The Risen Life of Christ is indeed ALL THIS—it is “endless,” it is “beyond the reach of death,” it is “imperishable,” it is “indestructible,” etc.; but it is so BECAUSE it is “indissoluble.” And if the resultant inference,—that when death does befall men it is because their life is dissolvable—does not suit the psychological theories of theologians, then all we need say is: So much the worse for their theories! Perhaps the practical hint is worth pondering, that when the true psychology of the Bible is really believed, we shall all more adequately feel the force of the example of our dying Lord and the protomartyr Stephen, when, in the article of death, they prayed, respectively: “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit,” and “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.”<sup>a</sup>

2. We gladly pass to a very practical because experimental observation, by emphasising the fact that our High Priest’s perpetual occupancy of his sacerdotal office especially commends him to our sustained regard and confidence, in that he is thereby “able to be saving us to the very end.” How bitterly many an afflicted and sensitive soul, under the Levitical priesthood, must have shrunk from opening anew long-standing griefs to an unknown successor, whose sympathy had never been tested; instead of merely, by a hint or even a look, bringing up to date the old troubles which now needed no further enlargement; a Hannah, for

<sup>a</sup> For further suggestions on this subject, see *ante*, pp. 37, 38, and *post*, pp. 137, 153-154. And see App. (7).

instance, finding it imperative to detail experiences to Eli's flippant sons instead of recalling them by a word to the memory of the kind old man their father. Consoling thought in our age, that we still approach the Divine Throne through the same Intercessor as pleaded for and helped us in our youth. Let us therefore go forward with confidence: he who has saved us so far will save us to the end; he who has sanctified us in measure already, will sanctify us wholly. The Priest who interceded for my father, my mother, lives to intercede for me. With my heritage of ancestral weaknesses and victories he is abidingly familiar, and will assuredly turn them to good account.

3. With a splendid outburst of eulogy, in which the choicest words of commendation are piled up, our Author brings his present train of thought to a climax. "For such a High-priest AS THIS *for us* is even suited": "Loving"—*hosios*, the Greek representative of the beautiful Hebrew *hésedh*, full of lovingkindness, like God himself,—and does not that "suit" us? "Noble"—*akakos*, free from baseness and especially malice, by implication the opposite of this, considerate, generous, "noble,"—and does this not "suit" us, who could ill bear to be chided harshly for our shameful failures? "Undefiled"—*amiantos*, with no spot to bar his way to God or to limit his holy power over us,—and does this not "suit" us? "Set apart from sinners"—*kechorismenos*, showing that although he was once hemmed in and thwarted by sinful men, he is so now no longer. "And become higher than the heavens" through which he has triumphantly passed and is exalted above all who do those heavens inhabit; so that no accuser can come so near the Divine Throne but Jesus is nearer still. "Who hath no daily necessity to offer sacrifice"—having no sins of his own to atone for, and having once for all made propitiation

for others. And, to say all, “A Son age-abidingly made perfect” with the acquired perfection of experimental discipline and obedient surrender ; we say, Do not all these exquisite fitnesses and adaptations in our High-priest pre-eminently “suit” and “beseem” us,—causing us at once to appreciate our unspeakable preciousness to the Divine Father, and to realise how much *saving* we need, to require so many illustrious qualifications in him who, as our Priest, has to achieve the task of “leading” us—even us—to the “glory” of joining our Leader in holding in subjection “the inhabited earth to come of which we speak”?

Truly our Author has transported us far out of sight of Melchizedek ; who, after all, personally is comparatively unknown. He has made us feel afresh that we do indeed intimately know him in whom we have believed—Jesus the Son of God.

## STUDY X.

## THE HEAVENLY PRIESTHOOD AND THE NEW COVENANT.

(Chap. VIII. 1—13.)

8. <sup>1</sup> || A crowning point on the things being spoken || :—

&lt;Such a one as this&gt; have we |as high-priest|,

Who hath *sat down on the right hand* of the throne of the Majesty  
in the heavens,—<sup>2</sup> <Of the Holy place> a public minister,And of the Real *Tent*, which |*the Lord*| *pitched* and not |man|.<sup>3</sup> For ||every' high-priest|| <for the offering of both gifts and sacrifices>  
is constituted ;Whence it was |necessary| for |this one also| to have something  
which he might offer.<sup>4</sup> <If, indeed, therefore, he had been on earth>

He had not, in that case, even been' a priest,

Since there are' those who are offering the gifts |according to the  
law| :—<sup>5</sup> Who, indeed, are rendering divine service, with a glimpse' and  
shadow' |of the heavenly things| ;Even as Moses hath received intimation, when about to complete  
the tent,—For *see!* saith he—*Thou shalt make all things according to the  
model which hath been pointed out to thee in the mount.*<sup>6</sup> But |now| hath he attained unto |a more distinguished| public  
ministry,—

By as much as &lt;of a better' covenant also&gt; he is |mediator|,

Which indeed &lt;upon better promises&gt; hath been legislated.

<sup>7</sup> For <if ||that first|| had been |faultless|>

Not' in that case &lt;for a second&gt; had there been sought |a place|.

<sup>8</sup> For finding fault with them he saith—*Lo ! |days| are coming, saith the Lord,**When I will conclude, for the house of Israel and the house of Judah,  
||A covenant of a new sort|| :*<sup>9</sup> *Not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers,**In the day when I took them by their hand, to lead them forth out  
of the land of Egypt,—*

- Because |they| abode not in my covenant,  
 And |I| disregarded them, saith the Lord.*  
 10 *Because |this| is the covenant which I will make with the house of  
 Israel,  
 |After those days| saith the Lord:—  
 <Giving my laws into their understanding>  
 <Upon their hearts also> will I inscribe them;  
 And I will become their' God,  
 And |they| shall become my' people;  
 11 And in nowise shall they teach—  
 Everyone his fellow-citizen,  
 And everyone his brother;  
 Saying,—Get to know the Lord!  
 Because |all| shall know me,  
 From the least unto the greatest of them;  
 12 Because <propitious> will I be as to their unrighteousnesses,  
 And <of their sins> in nowise will I be mindful |any more|.  
 13 In saying Of a new sort he hath made obsolete |the first|;  
 But |the thing that is becoming obsolete and aged|  
 Is near ||disappearing||!*

I. It is worthy of notice that, in specifying what he regards as the "crowning point" of the things he is saying, our Author should simply name the heavenliness of Christ's priesthood: "such a one as hath sat down," etc. This shews that the emphasis is none too great which in Studies II. and VII. we have already laid upon this very point. It is a point which is continually being missed; and, where not altogether missed, is at least obscured. It must not be overlooked. It must be persistently made prominent. It is a crowning point in the Author's own estimation. The shadowy Tent was on earth: the Real Tent is in heaven. The Messiah could not have been a priest on earth: it is solely in heaven that, in that capacity, he ministers.

II. The description here given of the Levitical priests, as men who were ministering "with a [mere] glimpse and shadow of the heavenly things," is especially illuminating when connected with the "pattern" or "model" which was



shewn to Moses in the holy mount. Let us try to realise this. Moses' Tent was *a copy of a copy*. The primary copy was *only* a copy on a reduced scale, affording a mere hint—a faint outline—a vague and dim shadow—of the vast and splendid heavenly realities. Those realities, if they could have been seen by Moses, would have dazzled and bewildered him, and have afforded him little or no help in constructing the small tent he was commanded to rear. What he needed was a working model, to be carefully and exactly imitated. Only a Divine Artist could have constructed for him such a model; for, though it was only “a glimpse and shadow,” yet it *was* that, and therefore must be scrupulously followed in every detail; since it is obvious that the slightest departure from it might have resulted in caricature instead of resemblance. Nor is this all. The model must, we think, have shown Moses how far he might go in adapting the tent he was to make for setting up and taking down, and for removal from place to place. So far and no further, even in these things, might he go; for on no account must the “glimpse and shadow” be defaced. Moreover, there is this to be considered: That the Divine Artist, in constructing that model, must himself have introduced into it certain temporary arrangements; as, for instance, the division of the whole structure into two compartments; the first to be of merely temporary significance. Only on a direct Divine basis would the Holy Spirit have given the hint, which in the next chapter he has given, that a time would come when that “first tent” (or compartment) would have no further “standing” or use. And therefore the Divine hand must itself have incorporated the feature which was to be of merely temporary application. The idea of doing such a thing of his own accord could never have occurred to Moses. For all these reasons, then, the inherent difficulty of reducing the vast and sublime heavenly things

to the dimensions of a working model, the need for appliances suited to the exigencies of journeying in the wilderness, and the incorporation in the model itself of some features of continued but not eternal significance, so that the double tent could ultimately be resolved into a single dwelling-place,—these things adequately account for the stringency of the oft-repeated Divine injunction laid upon Moses—to be very careful to follow implicitly the “pattern” or “model” which he was caused to see in the holy mount. There is always risk in copying a copy, and therefore the smallest departure from exemplar must, in this instance, be scrupulously guarded against.

III. The heavenly ministry of Jesus is now brought into relation to his position as Mediator of “a better Covenant resting on better promises” than those which sustained the Sinai Covenant. Already has he been named as “Surety” of such a Covenant—a title of no small significance, as we shall see. A “Surety” of a covenant is one who pledges himself to see it fulfilled: a “Mediator” is one who negotiates it, induces the parties to it to undertake its obligations. Jesus brings the New Covenant into existence: Jesus undertakes that its stipulations shall be faithfully carried into effect. How immediate the bearing of this is on the future of Israel and Judah, will appear presently. Meantime we are arrested by the statement that the New Covenant rests upon *better promises* than did the Old. And this at once becomes obvious as we glance down the terms of the New Covenant promised by the prophet Jeremiah, and then recall the conditional basis of the Old Covenant. “If ye will INDEED HEARKEN to my voice and keep my covenant, then shall ye be mine as a treasure beyond all the peoples”—such was the original overture to Israel. “Therefore shall ye observe my statutes and my regulations, which < if the son of

earth shall do them > then shall he live in them," is the oft-repeated reminder of conditionality. The Old Covenant was based on a conditional promise—"If"; but how serious an "if" was that! Not so the New Covenant. It begins and runs on with absolutely unconditional promises, in the strength of which guaranteed fulfilment the happy realisation was to follow.

It should be well observed how pre-eminently national the foundation promise of the New Covenant is: it is primarily and abidingly for "the house of Israel and the house of Judah": a distinction between the Two tribes and the Ten which has no conceivable application to any other nation under the heavens. I know, indeed—and rejoice to know—that the spiritual kernel of this New Covenant has meantime passed into the blessed possession of the Christian Ecclesia, and that, as the token of this grace, "the Cup of the Covenant" has been passed into believing Gentile hands. But this fact does not obliterate the primary national destination of the Covenant to the Twelve-tribed nation. It is theirs by express promise. It is furthermore confirmed to them by the specification of outward and local benefits which have no relation to Gentiles. And, indeed, it stands in a most remarkable section of Jeremiah's predictions; forming, as it does, the central promise of *three*, each beginning with the significant and confident Divine announcement—"Lo! days are coming." As surely as the house of Israel and the house of Judah are to be "sown with the seed of men and of beasts"; as surely as the waste places around Jerusalem are to become once more holy unto Jehovah *and so remain*;—so surely shall this central promise of a New National Covenant receive its most circumstantial and literal accomplishment. The time has gone by when we Gentiles could with impunity steal away the

promises expressly made over to the ancient nation ; especially that of the COVENANT of which their Messiah has become SURETY.

IV. Let us enlarge the bounds of our observation and of our exegesis, and not doubt whether there will be room in the " Kingdom " which we " are receiving " for all the gracious products of former and later dispensations. The anti-type of the old time of typical shadows is not the Church but the Kingdom. The Church is only twice named in this Epistle,—the first time as the worshipping Assembly gathered around the glorified Messiah,<sup>a</sup> and the second time as merely one of the companies of immortals gathered into or located around the Heavenly Jerusalem.<sup>b</sup> The myriad messengers are there, the spirits of the perfected righteous from the old economy are there ; and the church, as a distinct group, is also there, but only as an assembly of first-born ones, affording a distinct hint of later-born ones to follow. And as we thus make room for reaches of space out of which the ultimate harvest is to be gathered, so let us take in the reaches of time which incidentally come under our notice. One such incidental reference, as to time, arrests us at the close of this eighth chapter ; where, quite informally, we are given to understand that the Old Sinaitic Covenant was labelled " obsolete " for five or six hundred years before—according to any calculation—it finally passed away. God takes time to abolish : he takes time to introduce. We are receiving a Kingdom ; and yet its final manifestation is still in the future.

<sup>a</sup> Chap. ii. 12.

<sup>b</sup> Chap. xii. 23.

## STUDY XI.

### THE HEAVENLY PRIESTHOOD AND THE HEAVENLY TENT.

(Chap. IX. 1—28.)

- 9 <sup>1</sup> [Even] the first, indeed, therefore, used to have righteous appointments of divine service,  
The sanctuary also—pertaining to this world.
- <sup>2</sup> For |a tent| was prepared, |the first|,  
In which were both the lampstand and the table and the setting forth of the loaves,—  
The which is called Holies ;
- <sup>3</sup> But <after the second' veil> a tent, that which is called Holies of Holies :
- <sup>4</sup> Having a golden' altar of incense,  
And the ark of the covenant covered around on every side with gold,  
In which was a golden jar holding the manna,  
And the rod of Aaron that sprouted,  
And the tables of the covenant ;
- <sup>5</sup> But <over above it> Cherubim of glory overshadowing the propitiatory :—  
|Concerning which things| it is not now [needful] to be speaking particularly.
- <sup>6</sup> Now <these things having been thus' prepared>  
<Into the first' tent> indeed <continually> do the priests enter,  
<The divine services> completing ;
- <sup>7</sup> But <into the second> once' for all in the year',  
Only the high priest,  
Not without blood,  
Which he offered for himself and the ignorances of the people :
- <sup>8</sup> The Holy Spirit |making this' evident|—  
That <not yet> hath been manifested the way of the Holies,  
|So long| as the first' tent hath |a standing|.
- <sup>9</sup> The which is a similitude for the present season,  
According to which both gifts and sacrifices are offered,  
Which cannot |as to the conscience| perfect him that rendereth the divine service :—
- <sup>10</sup> Only as to eatings, and drinkings, and diversified' immersions,—

Righteous appointments of the flesh,

Which |until a season of rectifying| are in force.

11 But <when Christ approached, as High-priest of the coming good things,

Through the greater and more perfect tent, not made by hand,

That is, not of this creation,—

12 Nor yet through blood of goats and calves,

But through his own blood>.

He entered once for all into the Holies,

||Age-abiding' redemption discovering||.

13 For <if the blood of goats and bulls,

And the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the profaned,

Halloweth unto the purity of |the flesh|>

14 ||How much rather|| shall |the blood of the Christ,

Who through an age-abiding spirit

Offered ||himself|| unspotted unto God|

Purify our conscience from dead' works.

To the rendering of divine-service |unto a living God|?

15 And ||for this cause|| <of a new covenant> is he mediator,—

To the end that <death coming to pass for the redemption of the transgressions against ||the first|| covenant>

The called might receive |the promise| of the age-abiding' inheritance.

16 For <where a covenant is>

It is necessary for the death to be brought in, of him that hath covenanted;

17 For |a covenant over dead persons| is firm',—

Since it is not then' of force when he is |living| that hath covenanted.

18 Whence ||not even the first|| <apart from blood> hath been consecrated;

19 For <when every' commandment according to the law ||had been spoken|| by Moses unto all people>

<Taking the blood of the calves and the goats,

With water and scarlet wool and hyssop>

<Both the scroll itself and all the people> he sprinkled;

20 Saying—

|This| is the blood of the covenant which |God| hath sent in command unto you:

21 Yea <the tent also and all' the utensils of the public ministry> with blood' in like manner' he sprinkled;

22 And |nearly| all things <with blood> are purified |according to the law|,

And <apart from blood-shedding> cometh no ||remission||.

23 It was indeed therefore |necessary| for |the glimpses of the things in the heavens| with these' to be purified;

- But |the heavenly things themselves| with better' sacrifices than  
|these|.
- 24 For <not into Holies |made by hand|> entered Christ,—  
Counterparts of the real [Holies];  
But ||into the heaven itself||,  
|Now| to be openly manifested before the face of God in our behalf;—
- 25 Nor yet that |ofttimes| he should be offering himself,—  
Just as |the high-priest| entereth into the Holies year by year,  
with alien' blood;—
- 26 Else had it been |needful for him| ofttimes' to suffer, from the  
foundation of the world;  
But ||now|| <once for all,  
Upon a conjunction of the ages,  
For a setting aside of sin through means of his sacrifice>  
Hath he been made manifest;
- 27 And <inasmuch as it is in store for men—  
Once for all' to die,  
But after this' |judgment|>
- 28 |Thus| ||the Christ also||  
<Once for all having been offered,  
For the bearing of the sins of many>  
<A second time, apart from sin> will appear,  
|To them who for him' are ardently waiting  
||Unto salvation||.

I. THIS is probably the most difficult portion of the Epistle, and calls for especial care if we are to thread our way successfully through it.

II. The connection with what has gone before appears to be simple and obvious, the underlying thought being something like this: "Nevertheless, although the old Sinaitic Covenant had by Jeremiah been practically declared obsolete, yet had it valuable adumbrative instruction to yield"—some of which our Author proceeds to unfold.

III. Closer consideration brings me round to the more usual rendering of the remarkable word *kosmikon* ("worldly" or rather "world-related") used of "the sanctuary" in the first verse: "Even the first [covenant] used to have righteous appointments of divine service, and its

sanctuary—one related to this world.” This description was probably intended to strike the key-note of what follows—in which the relation of the Sacred Tent to this world is at several points made prominent: “a similitude for the present season”—“righteous appointments of the flesh.”

IV. It will be observed that the Writer describes the arrangements of the Sacred Tent with especial reference to the ceremonies which were celebrated therein; hence the use of the word “prepared” twice over (“a tent was prepared”—“these things having been thus prepared,” vv. 2 and 6). It is the ceremonial action in the prepared places which carries forward the thought to a climax.

V. It is remarkable that, for his purpose, our Author divides the one tent into two, and that he sets in strong contrast the daily ritual of the first or outer compartment (“continually do the priests enter”) and the yearly ritual consummated in the second or inner compartment. That this is essential to his argument is clear from the circumstance that it is the first tent *only* which he represents as a similitude for the present time. Whatever prefigurative force was centred in the second tent, falls into the background for the moment, so intent is he to note the lesson intended to be conveyed by the Holy Spirit from *the hiding of the second tent behind the first*, and the comparative prominence of the daily ritual in the outer place over the yearly ritual in the inner: as long as the daily service in the first tent continues, he says, it bars the way and obscures the entrance into the second.

VI. The most surprising thing of all is the clear assumption of our Author that there is something essentially more



temporary in the existence—or, at any rate, in the use—of the first tent than holds good of the second. The way of the Holies, he says, is obscured so long as the first tent has a “standing”: as though he were thinking of a time to come when the first tent would either be utterly abolished, leaving the inner tent remaining alone, with a ready and evident way into it; or, at least, when the outer tent would have no further significance—no “standing”, no especial use, no adumbrative force. The difficulty of the thought lies in its novelty; for, up to this point, the hypothesis has never been met with in the Sacred Writings that a time would ever come when the inner shrine would exist alone, apart from the outer.

VII. Perhaps, after all, this difficulty is not so great as at first would appear. It may be due to the rapid sweep of the Writer's thought, which, impatient of restraint, darts forward to greet the heavenly realities without first staying to point out what were the typical features of the inner tent. If this be the true explanation, then we must conclude that the marked transition which meets us at verse eleven conveys a fuller significance than is expressed in so many words: as much as to say—“But when Christ entered into the antitypical Holies, the very distinction between Holy and Most Holy was abolished. Passing through the one veil of his flesh, he was immediately in the unveiled presence of God. The heavenly Tent is not double, but single, spacious, complete: all of it lit up with the Divine Glory—all equally the Divine Home. Into this Christ entered at once, as well as once for all. The way of the Holies is henceforth manifest: Christ has entered it: he is in the Holies.”

VIII. Perhaps all that is wanted to complete our exposition at this point is that we blend state and place—the

glorious *person* of Christ with the heavenly *presence* of Christ. He has passed through the veil of his flesh into the spiritual condition of his person: he has passed out of earth into heaven. He is both glorious and in glory.

IX. All that remains before we pass on, is to emphasise the certainty that the "approach" mentioned in verse eleven is Christ's approach unto God, and *not* his coming into this world.<sup>a</sup> The "being come" of the A.V., the "having come" of the R.V., and even the "having appeared" of the Corrected N.T. are misleading. One has only to glance forward to verses 24 and 26 to be sure of this; but a misconception once lodged in the reader's mind is not always easily dislodged. The Greek word *paraginomai* simply means "to get near," whether by coming or going; and as in this place it is drawing near as priest—which Christ was not on earth—there should not be a moment's misconception.

X. The immeasurable superiority of Christ's death over that of the Levitical offerings has been sufficiently anticipated in "Study II." It may be well, however, to re-affirm the conviction that the "age-abiding spirit" (verse 14) through which the Messiah offered *himself* without spot unto God refers to his own human spirit, which in death was committed into the Father's hands, and which, being made dominant in his reconstructed personality by his resurrection, enabled and entitled him to resume the devotion which had on earth carried him to the Cross, and so now, as priest acting in "the power of an indissoluble life," he offers HIMSELF—offers the sum total of his surrendered earthly life—as an adequate offering for the sins of the world. This view invests the Messiah's priesthood with a

<sup>a</sup> See App. (8).

dignity which does not otherwise so triumphantly shine forth. According to this view, moreover, all excuse for charging with injustice the Divine substitution of the Just for the Unjust is effectually obviated. The Willinghood of earth is re-affirmed in heaven. Well might our Author claim that such blood—such a life—so surrendered—had efficacy to cleanse our conscience from the defilement of “dead works,” works done in death, even the miserable death which puts outward ceremonies in the place of love; and to bring us into holy and loving service to a Living God.

XI. Notwithstanding the inferiority of the first Covenant, its just claims must not be disregarded; hence offences against it must be dealt with, and those who have fallen under its condemnation must be treated as offenders. The old Covenant, however, though it could mark offences against its statutes, could not efficaciously deliver even the pious from its condemnation. The difficulty is met by the retrospective force of Messiah’s death, which avails for “the called,” who have by faith accepted promises of an age-abiding inheritance; who have caught glimpses of the life immortal, and counted themselves strangers and pilgrims on the earth. Such is the teaching of verse 15.

XII. With the utmost decision must we continue to protest against the introduction of “testament” as the meaning of *diatheke* in verses 16, 17. It is needless, and it does violence to the continuity of our Author’s argument. It is needless, as a patient consideration of Gen. xv. 7—21, and Jeremiah xxxiv. 18, 19, might have shown, where both parties to the Covenant are represented as dead to all change of mind; and it does violence to the argument of the present passage, as the sudden jerk back to the covenant idea, which in that case is felt in verse 18, alone sufficiently

shews: "Whence not even the first apart from blood hath been consecrated." "The first"—what? "Testament?" Nay! the first (that at Sinai) was *not* a testament, but a covenant. Besides, as well said by the "Speaker's Commentary" on vii. 22, "A testament no more requires a surety than it does a mediator;" and on ix. 15, "The use of the term Mediator shews that we have here to do with the Hebrew idea of a 'covenant,' not with the Roman idea of a 'testament.' A mediator is the proper guardian of a covenant (see Gal. iii. 15—20), but has no place in regard to a testament. Neither, again, does the death of a testator possess any of the sacrificial character which is referred to in vv. 15—22."

XIII. As already suggested in our second Study, the necessity for cleansing the holy places can only be relative. Sin is contaminating. Holy places are to be treated as defiled by the entrance of unholy persons. If into the former the latter enter, it must be under solemn Divine protest. He that has been unholy must be unholy no longer; and for the past, satisfaction must be made. If we would enter heaven itself, the holy abode of God, we must have a Sacrificial Forerunner.

XIV. It is evident on the face of the two concluding verses of this chapter (ix. 27, 28) that a CORRESPONDENCE is assumed to exist between Men in general and Christ—between the Race and the Redeemer of the Race. The introductory words "Inasmuch" and "Thus" make this sufficiently clear. But when we proceed to the working out of the correspondence, some difficulty is felt, probably due to the absence of exact words of comparison. If it had been said, "Inasmuch as it is in store for men once for all to die, thus Christ died once for all," the correspondence in

this part of the statement would, of course, have been self-evident; and it is worth while to observe that it is only because of the richness of the thought to be conveyed—only because the death of Christ is clothed in terms expressive of the object for which he died—that the correspondence in this particular is momentarily obscured. Of course, the statement about Christ at this point is equivalent to, “Thus Christ also died once for all, and in dying was made an offering for the bearing of the sins of many;” and when this is noted obscurity vanishes. It is in the next clause that the more serious difficulty arises; for, it may be asked, what resemblance is there between the appointment or reservation unto men of judgment after death and the second appearing of Christ? Fairly to confront this question is a good step taken toward discovering the answer. We have only to think of the judgment after death rather as an encouragement than as a warning, to perceive the correspondence in this matter also between the Race and the Redeemer of the Race. Regard judgment after death as primarily a righting of the wrongs of this life, and a stable basis is at once laid for the implied further correspondence between Men as Men and their New Head. How great the wrong done to the Messiah—from the human side—by his rejection and death: how triumphant the righting of that wrong which is brought into view by the prospect of his re-appearance from behind the veil which at present conceals him; especially when his bestowment of salvation on those who are looking for him is regarded as only an instalment of the full recompense that awaits him. Nor is it *far-fetched* to regard judgment after death as primarily and fundamentally a blessing; seeing that the last word on the line of sin is “Death,” and therefore the moment the weighty clause is added “but after death a Judging,” we have a right to infer that already the light of

Redemption has begun to dawn ! Our text is dealing with what is in store for man *as man*, and not with special condemnation for special sin : a breadth of view which affords a solid basis on which to contemplate the triumph of Men's Redeemer, and thus this climacteric text shines out according to its manifest intention.

## STUDY XII.

### THE MANY OFFERINGS ABOLISHED BY THE ONE OFFERING.

(Chap. X. 1—18.)

- 10 <sup>1</sup> For the law <having ||a shadow|| of the destined' good things,  
Not the very' image' of the things>  
They can never' <with the same' sacrifices which ||year by year||  
they offer evermore>  
Make |them who approach| ||perfect||;
- <sup>2</sup> Else, would they not, in that case, have ceased being offered,  
By reason of those rendering the divine service having no' further  
conscience at all' of sins,  
||Being once for all purified||?
- <sup>3</sup> But <in them> is a recalling to mind of sins |year by year|,
- <sup>4</sup> For it is ||impossible|| for blood of bulls and goats to be taking  
away sins.
- <sup>5</sup> Wherefore <coming into the world> he saith :  
<*Sacrifice and offering*> *thou willedst not,*  
*But <a body> hast thou fitted for me,—*
- <sup>6</sup> <*In whole-burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sins*> *thou didst not*  
*delight :*
- <sup>7</sup> |*Then*| *said I—*  
*Lo ! I am come,—*  
*<In the heading of the scroll> it is written concerning me,—*  
*To do, O God, ||thy will||.*
- <sup>8</sup> <|*Higher up*| saying—  
<*Sacrifices, and offerings, and whole-burnt-offerings, and sacrifices for*  
*sins*> *thou willedst not, neither delightedst in,—*  
*The which <according to the law> are offered> —*
- <sup>9</sup> |*Then*| *hath he said—*  
*Lo ! I am come*  
*To do |thy will|.*  
He taketh away the first, that <the second> he may ||establish|| :
- <sup>10</sup> By which *will* we have been hallowed,  
Through the *offering* of the *body* of Jesus Christ ||once for all||.
- <sup>11</sup> And ||every' priest||, indeed, standeth daily, publicly ministering,  
And the ||same|| sacrifices oftentimes' offering,  
• The which never' can clear away sins ;

- <sup>12</sup> But ||this|| priest <having offered one sacrifice ||for sins|| for evermore>  
*Sat down on the right hand of God :*
- <sup>13</sup> <As for the rest> waiting—  
*Until his foes |be made| his footstool ;*
- <sup>14</sup> For <by one' offering> hath he perfected for evermore, them who  
 are being hallowed.
- <sup>15</sup> But even the Holy Spirit ||beareth us witness|| ;  
 For <after having said—
- <sup>16</sup> ||This|| is the covenant that I will covenant unto them  
*After those days saith the Lord,—*  
 <Giving my laws upon their hearts>,  
 <Upon their understandings also> will I inscribe them'>
- <sup>17</sup> [He] also [saith]—  
 <Of their sins and of their lawlessnesses> I will in nowise be mindful  
 any more.
- <sup>18</sup> But <wherever remission of these is> there is |no further| offering  
 |for sins|.

I. AT first sight we may fail to see the force of our Author's argument (verses 1, 2), that, if the old offerings had been of real efficacy for the removal of sin, then would they naturally have ceased to be offered. But our failure to feel the cogency of his reasoning may be due to a misapprehension on our part. If, indeed, the yearly sacrifices presented on the great day of atonement, had been the mere clearing off of a year's transgressions, but thoroughly effective at that, there might have been some difficulty in the way of being quite satisfied with the inference so triumphantly embodied in the question, "Would they not in that case have ceased being offered?" It might have been replied, "The inference does not follow; because, however efficacious the annual offering may have been to clear off the past year's obligations, another year will infallibly bring new transgressions and therefore demand renewed offerings." The better view is suggested by the intimation given in Leviticus xvi. 16, 21, which teaches that this annual sacrifice was presented "because of the uncleanness of the sons of Israel, and because of their transgressions—to the extent of all their sins." But what



an extent was that! could it be circumscribed by the bounds of the single newly by-gone year? Were the sins of antecedent years not still theirs? The offerer (let us suppose) had committed theft the year before this last; had spoken reproachfully of his God in the year antedating that in which he had committed theft, and so on, indefinitely backwards over all his life. Who is to snap the thread of responsibility for all the sins of all the life hitherto? Who is to give perfect peace to the conscience over the remembered sins of all the bygone years? There is in this view, inevitably, the calling to mind of accumulated transgressions from *all the past*; and though a solemn form of absolution has been accepted from year to year, the question still remains as to the practical efficiency of that absolution. How can the conscience be kept from being still troubled by sins *at any time* committed, so long as the propitiation for them consists of animal blood only; the assurance of perfect and final acquittal can scarcely be stronger than the adequacy of the substitutional sin-bearing; and the question must still return, "How many animals' lives are equivalent to one man's life?" If it be said "That the Divine Word of pardon is alone sufficient," we have still to reply, "Yes! but in what way, on what conditions, through what medium, is that forgiving word vouchsafed?" The view thus suggested, as to the real meaning of the yearly ritual atonement, is greatly confirmed by the reflection that all the year's sins had already—when the great day of atonement came—been expiated by the daily and occasional offerings already presented,—*imperfectly* expiated, clearly, else why offer sacrifice anew with respect to them at the year's end? *Imperfect* was the daily general offering; *imperfect* also the occasional and individual offerings; and still *imperfect*—always *imperfect*—the yearly sacrifice! There was always a reaching forth for something more complete, more

efficacious, more fully and abidingly satisfying to the imperious demands of a guilty conscience. But it never came—or else the offerings would have ceased, never came until it arrived in the voluntary offering of Israel's Messiah.

II. This quotation here made from Psalm XL. possesses great interest, but at the same time is beset with considerable difficulty. The *interest* arises in part from the terms in which it is introduced, as being the language of the Messiah, disclosing the purpose with which he came into the world; partly from the comprehensiveness of the terms by which animal sacrifices are represented as relegated to an inferior place in the Divine economy, or even altogether abrogated; partly, moreover, by the decisive words with which the quotation is dismissed as clearly indicating a change in the Divine Will! The *difficulty* is mainly due to a discrepancy, at an important point, between the original Hebrew, as it has come down to us, and the Septuagint version, which is here followed by the writer of this Epistle. The Hebrew says, "Ears hast thou opened for me;" whereas the Septuagint renders the clause, "A body hast thou prepared for me." Either form of expression will make sense, but it is not easy to see how both representations can have had a common origin which would harmonise them and stand as the authentic original of the Psalm. Whether the present Hebrew is correct, and the Greek has missed its way; or the Hebrew has somehow become corrupt, and the true primitive assertion has been preserved in the Septuagint, we cannot say. No fault in the Hebrew as it now stands can be detected, no incongruity with the context be alleged; "the opening of the ear" is quite an easy expression for conveying the thought of a willing and attentive mind, and this would certainly weave well into the strain pursued throughout the verses wherein

it stands ; since everyone must admit that the disposition of the worshipper is of far more consequence than the offerings which he brings. On the other hand, a much deeper sense is conveyed by the Septuagint than by the Hebrew, seeing that the clause " A body hast thou prepared for me " more naturally suggests to the Christian mind the great fact of the Incarnation itself than anything else. And this moreover brings out a meaning from the exclamation " Lo ! I am come," which goes far to justify our Author in attributing the entire passage to the Messiah as uttered by him on " coming into the world." Moreover, from the Septuagint rendering as a starting point, we instinctively carry forward the term " body," when reading this Epistle, to the great Antitypical Offering, as the means by which it was rendered unto God ; and it may plausibly be asserted that the very terms of verse 10, " Through the offering of the ' body ' of Jesus Christ once for all," are expressly framed on the basis of the presence of the term " body," as it must be assumed to have stood in the Psalm while yet retaining its pristine purity.

Admitting a difficulty which we are unable to remove, we may nevertheless mitigate its severity by the reflection that, even accepting the minimum statement of the present Hebrew text, there is left us in the Psalm a striking and valuable addition to a notable class of passages, such as 1 Sam. xv. 22 ; Psalm li. 16, 17 ; Isaiah i. 11—17 ; Jer. vi. 20 ; vii. 22, 23 ; Amos v. 21—24 ; Micah vi. 6—8 ; in which the inferiority of animal sacrifices to moral disposition and conduct is strongly enforced. Whenever the ceremonial and the moral come into conflict, we are thus left in no doubt as to which is Divinely preferred ; and we are at the same time prepared for a possible new mandate from heaven that the offering of animal victims is henceforth to cease. With all this taken into account as of some

weight in favour of the existing Hebrew text, it is impossible not to feel that *inherent probability* strongly favours the presumably lost text underlying the Septuagint rendering. Is it likely that the Seventy would have thought of such a word as "body," in such a connection, without documentary warrant? It is on the face of it the "harder reading," and hence very unlikely to have been merely *imagined* as the correct word. It is far more probable that the term "body" was dropt by Hebrew copyists as unintelligible and another word substituted for it, than that it was gratuitously inserted by the Hebrew translators into Greek. The facts remain, that the equivalent for "body" (*soma*) has come down to us in the ancient Greek translation of a still more ancient Hebrew text; and that this word "body" has been turned to most forcible account by the Writer of our Epistle to the Hebrews. He, at any rate, betrays no fear of being charged with a misquotation.\*

\* See App. (9).

## STUDY XIII.

## EXHORTATION—WARNING—ENCOURAGEMENT.

(Chap. X. 19—39.)

- 19 <Having therefore, brethren, freedom of speech for the entrance of  
the holies |by the blood of Jesus|,  
20 Which [entrance] he hath consecrated for us, as a way recent and  
living,  
Through the veil, that is, his flesh,—  
21 And having a great priest over the house of God>  
22 Let us be approaching with a genuine' heart, in full assurance of faith,  
Having been sprinkled, as to our hearts, from an evil conscience,  
And bathed, as to our bodies, with pure water;  
23 Let us be holding fast the confession of the hope that it waver not,—  
For <faithful> is he that hath promised;  
24 And let us be attentively considering one another, to provoke unto  
love and noble' works,—  
25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together,  
According to the custom of some,  
But exhorting,  
And by so much the more as this',  
By as' much as ye behold drawing near ||the day||.  
26 For <if <by choice> we be sinning after the receiving of the full-  
knowledge of the truth>  
<No longer, for sins> is there left over |a sacrifice|,  
27 But some |fearful| reception of judgment and *fiery jealousy*,  
|About to devour' the opposers|.  
28 ||Any one having set aside a law of Moses||  
<Apart from compassions, upon [the testimony of] two or three  
witnesses> dieth;  
29 Of |how much| sorer |punishment|, suppose ye, shall he' be  
accounted worthy,  
Who hath trampled underfoot |the Son of God|,  
And <the blood of the covenant> hath esteemed |a profane thing|  
||by which he had been hallowed||,  
And <unto the Spirit of favour> hath offered wanton insult?  
30 For we know him that hath said—  
<To me> *belongeth avenging*,  
||I|| *will recompense*;

and again—

*The Lord will judge his people.*

- 31 <A fearful thing> [it is] to fall into the hands ||of a Living God||.
- 32 But be calling to mind the former' days,  
In which |once ye were illuminated|,  
<A great combat of sufferings> ye endured ;—
- 33 ||Partly||, indeed, because <both with reproaches and tribulations>  
ye were being made a spectacle,  
But ||partly|| because <into fellowship with them who were so  
involved> ye were brought ;—
- 34 For <even with them who were in bonds> ye sympathised,  
And <unto theseizure of your goods> with joy' ye bade welcome,—  
Knowing that ye have yourselves for a better' possession and  
|an abiding|.
- 35 Do not, then, cast away your freedom of speech,—  
The which hath |a great' recompense|.
- 36 For <of endurance> ye have need,  
In order that <the will of God> having done,  
Ye may bear away |the promise|.
- 37 For <yet a little while, how short ! how short !>  
|*The Coming One*| will be here, and will not tarry ;
- 38 But |*my righteous one*| by faith |shall live|,  
And <if he draw back> ||*my soul delighteth not in him*||.
- 39 ||We||, however, are not of a drawing back unto destruction,  
But of faith unto an acquisition of life.

I. THE *faith* of Christ ministers to the *life* of Christ in the souls of them who believe. Hence, after teaching comes exhortation ; and such teaching as abounds in this Epistle is fitly crowned with large and impassioned discourse immediately moving to steadfastness of conviction and consistency of conduct. Already hortatory impulses have broken forth from the deeply moved mind of our Author, as in chapters ii. 1—4 ; iii. 12 ; iv. 1, 11, 14—16 ; vi. 1—8 ; but now, having completed his exposition of the heavenly priesthood of the Messiah, he throws his whole energy into large and prolonged appeal. And yet, so closely are light and love combined in those who have “the mind of Christ,” that, even when exhorting, new forms and combinations of truth shed further illumination and originate fresh arguments to steadfastness. These

reflections are suggested by the anticipation that, even after we have committed ourselves to the overflowing stream of exhortation which here begins, we may discover that renewed expository effort is necessary if we would keep abreast with our Author.

II. The contents of the portion of the Epistle on which we now enter may be described as, *first*, exhortation proper (verses 19—25); *second*, warning (26—31); *third*, encouragement (32—39).

*First*, exhortation pure and simple; of which it is worth noting the framework, as seen in the effective repetitions, "Having . . . and having . . . Let us . . . let us . . . And let us." "Having" a way of entrance into the house of God; "and having" a great high priest over that house, "Let us" make good use of our high privilege. The moving verbs of exhortation are, in the original, aptly thrown into the form which prolongs the actions successively urged: "Let us be *habitually* approaching through the new and living way; let us be *continuously* holding fast our confession; and let us with *constantly renewed* brotherly love be attentively considering one another for the worthy purpose of emulative provocation." Note also the effective—the almost startling—reservation to the very last place, in this one hortatory sentence of seven verses, of the word "day." It is like the final blast of a trumpet. How has lukewarm Christendom lost sight of—the Day! Of course, the Day has been long in coming, and the extension of the short time of waiting for it into a long time (as to which see our first "Study") has proved a sore trial to her faith—a trial so severe that contradictory voices have confused her as to the identity of—the Day. The connected study of the Epistle as a whole should do something to remove the confusion.

The rhetoric of our Author tends to hide his logic from observation. In this very exhortation there is a logical order employed in describing the way of approach which has possibly not attracted much attention; the immediate cause of the partial concealment being this: That, although there is a logical order, it is an *inverted* order. In other words, as actually named, we have:—

1. The sprinkling of the heart from an evil conscience ;
2. The bathing of the body in pure water ;
3. The confession of the hope.

It is not fanciful to say that the bathing of the body alludes to Christian immersion. Unless words are perverted or historic facts distorted, it can allude to nothing else, seeing that there is, in the process of consecration to Christ, no other observance to which the words can literally apply ; and, as to literalness, it may justly be observed that if “ body ” does not mean “ body,” neither does “ heart ” mean “ heart ” ; but, in fact, the very contrast between the two necessitates the acceptance of both terms in their usual significance. <sup>a</sup>But when this is settled, is it fanciful to see further in this place a tracing backwards of the process of conversion? Let us try the hypothesis of inversion ; and, doing so, the order will stand thus :—

1. The confession of the hope ;
2. The bathing of the body in pure water ;
3. The sprinkling of the heart from an evil conscience.

Now it is notorious that in primitive times such was the common order of conversion :—

- 1st. The Christian hope was confessed with the mouth ;
- 2nd. The body of the confessor was immersed in pure water ;

<sup>a</sup> See App. (10).



3rd. And seeing that the baptism of the penitent was avowedly "for the remission of sins," it follows that just as certainly as the obedient believer trusted the assurance given by God in this covenant ordinance, so certainly would his heart be sprinkled from an evil conscience; and, like the Ethiopian Eunuch, he would go on his way rejoicing.

The reason of the inversion is evident. The whole process of the foregoing discussion of Messiah's heavenly priesthood having carried the Writer in thought *into the Holiest*, what more natural than that he should mentally *step backwards*, retracing the way by which all converts in those days passed into the shrine of the Divine Presence?

*Second*, warning. Out of the exhortation springs the warning. "Let us approach—let us hold fast—let us consider one another with frequent exhortations"—*because* of the danger of apostacy. Wilful continuance in sin is exactly what is expressed; and therefore it is doubtful whether actual apostacy is regarded as contemplated from the first by the erring one; or whether (as rather appears) any wilful sin persisted in is not looked upon as inevitably leading to a total departure from Christ. In any case it is presupposed that, whatever be the form of sin wilfully persisted in, it does in fact culminate in conscious renunciation of the Son of God; and this is the grand point to be considered. We are of course at once reminded of the parallel warning in chapter vi. Here, as there, the Writer seems to take pains to express himself so that there shall be no escape from the conclusion that those who revolt, revolt from a real experience of the saving power of the Redeemer. They have received the full or experimental knowledge of the truth, as the Greek compound word *epignosis* always signifies. They have been hallowed

by the blood of the covenant. They have known the Spirit of favour—whom the world cannot know (John xiv. 17) intimately enough to be able to **insult** him. So that it seems impossible to question the reality of their conversion: indeed, the very object of accumulating the evidences of this, manifestly is to demonstrate the enormity of the guilt of those who thus apostatise, and so to lay a firm basis for the conclusion that there is really no compassion possible for those who *thus* sin. Every approach to such an unpardonable crime must therefore be vigilantly guarded against; and every possible means, including those which are secured by regularly assembling together, must be employed to rouse the careless and to make the timid bold.

*Third, encouragement.* As in the former passage (chapter vi.) so here, the very force of the warning against such a terrible danger, brings a reaction in the spirit of the Writer, as though he must needs seek relief from an intolerable strain: not indeed by weakening his admonitions, nor by any minimising of the dreaded guilt if really incurred; but by a recurrence to the fond hope that the crime of apostacy *will not be committed*. Hence he encourages his wavering readers to indulge those happy memories of past sufferings bravely borne which will be likely to move them to take heed lest they defeat the promise of so good a beginning. The general meaning of this wooing strain is so clear as to need no detailed comment. There are, however, two allusions therein to the primitive teaching of endless life in Christ only which should not be missed. The one is couched under a “reading” now generally accepted by textual critics, according to which we “ourselves” are the better and abiding possession—which seems indeed to be but an echo of our Lord’s own well-known

teaching (Mat. xvi. 26, and parallels), to the effect that, no matter what we gain, if we lose **ourselves**, we lose all. The other allusion springs out of the closing verse of the chapter, when rendered with resolute fidelity. "We are not of a drawing back unto destruction; but (of the opposite) of faith unto an acquisition of life" (or "soul" or "personality") of a something, therefore, which is not ours naturally and inevitably, but only if we win it in the only way in which it can be acquired. "The N. T. in Modern Speech" is the only known version which can be named with satisfaction as confirming the above rendering and the explanation based upon it: "But are among those who believe and gain possession of their souls." Even this, however, is not entirely satisfactory; since the original for soul (*psyche*) is in the singular number and without either article or pronoun; and so precisely and naturally suggests that the thing gained is "soul," which, as is well known, is the great biblical word for conveying the idea of "self" or "personality." There ought to be no hesitation to accept the passage before us in this sense, especially in view of Luke xvii. 33: "Whosoever shall lose his life (*or*, soul) shall preserve it (Gr. save it alive)." Now, if faith is the grand instrument on our part for winning the abiding acquisition of personality, no wonder that the nature and triumphs of faith should be celebrated at large,—which is **exactly what awaits us in our next "Study."**

## STUDY XIV.

### THE NATURE AND TRIUMPHS OF FAITH.

(Chap. XI. 1—40.)

- 11 <sup>1</sup> But faith is' <of things hoped for> a confidence,  
     <Of facts> a conviction |when they are not seen| ;
- <sup>2</sup> For <thereby> well-attested' were |the ancients|.
- <sup>3</sup> ||By faith|| we understand the ages to have been fitted together ||by  
     declaration of God||,—  
     To the end that <not out of things appearing> should that which  
     is seen ||have come into existence||.
- <sup>4</sup> ||By faith|| <a fuller sacrifice> did Abel' offer unto God than Cain',—  
     |Through which| he received witness that he was |righteous|,  
     *There being a witnessing upon his gifts ||by God||;*  
     And |through it| though he died' ||he yet' is speaking||.
- <sup>5</sup> ||By faith|| |Enoch| was translated, so as not to see death,  
     *And was not found, because that |God| had translated him ;*  
     For <before the translation> he had received witness that *he had*  
     *become |well-pleasing unto God| ;—*
- <sup>6</sup> But <apart from faith> it is impossible *to be well-pleasing ;*  
     For he that approacheth unto God—  
     Must needs ||have faith|| that he is'  
     And that <to them who seek him out> <a rewarder> he  
     becometh.
- <sup>7</sup> ||By faith|| |Noah| <having received intimation' concerning |the  
     things not yet' seen|>  
     <Filled with reverence> prepared an ark to the saving of his house—  
     Through which he condemned the world,  
     And <of the righteousness |by way of faith|> became ||heir||.
- <sup>8</sup> ||By faith|| <being called> Abraham' obeyed—  
     *To come forth into a place he was destined to receive for an inheritance ;*  
     *And he came forth ||not well knowing whither he was going||.*
- <sup>9</sup> ||By faith|| *he sojourned* in the land of promise |as a foreign land|,  
     <In tents> dwelling,  
     Along with Isaac and Jacob, |the joint-heirs of the same promise| ;
- <sup>10</sup> For he was awaiting the city having foundations',  
     Whose architect and builder is |God|.
- <sup>11</sup> ||By faith|| |even Sarah herself| received |power for founding a seed|,  
     |Even beyond the season of life's prime|,—  
     Seeing that <faithful> she reckoned |him that had promised|;

- 12 Wherefore <even from one> were born,  
 And <as to these things> one who had become dead,—  
*Like the stars of the heaven, for multitude,*  
*And as the sand that is by the lip of the sea, that cannot be*  
*numbered.*
- 13 ||In faith|| all' these died'—  
 Not bearing away the promises,  
 But <from afar> beholding' and saluting' them,  
 And confessing that <strangers and sojourners> were they upon  
*the land.*
- 14 For ||they who such things as these' are saying||  
 Make it clear that <of a paternal home> they are in quest ;
- 15 And <if indeed |of that| they had been mindful from which they  
 had come out>  
 They might, in that case, have had an opportunity to return ;
- 16 But ||now|| <after a better one> are they reaching forth,  
 ||That is, a heavenly||;  
 Wherefore God is not ashamed of them to be invoked |as their God|,—  
 For he hath prepared for them |a city|.
- 17 ||By faith|| *Abraham |when tested| offered up Isaac ;*  
 And <the only begotten> would he' have offered up |who <the  
 promises> had accepted|,—
- 18 Even him of whom it had been said—  
 <In Isaac> *shall there be called to thee |a seed| :*
- 19 Accounting that <even from among the dead> ||God|| was able |to  
 raise [him]|,—  
 Whence <even in similitude> he bare him away.
- 20 ||By faith|| <even concerning things to come> did Isaac bless |Jacob  
 and Esau|.
- 21 ||By faith|| Jacob, when about to die|,  
 Blessed ||each of the sons of Joseph||;  
 And bowed in worship on the top of his staff.
- 22 ||By faith|| |Joseph, when drawing to his end|—  
 <Concerning the exodus of the sons of Israel> called to remem-  
 brance,  
 And <concerning his bones> gave commandment.
- 23 ||By faith|| |Moses, when born|—  
 Was hid three months by his parents,  
 Because they saw that <goodly> was |the child|,  
 And were not affrighted ||at the decree of the king||.
- 24 ||By faith|| |Moses, when grown up|—  
 Refused to be called son of a daughter of a Pharaoh,
- 25 Rather choosing—  
 To be jointly suffering ill-treatment with the people of God,  
 Than <for a season> to be having ||sin's enjoyment||;

26 Accounting—

<As greater riches than Egypt's treasures>

|| *The reproach of the Anointed One* ||;

For he was looking away unto the recompense.

27 || By faith || he forsook Egypt—

Not put in fear of the wrath of the king ;

For <as seeing him who cannot be seen> || he persevered ||.

28 || By faith || he hath kept *the passover* and the besmearing of *the blood*,

Lest | *he that was destroying* the firstborn | || should be touching them ||.

29 || By faith || they passed through the Red Sea, as over | dry land |,—

Which the Egyptians | seizing an attempt' to do | they were swallowed up.

30 || By faith || | the walls of Jericho | fell,

| Having been surrounded for seven days |.

31 || By faith || | Rahab the harlot | perished not with them who refused to yield,

|| She having welcomed the spies with peace ||.

32 And what more' can I say ?

For | time | will fail me while I go on telling—

Concerning Gideon, Barak, Sampson, Jephthah,

David also, and Samuel, and the prophets,—

33 Who || through faith ||—

Prevailed in contest over kingdoms,

Wrought righteousness,

Attained unto promises,

Shut the mouths of lions,

34 Quenched the power of fire,

Escaped the mouths of the sword,

Were made to gain power from weakness,

Became mighty in battle,

Overtaken | camps of aliens | ;

25 Women received | by resurrection | || their dead ||;

But | others | were put to the rack,

Not accepting redemption,

That <unto a better resurrection> || they might attain || :

36 | Others |, again, <of mockings and scourgings> received trial,

| Nay ! further | of bonds and imprisonments :

37 They were stoned, were pierced through, | were sawn asunder |,

<By murder> with a sword, || died ||,

Went about in sheep-skins, in goat-hides,—

Being in want, suffering tribulation, enduring ill-treatment :

38 Of whom the world' | was not worthy |—

<Upon deserts> wandering, and mountains, and in caves,—and in the caverns of the earth.

39 And || these all || <though they obtained witness through their faith>

Yet bare not away |the promise| :

40    ||God|| <for us> something better' providing,—  
      That <not apart from us> should they be made ||perfect||.

I. It is certainly more important to *have* faith than to be able with accuracy to *define* it. Nevertheless, in the sphere of exposition, there is probably nothing to come before us in our present "Study" more important than the definition of faith here at the outset given ; especially seeing that, so far as we are aware, this is the only definition of faith offered in the Bible. That the first verse of chapter xi. of our Epistle is a definition of faith, is probably self-evident to nearly all readers ; and the few who may possibly have persuaded themselves to the contrary are reminded that the very position of the verb "to be" in the sentence is such that by its rightful emphasis it ought to set this matter at rest. In short, our Writer first defines what faith *is*, for the purpose of then expatiating at length on what faith *does*.

The misfortune is that the popular rendering of the verse—that at least which is familiar as the translation of the A.V.—while still appearing to be a definition, practically mystifies what it should have made clear. That faith is "substance" and "evidence" is by no means satisfactory, and a professed definition of it in that sense can only puzzle the uninitiated ; whereas to have said that faith is "confidence" and "conviction," would have at once commended itself to every unsophisticated mind ; and even the sub-distinction between "confidence" in relation to "things hoped for," and "conviction" in relation to "things (simply) not seen" would have been readily appreciated after a little reflection, inasmuch as things hoped for naturally elicit the action which *confides*, whereas things not seen, being good, bad, and indifferent in their nature, may broadly be said to be objects of conviction irrespective of the especial attitude toward them which they evoke.

The definition thus submitted ought most assuredly to have appeared in this place. The fact that *hypostasis* (here employed) had already, with universal consent, been rendered "confidence" at chapter iii. 14, should have prepared the way for its adoption here; and then by a similar derivation of a good sound secondary sense for *elenchos*, "conviction" would have followed to complete the sentence. That "confidence" and "conviction" are secondary meanings of the Greek words they represent, is frankly admitted; but while primary acceptations for words ought not to be needlessly departed from, on the other hand too much reluctance to admit derivative senses should not be displayed. In the instance before us, there is not only the fact to consider, that "confidence" is too manifestly right and too securely lodged in iii. 14, to be removed; but there is the volume of evidence conveyed by the whole chapter that follows, to confirm the definition at its outset in the clear and simple significance which is here submitted as correct. Indeed, it may be said that the account of the triumphs of faith which succeeds the definition both generally and particularly protests against the mystical exaggeration which is conveyed by the word "substance" at the outset. Why not be content to say that Noah, Abraham, and the rest had "confidence" beforehand in the good things that were promised them? Why exaggerate by making out that they had the "substance" of the promises *before the promises were fulfilled*? Besides, it is scarcely too much to say that the sacred text twice over flatly contradicts such an assumption; seeing that in two instances, namely, at verses 13 and 39, it is most careful to protest that the ancient heroes of faith "bare not away the promises"! Surely to say that they "bare not away the promises" and yet all the while had the "substance" of them in their bosoms is a species of exegetical trifling to be



deprecated. We observe with pleasure that the rendering of this definition in "The Corrected New Testament" is a great improvement on that of the Revised.

Recurring to the sub-distinction between faith when fixed on "things hoped for," and faith when simply directed to "things unseen," it may prove of practical assistance to re-affirm and emphasise the difference. In ordinary life the principle is the same: we believe or credit what appears *true on evidence*; but, properly speaking, we **confide** only when we act or resolve to act. There must be some venture, some committal of our interests, some reliance—frequently upon another—before intellectual conviction is ripened into whole-souled confidence. To follow this out would be to exhibit the personal relations of the faith that saves, as always in that case trust in another; and yet at the same time—as an unwarranted trust where there is no repentance, no determination of will to accept and win the promises. Moreover, the whole cause and cure of so-called "dead" faith is at once laid bare. Let a man only *act on his conviction*, and his faith will be dead no longer. So, again, the freedom of faith is hereby vindicated: "conviction" of truth is partly at least involuntary; but "confidence" in promised good demands the voluntary surrender of an obedient life to prevent its becoming presumption.

II. To those who have observed how little appears to be said of a future life in the early books of the Bible, it may come as a surprise to be told that Abraham and others looked for the heavenly Jerusalem, and so far came under the spell of the hope of ultimately dwelling therein as to avow themselves "strangers" on the earth. Such readers will be apt to feel as though they had made some mistake or committed some strange oversight in reading the ancient sacred histories, not to have taken from them an impression as to the hope

in olden times more commensurate with the glowing picture presented by the writer of our Epistle. It would seem as though either our Author had access to information which is not in our possession, or else that he read in the sacred documents, which we also possess, evidences which have escaped our search. It is indeed easy to conceive that he did possess an amount of inspirational insight surpassing our own ; but it is not easy to regard that insight as being wholly independent of the actual memoirs of patriarchal lives—as though it had come to him by direct revelation from heaven. The likelihood is, rather, that we have been dull scholars ; and that greater diligence and keener insight may yet vindicate the inferences which our Author draws from the incidents of those early biographies. To do justice to the argument of our Epistle there are three things which should not be forgotten.

*First*, we ought to clear our minds of all mere formal acquiescence in popular phraseology, current at the present day. It is easy for *us* to talk and sing about being “strangers and pilgrims” on the earth, but what was it for a man like Abraham to do so ? We have behind *us* the fuller revelations of a future life which the later sacred writings have bequeathed to us, and whether we have absolute faith in them or not, it is easy for *us* to adopt, current phraseology without seriously confronting all that it involves. To enter into the feelings of the ancient patriarchs, we ought to weigh well the hypothesis that light on the great Beyond was only just beginning to dawn upon their minds ; and *then* what would it be for them to confess they were “strangers and sojourners” amongst men ?

*Secondly*, we should note well exactly what the Writer to the Hebrews attributes to Abraham and his joint-heirs. To some extent it is easy to detect in his language that he is

putting his own (no doubt enlightened) construction upon their conduct. But there are two definite things which he attributes to *them*—something they **did**, and something they **said**; and it is fair to assume that he saw the significance of the two things in their combination, since an act, and a hint in explanation of that act, will often be more significant than a fuller verbal explanation alone. They dwelt in tents: they avowed they were strangers. They dwelt in tents—they did not build houses. All three of them did this—father, son, grandson. For a brief stay in Canaan this would have been quite natural; but Abraham so dwelt there for many years. His sojourn when Sarah died must, allowing for one short absence, have been already lengthened to fifty years. Still he continued living in tents; and his sons after him. Why was this? It cannot have been merely because they were sheep and cattle owners; so were their neighbours, and like them these Chaldean foreigners could have dwelt in houses and still have sent abroad their flocks and herds. There were cities: why did they not dwell in them? Their action, on the face of it, seemed ever to be proclaiming that they expected shortly to leave the country. Then, besides their action, there was the occasional confession falling from their lips, as from Abraham's on occasion of Sarah's death: "A sojourner and settler am I with you." How often this frank avowal was made we know not; but we may fairly suppose that, ever and anon in friendly intercourse with their neighbours, it fell from their lips, and that in their own homes it became a household word. This last reflection is obvious when we find the grandson Jacob, as though accustomed to such language, in his speech before Pharaoh, alluding with rhythmic repetition to "the years of my sojournings" and to "the days of the sojournings of my fathers." Nay! it is not a far-fetched inference that this

confession passed into the thought of later times with constant and special reference to those early patriarchal wanderers as probably the first to make it, seeing that in David's noble prayer at the close of his life<sup>a</sup> and in the thirty-ninth Psalm the same association with the fathers occurs: "Sojourners are we before thee, and strangers like all our fathers"; "A sojourner am I with thee, a stranger like all my fathers." It is natural to think that it was from those three famous "pilgrim fathers," Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, that this association of ideas—in fact this confession—originally sprang. For, when thoughtfully examined, it is not a very natural confession for men to make who have no hope of a future life; since, however brief human life may be and must sometimes affectingly appear, yet, on the hypothesis of there being no life beyond the present, it may be asked—If man is not at home in this his only dwelling place, then where is he at home? and why then should he describe himself as a stranger therein? Such, at all events, are the two facts in the lives of the patriarchs which there is no denying: for long years, even for three generations, they dwelt in tents; and they avowed themselves to be strangers and sojourners in the land.

*Thirdly*, having noted well the facts on which our Author builds, we have finally to consider how far his conclusions from those facts are legitimate inferences, and how far they were matters of direct revelation. It is obvious that the language in the text before us is partly inferential. For example when it says, "They who such things as these are saying make it clear that of a paternal home they are in quest," this by no means conveys the idea that the patriarchs actually *said* so; but only that, from their conduct, such was the conclusion to be legitimately drawn. And so, further on, in reminding us that these sojourners could

<sup>a</sup> 1 Ch. xxix. 15.

have returned to Ur of the Chaldees had they been so determined, the writer is again making a legitimate *comment* and inviting his readers to form that conclusion concerning the three notable wanderers. But after ample allowance has been made for the play of just inference, it must be admitted that there is yet something which a mere later construction of recorded fact can scarcely account for. Granted, as a fact clearly substantiated, that God was not ashamed to be invoked as their God, yet how does that shew that he prepared for them a city; where is that narrated in the ancient record? or how is it implied in his acknowledging himself as their God? If it is narrated, we have failed to discover the narrative: if it is to be inferred from what is recorded, then we should be glad to see the force of that inference clearly evinced. The strongest statement awaiting solution is probably that other, contained in verses 9 and 10, namely, that the reason why Abraham and his co-heirs dwelt in tents was that they—Abraham at least—were awaiting the God-built city well founded. Does it suffice to say of this: That it shews Abraham looked for a permanent abode at home with God, and that the specific description of that condition *as a city* is due to a half-unconscious crystallisation of that conception by the writer of this Epistle? or—better still perhaps—is due to a clearer light than Abraham himself possessed on the nature of the hope which in its substance he cherished? As much as to say: He looked for an eternal happy home with God—which *we now know* as the heavenly Jerusalem.

The above analysis has been thus pressed rather searchingly upon fellow-students of this Epistle under the feeling that, perhaps, just here—namely in relation to the apparent feebleness of evidence for a future life discoverable in the Old Testament—God has more light to break forth

from his Word. This, at least, may be said in advance: that it would greatly enhance the perceived completeness of those ancient biographies, could we find in them satisfying proofs that, amid the vicissitudes and disappointments of their earthly lives, they possessed a heavenly hope, which, though they might only seldom and enigmatically speak of it, nevertheless was to them a firm and enduring support to their faith in a Living God.

III. There is but one other matter which especially craves to be included in our present Study; and that is, some notice of the peculiar terms in which this most eloquent Eleventh Chapter concludes. It is not merely that the ancient heroes of faith bare not away the promises; but that there was some imperfection clinging to themselves, for the removal of which they had to await our time and our companionship. What that persisting imperfection was, may be gathered from the prevailing usage of the Epistle in particularising the "conscience" as that which animal sacrifices so signally failed effectually to cleanse. It would appear, then, that for the adequate cleansing they had to await the earthly provision and heavenly presentation of the One great Messianic Sacrifice: a conclusion which in many ways furnishes food for thought, and which besides furnishes an especial uniting bond to the whole Epistle. It was for the want of such cleansing that the fear of death rendered even the faithful all their lifetime liable to bondage.<sup>a</sup> It was for the same cause that the offences of even "the called" committed "against the first covenant" demanded a redemption which only the sacrifice of "the Mediator of the new covenant" could furnish.<sup>b</sup> And, finally, this accounts for the enumeration, as of a distinct class among the associates of the heavenly Jerusalem, additional to "the Assembly of Firstborn ones," of those

<sup>a</sup> Chapter ii. 15.

<sup>b</sup> Chapter ix. 15.

described as “spirits of righteous ones (now at length) made perfect” or sacrificially cleansed.<sup>a</sup> Such need to wait for our time and our companionship before their consciences could be made finally pure, furthermore harmonises with the well-known fact that to the logical mind of the Apostle Paul the *aphesis* of the sins committed aforetime by the ancients appeared to be but a *paresis*—the apparent *sending away* to be only a temporary *setting aside* for future dealing, and even so as requiring to be vindicated or justified “through means of the redemption in Christ Jesus.”<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Chapter xii. 23.

<sup>b</sup> Rom. iii. 25, 26.

## STUDY XV.

### RUN THE RACE: ACCEPT THE DISCIPLINE.

### SINAI AND ZION.

(Chapter XII. 1—29.)

12 <sup>1</sup> Therefore, indeed,

<Seeing that ||we also|| have encircling us |so great' a cloud of witnesses|>

<Stripping off every |incumbrance| and the easily entangling sin>

<With endurance> let us be running |the race that is lying before us|,

<sup>2</sup> Looking away unto our faith's Princely-leader and perfecter,  
||Jesus||,—

Who <in consideration of the joy lying before him>

Endured a cross, <shame> despising!

And <on the right hand of the throne of God> *hath taken his seat.*

<sup>3</sup> For take ye into consideration—

Him who hath endured |such' contradiction| *by sinners against themselves,*

Lest ye be wearied, <in your souls> becoming exhausted.

<sup>4</sup> <Not yet' unto blood> have ye resisted, <against sin> waging a contest;

<sup>5</sup> And ye have quite forgotten the exhortation which, indeed, <with you' as with sons> doth reason:—

*My son! be not slighting the discipline of the Lord,*

*Neither be fainting, when <by him> |thou art reproved|;—*

<sup>6</sup> *For <whom the Lord loveth> he doth |discipline|,*

*And scourgeth every' son whom he doth |welcome home|.*

<sup>7</sup> <For the sake of discipline> persevere!

<As towards sons> |God| beareth himself |towards you|;

For who is |a son| whom |a father| doth not discipline?

<sup>8</sup> <If however ye are without' discipline,

*Whereof |all| have received a share>*

|Then| are ye |bastards| and ||not sons||.

<sup>9</sup> ||Furthermore, indeed|| <the fathers of our flesh> we used to have  
|as administrators of discipline|,

And we used to pay deference:

Shall we not ||much rather|| submit ourselves to |the Father of our spirits| and ||live ?



- 10 For |they| indeed <for a few days, according to that which seemed good to them> were administering discipline;  
 But |he| unto that which is profitable, | with a view to our partaking of his holiness| :  
 11 But ||no discipline|| <for the present, indeed> seemeth to be of joy' but of sorrow' ;  
 ||Afterwards|| however—  
 <To them who thereby have been well trained>  
 It yieldeth |peaceful fruit| ||of righteousness||.  
 12 Wherefore <the slackened hands and paralysed knees> restore ye,  
 13 And <straight tracks> be making for your feet,—  
 That |the lame member| may not be dislocated, but |be healed rather'|.  
 14 <Peace> be pursuing with all, and the obtaining of holiness,—  
 |Without which| no' one shall see the Lord| :  
 15 Using oversight—  
 Lest any one be falling behind from the favour of God,—  
 Lest |any root of bitterness| springing up above' ||be causing trouble||,  
 And |through it| ||the many|| be defiled :  
 16 Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person |like Esau|,—  
 Who <for the sake of one meal> yielded up his own firstborn rights ;  
 17 For ye know that <afterwards—  
 When he even wished to inherit the blessing>  
 He was rejected ;  
 For <place of repentance> found he none,  
 Even though |with tears' he diligently sought it|.
- 18 For ye have not approached—  
 Unto a searching' and scorching' fire,  
 And gloom, and mist, and tempest,  
 19 And a trumpet's peal,—  
 And a sound of things spoken:—  
 From which |they who heard| excused themselves,  
 Lest there should be added to them |a word| ;  
 20 For they could not bear |that which was being enjoined|,—  
 And <should a beast' be touching the mountain> it shall be stoned ;  
 21 And <so fearful' was that which was showing itself>  
 |Moses| said— I am terrified and do tremble !
- 22 But ye have approached—  
 Unto Zion's mountain,  
 And unto the city of a Living God, the heavenly Jerusalem,—  
 And unto myriads of messengers <sup>23</sup> |in high festival|,—  
 And unto an assembly of firstborn ones, |enrolled in the heavens|,—  
 And unto God |judge of all|,—  
 And unto the spirits of righteous ones made perfect,—

- 24 And unto the mediator |of a new covenant| ||Jesus||,—  
And unto blood of sprinkling, more excellently' speaking than  
||Abel||.
- 25 Beware, lest ye excuse yourselves from |him that speaketh| ;  
For <if ||they|| escaped not, who excused themselves from him  
who <on earth> was warning>  
||How much less|| shall ||we|| who <from him that warneth from  
the heavens> do turn ourselves away :
- 26 Whose voice shook the earth' ||then||,  
But ||now|| hath he promised, saying—  
|| Yet once for all|| I will shake—  
<Not only the earth>  
But ||also the heaven||.
- 27 But ||the saying Yet once for all||  
Maketh clear the removal of the things which can be shaken,  
|As of things done with|,—  
That they' may remain' ||which cannot be shaken||.
- 28 Wherefore—  
<Seeing that <of a kingdom not to be shaken> we are receiving  
possession>  
Let us have gratitude—  
Whereby we may be rendering divine service well-pleasingly unto  
God |with reverence and awe| ;
- 29 For ||even our God|| [is] a fire that consumeth.

WHILE there is much to contribute to holy living in verses 1—17 of this Twelfth Chapter, there is so little that needs explanation that we may at once address our best expository diligence to the sublime contrast between Sinai and Zion which concludes the chapter.

I. That this remarkable passage grows out of and crowns the foregoing exhortations, is obvious. Let us pursue peace and holiness, with the diligent oversight that cares for our brethren ; **for** we have *not* approached Mount Sinai (described, though not named), but *have* approached Mount Zion, both named and amply described by the enumerated fellowships and privileges of which it is the centre, and by which we are laid under supreme obligations to steadfastness.

II. The general drift of the contrast is evidently : on the

one hand, to represent Mount Zion as attractive and encouraging in opposition to the terror inspired by Mount Sinai; and yet, on the other hand, as imposing obligations even more solemn and urgent than those enforced by the solemnities of Horeb: If *they* escaped not, much less shall *we*! We have more to answer for than *they*!

III. It may be well to notice in passing that Israel *approached* but did not *ascend* the earthly mount: her mediator alone went up to the summit and entered into the cloud of the immediate Presence. How far this distinction between “approaching” and “ascending” applies to the heavenly mount, remains to be seen; but the same guarded expression “coming unto,” or “approaching,” is carefully used in both cases. Introduction into fellowship with Law and Grace respectively manifestly lies in the heart of the words.

IV. Perhaps the most significant detail in the description of Sinai and its incidents, is the circumstance that the Sons of Israel “excused themselves” from hearing any more directly uttered by the Divine Voice; for this it is which is caught up and expounded as a warning in verse 25 after the attractions of the heavenly Jerusalem have been displayed. Note well, then, that incalculable responsibility is incurred by any who presume to ask that divine communications be brought to a close. Constructively it is “turning away from” him that speaketh.

V. The general grammatical structure of the description of Mount Zion and its associations, demands a moment’s attention; inasmuch as, in the symmetrical arrangement of the passage we discover our best substitute for authoritative punctuation—which, of course, we do not possess. From

this point of view we cannot fail to observe how naturally and effectively the seven-times repeated *kai* ("and") divides the sentence into eight clauses; and a perception of the commanding force imparted to this "And," as it appears in the rendering given above, will probably satisfy any English reader of literary instincts that in this and no other way should the clauses be divided. The one exegetical point involved concerns the clause about "myriads of messengers," and has the effect of *affixing* to *it*—rather than *prefixing* to the next clause—the phrase "in high festival"; or, if that were in the least too brightly coloured a rendering, we might be content to translate, "in general gathering." The "Speaker's Commentary," indeed, not only decides for the clausal division above adopted, but boldly sustains it by the exegetical remark: "'Tens of thousands of Angels' had attended 'the ministration of death' on Sinai (2 Cor. iii. 7) and had mournfully watched over Israel's later history. Now they were able to hold festival: celebrating the victory of Divine love." In any case this interpretation almost certainly looks in the right direction; for the gathering of heavenly messengers, it would seem, is already complete, whereas the "assembly of the first-born ones" though already "enrolled in heaven" is not yet, as to actual congregating, an accomplished fact. Moreover, since we know that, to the ascended Christ, "messengers and authorities and powers" have already been made subject,<sup>a</sup> it is no very extravagant exercise of fancy to suppose that, although their curiosity regarding the work of redemption is not yet by any means satisfied,<sup>b</sup> they have even now so ravishing a view of the superlative worth of their newly exalted Head, that their very subjection to him has occasioned them unbounded joy, and that in the constant spirit and recurring realisation

<sup>a</sup> 1 Peter iii. 22.

<sup>b</sup> 1 Peter i. 12.

of "high festival" they (those among them especially, called "messengers") have already started on their mission of ministering unto those who are destined to inherit salvation.\*

VI. It is perhaps impossible not to feel the idealism of this whole description of Mount Zion and all that it represents. In other words we are restrained from pressing too anxiously the question, "*What* Mount Zion is this?" All that we need say is, That it is the heavenly realisation of that which the earthly Zion symbolised. The counterpart of the earthly Zion is in very deed "the Sunny Mount." It has its head in the heavens. On its summit is the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. We are at the base of the mountain, not having reached its summit yet. But we are in touch with all that is thereon. Our Mediator and Forerunner, who has ascended into it, is in communication with us at the foot. In the next chapter, indeed, we learn that at present we have by no means reached our Mother City. We are only seeking our way to it. But that is not the dominant thought here. The controlling conception in this place is, not distance, but nearness; not separation, but fellowship. And the fellowship is living, active, fruitful. The heavenly messengers are already ministering to us. Our Mediator is interceding for us. The blood of sprinkling has touched our consciences. Much remains to be done. But the circle of blessing is large: and it is all ours.

VII. The amplitude of blessing centring in Mount Zion is so evident that we are thereby put on our guard against any overnarrowing definiteness which might otherwise gain admission into our thoughts. For instance, it has been concluded that Mount Zion here simply stands for the

Church ; but that position is at once set aside when we pay proper attention to the wide circumference of fellowship which centres in the "Sunny Mount." It comprehends both heavenly messengers and the spirits of the righteous ones who have been made perfect, neither of which classes is included in the Church. To speak of Angels as forming a part of the Christian Church is manifestly unwarranted ; and, even if it were not, here at least we are taught to differentiate them. The last consideration also applies to these "spirits," whoever they are : they are enumerated as a class over and above the "*ecclesia* of the firstborn ones," and even if they had not been so parted off in the present passage, they so much better fall into their right place as having lived their life before the Messiah *began* to build his assembly<sup>a</sup> by connecting them with the previous statement at the close of the eleventh chapter, as being those who could not be made perfect without us, that we are dutifully bound to abide by the present distinctive classification. It is quite true, according to the express teaching of the Apostle Paul,<sup>b</sup> that the free Jerusalem that is above is "our mother" ; but, whether we (the Church) are her only child, remains to be seen : in truth, it does not seem likely—from the very passage before us. No ! leave Mount Zion alone, in her majestic largeness. We have no need to limit the ages,<sup>c</sup> and we have no need to impoverish the "Sunlit Mount" which stands for the wide blessings of Redemption.

VIII. Lingering for another moment over the Associates of Mount Zion, we shall do well to decline a timid exegesis of the significant term coupled with the *ecclesia*—"assembly of firstborn-ones" : a literal translation of importance, as revealing the fact that the word in the Greek is in the plural number, not in the singular, as the A.V. certainly,

<sup>a</sup> Mt. xvi. 18.

<sup>b</sup> Gal. iv. 26.

<sup>c</sup> See *ante*, Study II.

and the R.V. probably would lead the merely English reader to suppose. Surely it is a timid exegesis to say that the members of the Church are called "firstborn" because their Head is *the* Firstborn; the natural conclusion being that they themselves also are "firstborn" by some valid right. What that right may be is another question, which we may or may not be able to settle. Possibly the bringing of the ancients up to the same standard of redemption as that which the Church enjoys, may, in its realisation, be somewhat posterior to the investiture of the Church with her first-born rights, and so *they* may be the "after-born" ones whose existence is here implied; or else the anticipatory reference may be to those who *shall* be born of God after the coming Reign has been inaugurated. We need not set conjecture in the place of revealed truth; but it is *most important that we do not, by our dull and blundering unbelief, shut out further light.*

IX. And now we reach anew the question glanced at in our first "Study," as to the "promised" Voice which is to shake not earth only but also heaven. Let us note what lies before us in the text. "Beware lest ye excuse yourselves from him that speaketh": who has spoken from heaven—*did* so speak while on earth as a messenger from heaven; again so *spake* by his Apostles and Evangelists after he had ascended into heaven; and *will* so speak on his Return from heaven: whensoever and howsoever He speaketh, let us beware lest we excuse ourselves from hearing him. And yet the language—especially when taken in connection with the example given in the earlier context (verse 19) as to those who were brought to the foot of Sinai—rather imports *dismay*, and hence is especially suited to those further words which we know the Son of God will speak on and after his Second Advent. This

alone is not decisive, it is true: for the whole word of Christ, whensoever delivered by him, has in it an undertone of warning, solemn and searching enough to cause restive hearts to "turn away" from him. The language of verse 26 is considerably more fitted than that which goes before to carry on the reference into the future; since the very contrast of the text between "then" and "now" might naturally have led on to a different sequel—something like this, but "now" hath he **fulfilled**,—rather than "promised," which is the word actually employed. "Now **hath he spoken** with a voice which **hath shaken** not the earth only but also the heaven, as it is written in the prophecy of Haggai:" that is, had such been our Author's intention. Besides, the voice that thus shaketh all things is represented as making *a clean sweep* of all those things that are done with—all those things which, by reason of their temporary use, are susceptible of being shaken down and removed: leaving in permanence only those things which **cannot** be shaken. Whereas, whether we look back or look around, we are everywhere confronted with things in lingering Judaism and in corrupted Christianity which we **KNOW** cannot abide! Equally guarded against premature notions of fulfilment is the allusion to the "kingdom" which we "are receiving"; the observable thing being that we are not said to *have* received it, but to be either in process or in prospect of *receiving*. Moreover, it is only the abiding kingdom, which cannot be shaken, that we are here said to be receiving. And finally, though our God is a fire that in his holy love consumeth, and the fire of his holy displeasure has begun to burn, yet certainly the consuming of that against which it is lighted has not yet reached its consummation. On the whole, then, the future reference predominates throughout these final hortatory words: which brings them into accord



with the fullest demands of Haggai the prophet.<sup>a</sup> Let us say, if we will, that, as the speaker is one from chapter i. 2 to this place, so the Voice or utterance is one, from the first opening of his lips in Nazareth until now; and that, in particular, his accepted blood has already begun to speak to merciful purpose in heaven;<sup>b</sup> yet these concessions to the past and to the present rather favour than discountenance the thought of a suitable culmination in the future. The trumpet on Sinai sounded long and loud, and with repeated blasts,<sup>c</sup> yet the occasion was *one* in character and results; and if the larger scale of fulfilment demanded by the antitype than by the type be considered and due allowance be made for the natural summary largeness of the prophetic word, we may rest satisfied with the terms of the text before us as chiefly pointing forward to a renewed resounding of the Voice that shall usher in the Kingdom to Come.

<sup>a</sup> Compare Study I., pp. 13, 14, *ante*.    <sup>b</sup> Verse 24.    <sup>c</sup> Exo. xix. 19.

## STUDY XVI.

### FINAL EXHORTATIONS.

(Chap. XIII. 1—25.)

- 13 <sup>1</sup> Let ||brotherly love|| continue.
- <sup>2</sup> <Of the entertaining of strangers> be not forgetful,  
For |hereby| <unawares> have some entertained ||messengers||.
- <sup>3</sup> Bear in mind them who are in bonds,  
|As having become jointly bound|,—  
Them who are suffering ill-treatment,  
|As being ||yourselves|| also in the body|.
- <sup>4</sup> Let marriage be ||honourable|| in all, and |the bed| undefiled,  
For <fornicators and adulterers> ||God|| will judge'.
- <sup>5</sup> <Without fondness for money> be your way of life,—  
Being content with the present things,—for |he| hath said:  
||In nowise|| thee |will I leave|,  
|No indeed!| ||in nowise|| thee |will I forsake|.
- <sup>6</sup> So that |taking courage| we may be saying—  
||The Lord|| hasteth to my cry,—I will not be put in fear;  
What shall ||man|| do unto me?
- <sup>7</sup> Be mindful of them who are guiding you,  
Who, indeed, have spoken unto you |the word of God|;  
<The outgoing of whose behaviour reviewing>  
Be imitating |their faith|.
- <sup>8</sup> ||Jesus Christ|| <yesterday and to-day> [is] |the same|,—  
||And unto the ages||.
- <sup>9</sup> <With teachings manifold and strange> be not carried aside;  
For it is ||noble|| that <with gratitude> |the heart| be getting  
confirmed,—  
|Not with matters of food|,  
In which they who are walking |have not been profited|.
- <sup>10</sup> We have an altar—  
<To eat out of which> they' have no right |who <in the tent>  
are doing divine service|;
- <sup>11</sup> For <in the case of those living creatures, whose blood for sins is  
carried into the holies, through means of the high-priest>  
||The bodies of these|| are burned up outside the camp.
- <sup>12</sup> Wherefore ||Jesus also||  
<That he might hallow the people through means of his own blood>  
<Outside the gate> suffered.

- 13 ¶Now, therefore|| let us be going forth unto him |outside the camp|,  
 <His reproach> bearing.
- 14 For we have not here an abiding' city,  
 But <unto that which is to be> are we seeking our way.
- 15 <Through him> then—*let us be offering up a sacrifice of praise*  
 continually ||unto God||;  
 That is, *a fruit of lips* confessing unto his name.
- 16 But <of the doing good and of fellowship> be not forgetful;  
 For <with such sacrifices as these> is ||God|| well-pleased.
- 17 Be yielding unto them who are guiding you, and submit yourselves;  
 For they are watching over your souls |as having an account' to  
 render|,  
 That <with joy> the same' they may be doing and not with  
 sighing,—  
 For <unprofitable for you> were ||this||.
- 18 Be praying for us;  
 For we persuade ourselves that <an honourable conscience> have we,  
 <In all things honourably> desiring to behave ourselves.
- 19 But <much more abundantly> do I exhort you, <the same> to do,  
 That <more speedily> I may be restored unto you.
- 20 But ||the God of peace||  
 <He that *led up* from among the dead *the great Shepherd of the sheep,*  
*With the blood of an age-abiding covenant* ||our Lord Jesus||>
- 21 Fit you, in and through every good thing, |for the doing of his will|,  
 |Doing within us| that which is well-pleasing |before him, through  
 Jesus Christ|:  
 To whom be the glory unto the ages of ages. Amen.
- 22 Now I exhort you, brethren, bear with the word of exhortation,—  
 For <even with brief words> have I sent unto you.
- 23 Know ye that |our brother Timothy| hath been set at liberty,—  
 With whom <if more speedily he be coming> I will see you.
- 24 Salute all' them who are guiding you, and all the saints:  
 ||They from Italy|| salute you'.
- 25 Favour be with you all.

I. It is observable that three times over in this concluding portion of the Epistle does the Writer refer to the spiritual guides of his brethren: Be mindful of them; Be yielding to them and submitting yourselves; Salute them. Their office he represents as no sinecure: they are watching for your souls as having an account to render. On them, at least in some cases, these Hebrew converts had been de-

pendent for their knowledge of the spoken word of God—the Gospel. As a class, these their “guides” were worthy of honour and imitation; although, in some instances, they may have proved unstable, and must in no case be allowed to divert attention from the more marked and reliable stability of Jesus Christ himself. Indeed, it is more than hinted that some who assumed to be teachers spent their time on frivolous questions respecting “food” which were to no profit. In any case, it is noteworthy that this letter is not especially addressed to them: the great Epistolary Exhorter aims to get at his wavering brethren direct, and trust what remains in them of spiritual enlightenment to enable them to profit by his arguments and appeals. Finally, as possibly having some bearing on the question of authorship, it should be said that the title he gives the teachers is unique in New Testament usage.

II. A suspicion is raised by the very terms of verse 9, that among the wavering Hebrews there were opportunists whom if found among Gentile churches we should have called Judaizers. This suspicion is confirmed by the next verse, which seems written under the impulse to insist on a clearer line of demarcation: “One thing or another: you cannot share our benefits without making up your minds about our Jesus; if he was not our Messiah, he was an unclean outcast; and then even as a sin-offering you could not derive any benefit from him, for according to the old ritual there was no feasting on a sin-offering.” But this line of thought is not fully carried out. It seems as though our Author was stirred to the depths by the mere suggestion that Jesus had been made a sin-offering; and in mental vision of the Nazarene being led outside Jerusalem’s gates to suffer, he is moved to call for the sternly needed cleavage in another way. The camp of Judaism rejects our Master:

let us go forth to him, although to do so we have to leave the camp of the Old Faith. And then, as if suddenly confronted with the idea of homelessness, he bravely faces the issue: Here, it is true, in that case, we have no continuing city. Be it so: we are on our way to that which is to be! Quickly recovering himself, our Author grasps the reassuring conception that the Outcast of earth is the Officiating High-priest in heaven. "Through him, then, let us be offering the (bloodless) sacrifices of praise to God and of doing good to others;" for we, too, in our measure, are priests, with freedom of speech for entrance into the Holies—in spirit now, in person when our redemption is complete. If this account of the train of thought is approximately correct, we shall scarcely exclaim—"What altar?" when we hear the protest commencing with the words, "We have an altar." The altar is simply the ideal centre from which all Christian benefits emanate: as, to the Levitical Priest, all privileges were guaranteed by the altar to which they ministered.

III. An exquisitely beautiful Invocation carries this primitive Letter to a fitting conclusion. "But"—whether I be restored to you sooner or later; may "the God of peace"—who amidst all troubles from without imparts his own peace to obedient souls; "he that," having once led up his people out of the Red Sea into a new and national existence, hath now led up from among the dead his own Son, the Shepherd of the sheep, that *he* may lead *them* up into glory as the rulers of the Coming Habitable earth; the Shepherd—who has entered upon his resurrection state invested with all the merit and power of his sacrificed earthly life,\* and thereby become mediator and surety of a new and better covenant than that of Sinai; by which

\* App. (11).

Shepherd I mean our Lord Jesus :—may He—fit, adapt, adjust, you ; in and through every blessing He bestows, for the doing of his will ; doing within us that which he requires from us ; even that which is well-pleasing before him ; doing it within us through the mediatorial energy of Jesus Christ ; to whom, as the primary doer of it, be the glory of this entire redeeming work unto the ages of ages : Amen.

IV. A few details precede and follow this invocation which are undoubtedly in the Pauline manner, but the style of which would naturally become current in common between two such intimate co-workers as Paul and Apollos ; between whom and Timothy there was an undeniable bond of loving co-operation.\*

\* See "Introductory Note."



# APPENDIX.

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## (1) *The Ages.*

“The ages have been made by God, and we apprehend them by this principle of faith. The ‘ages’ there is not the world, or worlds. If we merely translate, we are bound to use the word ‘ages.’ If we indulge in speculation, we may use other words. We may write it that the habitable world was framed by God, but that is not translation. We may say that the universe was framed by God, but that is not translation. It is simply a concession to the general explanation of this verse, which is that the writer here meant to say that the world we know, and the worlds about us, were made by God. Personally, I do not so understand this verse. I think he here means to say that the ages or dispensations, age succeeding age, have been framed by God, that He is not only Maker of the worlds of matter, but He is also the Framers of the ages of time, and I understand the writer here to say that the elders, the men who have come down the ages, have had witness borne to them by faith. By faith we believe that the very ages have been framed by God, and that ‘what is seen hath not been made out of things which do appear.’ He is surveying the whole movement of human history down to the One Witness, and he says, Age has succeeded to age, and the forces that have made the ages have not been the seen things, but the unseen things, and the men that have taken hold of the unseen things and pressed their dynamic into the making of history, have been the men of faith.”—*Dr. G. Campbell Morgan*, “Westminster Record,” for Jan. 1906 (Hodder & Stoughton), p. 7.

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(2) *Who maketh his messengers winds,  
And his ministers of state a fiery flame.*—i. 7.

“The conception that God gives his angels, when employing them to carry out his purposes in the sensible universe, elemental bodies, as it were, of wind and fire, as *media* of manifestation, is certainly the deeper (thought) of the two, and not unsuited to such a lyrical echo as the Psalm is meant to be of the great creative beginning. In this sense, also, the rendering of the Targum must be understood when rendered in the light of the Midrash [on which it is based]: ‘who maketh His messengers speedy as the winds, His ministers strong as a flaming fire.’ . . . That our author understood the text in the Psalm in this sense cannot be doubted.”—*Delitzsch*, on “Hebrews.”

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(3) *The word spoken through messengers.*—ii. 2.

This is the best explanation I can offer. Of course its weak point is that it diverts the application of the word “messenger” from heavenly to earthly agents, and supposes an almost immediate return to the higher reference, which is undeniable in chapter i. I am however, instinctively, reluctant to resort to the explanation of *Delitzsch* given below.

“In Exo. xix. et seq., however, we read nothing of angels, but of thunder, lightning, the sound of a trumpet accompanying the very voice of Elohim speaking. This seems contradictory to the statement that the law was not only given in the presence of angels, but was spoken by angels . . . . The unity of these statements consists in this, that it was indeed Jehovah who spoke on Sinai, but that his speaking was mediated through angels (including also the Angel of the Lord, *kat’ exoc’hēn*. Acts vii. 38, comp. 30).”—*Delitzsch*.

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(4) *Crowned—to the end that.*—ii. 9.

“As the words stand, it seems as if *the crowning went before the death, and in order to it*. And that I am persuaded is the true sense, though not denying the glory after it . . . . The verse refers, I doubt not, to our Lord’s *glorification on the Mount of Transfiguration*.”—*R. Govett*, in “Christ superior to Angels.”

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(5) *Of immersions and of laying on hands.*—vi. 2.

“The historical sequence is followed in the enumeration. When a sinner repented and believed, the next step was that he was baptized for the remission of sins, and connected with this was prayer and the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts ii. 38, viii. 12, 15-17; comp. Acts ix. 17 with xxii. 16). Through the remission of sins the convert became a member of the house of God in the new covenant (ix. 15; Jer. xxxi. 34 in viii. 12), heir of the promises (vi. 17), partaker of a heavenly calling (iii. 1) to the world to come, of which through the gift of the Holy Ghost he then tasted the powers (vi. 5; comp. ii. 4, x. 29). Early baptism was into the name of Christ, implying a confession of His Messiahship (Acts viii. 16, x. 48, xix. 5); so in the Epistle, Christ occupies the place of High Priest and Apostle in our confession (iii. 1, iv. 14). The act of immersion naturally suggested that the old life was done away and that a new man had arisen, and thus the preceding repentance and faith were confirmed.—The plural baptisms probably refers to the various Jewish washings (ix. 10), the baptism of John (Acts xix. 3), and Christian baptism, in their distinction from one another and in the meanings of the last. That teaching regarding baptisms and the Holy Ghost was not always unnecessary in the case of Hebrew converts may be seen from Acts xviii. 25, etc., and xix. 2, etc.” *A. B. Davidson*, in *Handbooks for Bible Classes*, “Hebrews” (Clark).

“The plural and the peculiar form seem to be used to include Christian Baptism and other lustral rites. The ‘teaching’ would naturally be directed to shew their essential difference.

Comp. Acts xix. 3, 4; John iii. 25, *peri katharismou*.”—*Westcott*, on “Hebrews.”

“Baptism was practised by the Pharisees, Essenes, and disciples of John the Baptist (comp. Acts xix. 3, 4), as well as Christians. Converts from Judaism would therefore need instructions not only in Christian baptism itself, but in its special character as distinct from other baptisms. Hence the use of the plural in this passage.”—*Rendall*, “The Epistle to the Hebrews” (1888).

“‘But why is the plural used? And why is not the *usual* Greek word for immersion used?’ The plural is employed because there are two baptisms: (1) that of *water*, and (2) that of the *Spirit*. This is the reason, too, I suppose, of the slightly different word employed (*baptismōn* instead of *baptismatōn*.)”—*R. Govett*.

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(6) *Melchizedek . . . . without father, etc.*—vii. 3.

“To make the facts serve his purpose the writer finds it necessary to attach importance, not merely to what is said of Melchizedek, but to what is not said,—to the silences as well as to the utterances of history; also to give ideal meaning to the names occurring in the story . . . . A personal, not an inherited dignity (without father, without mother, i.e., so far as the record is concerned) . . . . an eternal priesthood (without beginning of days or end of life—so far as the record is concerned).”—*A. D. Bruce*, in “Hastings Bible Dictionary,” Art. “Hebrews, Epistle to.”

“Melchizedek then had, as a man, both father and mother, both beginning of days and end of life. But *in so far as he is made like unto the Son of God*, and appears on the page of Scripture, he has neither father nor mother, neither birth nor death.”—*R. Govett*, “Christ superior to Angels,” etc.

“I take these expressions (‘without father,’ etc.) to relate purely to his priesthood, of which only the apostle is speaking; as if he had said, Melchizedek had neither father nor mother of any priestly order, and was without descent from any race of priests . . . . As a priest he had neither the beginning of the

days of his priesthood, nor the end of his life in it limited by any particular law, as was the case with the Levitical priests, whose time of officiating was limited to twenty years.”—*Archibald McLean*, on “Hebrews,” Edinburgh, 1820.

“The designation of the Messiah to a heavenly priesthood was distinctly asserted in one passage in the Old Testament (Ps. cx. 4): ‘Thou art,’ etc.; the Messianic import of which was universally admitted by Jews.”—*Rendall*, p. 47, “Epistle to the Hebrews.” Compare J. B. McCaul on “Hebrews,” where quotation is given from the Talmud to this effect.

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(7) *An indissoluble life.*—vii. 16.

“His life was once dissolved. The union between his body and soul was once unknit. But now his power of life is indissoluble. The eternity of his priesthood knit to his indissoluble life, is the proof of Aaron’s priesthood being put away for ever.”—*R. Govett*. “The life of a tabernacle which could not be dissolved.”—*Farrar*.

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(8) *When Christ approached.*—ix. 11.

“This appearance was not Christ’s coming amidst men, but his appearance as high priest before God after his ascension, like the parallel appearance of the high priest on the day of atonement.”—*Rendall*.

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(9) *A body hast thou fitted for me.*—x. 5.

“By the opening of the ears [in Ps. xl. 6], is meant the opening of a passage for hearing in the formation of the body: the two versions therefore agree in spirit; both make God’s creation of the body a ground for devoting that body to his will.”—*Rendall*.

“The rendering must be considered to be a free interpretation of the original text. In this respect it extends and emphasises

the fundamental idea. The 'body' is the instrument for fulfilling the divine command, just as the 'ear' is the instrument for receiving it. God originally fashioned for man in his frame the organ for hearing his Voice, and by this he plainly shewed that he was made to obey it."—*Westcott*.

Very much to the contrary is *Govett*; who not only regards the difference between the Hebrew and the Septuagint as irreconcilable, but, inasmuch as the latter was itself the production of Jews, is disposed to maintain the latter against the former and conclude the Hebrew to have been by accident or design corrupted.

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(10) *Bathed, as to our bodies, in pure water.*—x. 22.

"There are many learned and judicious commentators who understand both the *body* and *water* literally, and explain these words of Christian baptism. That this is what is meant is very probable; for there is no other washing of the body appointed under the gospel but in baptism: And it is most natural to understand both *body* and *water* here in a literal sense; for if having *the body washed with pure water* were to be understood entirely of something spiritual and internal, it would be hard to distinguish it from *the sprinkling of the heart from an evil conscience*, mentioned immediately before, which seems to be the spiritual signification of baptism."—*Archibald McLean*, "The Epistle to the Hebrews," Edinburgh (1820).

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(11) *With [lit. "in"] the blood of an age-abiding covenant.*—xiii. 20.

"The raising of Christ was indissolubly united with the establishment of the Covenant made by His blood and effective in virtue of it. His 'blood' is the vital energy by which he fulfils his work. So, when he was brought up from the dead, the power of his life offered for the world, was, as it were, the atmosphere which surrounded him as he entered on his triumphant work."—*Westcott*.

PART II.

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THIRTEEN

EXPOSITORY SERMONS

—ON—

THE BOOK OF HEBREWS,

—DELIVERED—

BEFORE THE STUDENTS OF THE SCHOOL  
OF THE EVANGELISTS DURING 1895-6.

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REPORTED AND REVISED

—BY—

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## INTRODUCTORY.

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These brief sermons are intended to be suggestive and practical, rather than critical and comprehensive. They were delivered for the benefit of the students of the School of the Evangelists. I give them this permanent form in order to test public desire for expository literature. If there seems to be a demand for it, I may in the future publish brief sermons of the same kind on all the Epistles. I shall be greatly pleased to hear from the reader touching the results of the circulation of this book.

THE AUTHOR.

## SERMON XI.

TEXT: "God, who at sundry times and in divers 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, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?

6. And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.

7. And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.

8. But unto the Son *he saith*, Thy throne, O God, *is* for ever and ever: a scepter 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, Thou, 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 wax 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, Sit 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 (Heb., 1: 1-14)?"

INTRODUCTION:—The first word in this chapter indicates that those to whom this book was addressed were believers in the one true God, and the contents of the entire book go to prove that it was written primarily for Hebrew Christians.

VERSE 1. It is asserted here that previous to the time this book was written God had spoken to the fathers at different times and in different ways. I build upon this statement the argument that God communicates His will by speaking. God made man with an eye and an ear, and from the day of the first man forward He has spoken in harmony with man's constitution. A picture to the eye, a sound to the ear, and the work is done. From this I draw the lesson that we must either hear or read the Gospel. No other method of communication can be harmonized with the constitution of man. You must address his mind or reduce him to the condition of the merest machine.

VERSE 2. Before man sinned God spoke to him face to face. After he sinned God departed from him, but still continued to speak to him when the occasion demanded it. He spoke to Cain (Gen., 4: 6), to Noah (Gen., 6: 13), to Abraham (Gen., 12: 1), to Isaac (Gen., 26: 1-5), to Jacob (Gen., 28: 10-15), to Moses (Ex., 3: 1-6), to Joshua (Josh., 1: 1), to Samuel (I. Sam., 3: 4-8), to David through Nathan the prophet (II. Sam., 7: 1-17), and to the prophets (II. Pet., 1: 20-21). The manner of speaking was greatly diversified. In the latter days God speaks to us through

His Son. Jesus is therefore to us the revelation of the person, of the will, of the purpose, and of the power of God. He is the appointed heir of heaven and earth, and must reign until all of his enemies are put under his feet.

VERSE 3. It is difficult for a finite being to set his mind on God; for the weak can not encompass the strong, neither can the transitory fully understand the eternal. This verse emphasizes the personality of God, but we are bewildered when we attempt to take Him in. Soaring on the wings of imagination, we try to measure eternity, but wearying with flight and frightened with the immensity of that which lies before us, we gladly return to our temples of clay, bolt the doors, endeavor to hide from the presence of God, and say with the apostle: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death (Rom., 7: 24)?" Jesus came to show us the Father. Coming out from the gate of eternity He walked the paths of men for a little time, showed us the way, gathered up the broken threads of human character and went back to His home, that knowing the Father through Him we might love earth less and heaven more.

VERSES 4-9. Jesus is better than the angels. He is the Son of God, the only Son, and at His birth the Father said, "Let all the angels worship him." He was made like unto the children of men that He might know our frailties and sympathize with us in our sorrows, and in consideration of his willingness to stoop to suffer pain and death, the Father has decreed that He shall reign over heaven as its King, and over earth as its Prince of Peace. His is a perpetual throne; and He wields not a sceptre dipped in

blood, but a sceptre of righteousness and peace. The universe is His dominion ; part of His subjects have crossed the flood and part of them are lingering here.

VERSES 10-14. The writer here contrasts the permanency of the kingdom of Christ with the changeableness of temporal things. What a striking figure this ! How it broadens and deepens and heightens our conceptions of the majesty and strength of our blessed Redeemer. As I take off a worn-out garment, fold it up and lay it away, so our Redeemer shall at last fold up material things and lay them away, while the children of God, rising in victory over sin and death, shall, with the glad song of Moses and the Lamb, sound their triumph through the dominion of God, at last purified from sin. I draw from these verses the lesson of the Father's care. While He delights in that which to us is a boundless dominion, He will never forget, even in the most trying moments, the weakest of human creatures who puts his trust in Him. He even gives His angels charge concerning us, and assures us that they encamp about us when we do our best to please Him. It is sweet to think, in the hour of pain, disappointment, annoyance or death, that the swift-winged messengers of the Father's love are ever about us.

I draw from this chapter five lessons :

I. God communicates with man by speaking to him. The manner of speaking changes but the fact of speaking remains the same.

II. Jesus is the exact revelation of His Father's person. The human mind can not grasp the First Great Cause, but Jesus having been made like unto us, comes to us in a manner we can comprehend.

III. God honors Jesus as His Son. Whoever takes hold of Jesus takes hold of the Father, and whoever takes hold of the Father has life, present and eternal.

IV. Men are better than angels. Jesus did not become an angel. He dignified human nature forever by becoming a man, and He illustrates the possibilities of human nature under His redeeming power.

V. God is patient with us, anxious about us, and faithful in all His dealings with us. He spoke to man face to face, through the prophets, and finally by His Son. Jesus is the last and only perfect revelation of the Creator. In Him is light; out of Him is darkness, deep and eternal.

## SERMON XII.

TEXT: "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 spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward;

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 divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?

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, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him?

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

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

14. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of the 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 behooved 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.

18. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted (Heb., 2: 1-18)."

INTRODUCTION.—"Therefore"—this is a conclusion drawn from the argument introduced in the previous chapter. The first chapter tells us that God had spoken to the children of men: first, He spoke to man face to face; second, He spoke to him through a long line of illustrious prophets; but now, in the Christian age, He has spoken to us by His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. In speaking to us through His Son, He also brought to light the fact that all terrestrial things shall fail.

VERSE 1. The author proceeds to draw a practical lesson from what had gone before. It is a fact that we are benefited by the Gospel only in proportion to what we remember of it. The two damning sins of the ages have been heedlessness and forgetfulness, and they both have their roots in one thing—selfishness.

Thinking of our own interests, as we suppose, we fail to heed the warning of our Father, of the prophets, and of His Son, our Lord. Sometimes we give the Gospel passing notice, and then permit the deceitfulness of riches and other illusive things of this life, to cause us to forget it. Paul declares that we are saved by the Gospel providing we keep it perpetually in memory (I. Cor., 15: 1-5). It is the power of God to our salvation only as we understand and hold on to it. The tendency of the human heart is to forget, hence the writer exhorts us to earnest heed. The word "earnest" in this passage has a very intense meaning and it certainly does imply that we are to give as much attention to the Gospel as we do to secular affairs.

VERSE 2. This verse emphasizes the faithfulness of the word of God whether spoken by Himself, by angels, through the prophets, or through His Son. It is another way of saying, God always says the right thing at the right place and in the right manner, and demands of us absolute and unhesitating obedience. It is declared that every transgression received a just recompense of reward. This is elucidated or enforced in the lives even of those who were the friends of God. The mistakes of Noah (Gen., 9: 20, 21), Abraham (Gen., 12: 10-20), Isaac (Gen., 26: 6, 7), Jacob (Gen., 27: 1-30), David (II. Sam., 12: 1-13), Solomon (I. Kings, 11: 1-8) cost them dearly. How much greater the penalty paid by those who knew not God!

VERSE 3. The lesson is drawn from the two preceding verses that heedlessness and forgetfulness head toward destruction. The question propounded here is a most forcible way of declaring that we cannot escape if we neglect so great salvation.

VERSES 4, 5. Patriarchs and prophets dreamed and prophesied of this great salvation, but in reality it began to be spoken by the Lord and was confirmed to the children of men by those who heard Him. The place of miracles in the remedial scheme is fully emphasized here. Conversion is not, and never has been, a miracle. Miracles were performed in the days of Jesus and his apostles to call attention to the converting power which they always presented in words. The miraculous outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost and the consequent baptism of the apostles was, not to convert, but to inspire them to proclaim an infallible Gospel for that day and every subsequent generation. These miracles and gifts were conferred on men and not on angels, thus conferring on man a dignity that the tallest archangel might covet.

VERSES 6, 8. Here we have a two-fold estimate of man. When David stepped out on the Judean hills on a starry night and surveyed the heavens, looking from the stars to their Maker, he said, "What is man that thou art mindful of him?" In comparison to the great universe about us he appears as nothing. The second estimate of man is revealed to us through Jesus Christ. In Him the weakest disciple is to become a conqueror of all things.

VERSES 9, 10. The writer never loses sight of Jesus Christ. How easy it would be for us to fight the fight of faith if we could always have such a blessed experience! When we lose sight of Him we pollute our lips with filth and drift on with the thoughtless multitude. How true it is that I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me. I want to emphasize the fact that we see Jesus, that is,



we see Him with our mind's eye, and as long as we can set our affections on Him our success is assured. His pathway to glory, honor and universal authority was through suffering—not necessarily physical pain, but mental anguish. After all it may appear in the light of the judgment day that the Master died of a broken heart. How sad, how touching, how appalling is the thought! He is the Captain of our salvation! We admire a Hannibal, a Washington, a Bonaparte, a Jackson, a Grant, because in the face of death he leads a few men to victory. The Captain of our salvation leads the grandest army ever marshalled on the fields of time, and at His command the shining battalions of heaven instantly stand in battle array. Did you ever notice that He is coming to be admired (II. Thes., 1: 10)? and surely it will be a glad day when He shall bring the armies of the sky to meet the grand battalions of kindreds, nations, tribes and tongues, while nature dies and God and angels lay her in her tomb.

VERSES 11-13. Here is emphasized the unity of Christ and His people (John, 17: 1-21). If he reached the throne of His glory through self-denial, physical pain and mental anguish, do you think there is any better or shorter road for you? We are one with Christ; one in heart, one in mind, one in life, one in pocket-book. John brings out the thought (I. John, 1: 3) that we are in fellowship or partnership with Him. When funds run low, when times seems hard, I always console myself with the fact that the senior member of the firm though absent for a little time, calls on me to draw on Him for whatever I need, assuring me that my draft will always be honored at the court of heaven. How few of us realize the dig-

nity of this partnership. We walk the valleys of time with our heads down, forgetting that beyond the clouds the Sun of Righteousness shines perpetually. There is a pretty thought as well as a practical one in verse 13: "Behold I and the children which God has given me." This may be applied to the family or to the church.

VERSES 14-18. The idea of a priest underlies all religion. In patriarchal times and under the law of Moses, frail men were priests. Jesus, in order to become a priest, took on himself our physical nature. Divinity came down to our necessity. I heard a good old preacher say that the kingdom of heaven here is simply the kingdom of God let down to the comprehension of man. This witness is true. Jesus in order to become our priest, took a body like ours so He would know our necessities, the object of which was to destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil (I. John, 3: 8). I emphasize the fact that the thing narrows itself down between Christ and the devil. Before Jesus came, all men were in bondage to the fear of death. He made what had only been a vague hope before, a dread reality now—man shall live again or rather, he shall never die. The writer in both of these chapters seems determined to invest man with a greater dignity than angels, for he says that Jesus did not take the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham. I emphasize the fact that He was made like unto His brethren in order, as I take it, that his brethren might be made like unto Him. The author brings out the characteristics of this great priesthood by the use of two important words: first the word, merciful; second the word, faithful. Jesus is always kind and never

neglects his business. Some one has said that the Mercy-seat connected with the Ark of the Covenant was placed above the law written on tables of stone, to signify that even justice is tempered with mercy. Reasoning from this, I take it that Jesus our High Priest tempers all His dealings with men with great mercy. As a merciful and faithful priest He is to-day making reconciliation for the sins of the people. He has suffered all the temptations to which flesh is heir, hence He is able to help us because He knows from experience the pressure that the flesh, the world and the devil bring upon us. The word "succour" in this passage means to help. Jesus is gone up on high not to judge, not to punish, but to help.

I draw from this chapter seven lessons.

I. The things herein presented to us are worthy of the most careful attention and consideration.

II. One of the great dangers before the Christian is heedlessness. Heedlessness is the first step in backsliding.

III. The Lord has not only given us the Gospel but has demonstrated its divine origin by miracles, wonders and signs.

IV. Notwithstanding the immensity of our Father's dominions He thinks of us personally and loves us with an everlasting love.

V. Jesus tasted death for every man and marked out the way to perfection and eternal salvation through suffering.

VI. We are one with Christ. The very process of sanctification makes us like Him.

VII. Jesus became like unto men in order that He might be able to help us in the hour of temptation. He is like unto men yet !

## SERMON XIII.

TEXT: "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus ;

2. Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses *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* God.

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

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.

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

11. So I sware 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 steadfast 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, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness ?

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 (Heb., 3: 1-19)."

INTRODUCTION.—The author is constantly drawing lessons. In this chapter he draws a lesson from the preceding.

VERSE I. The writer here lays emphasis on holiness. He frequently uses the expression, "My brethren." In this passage he emphasizes the demand for individual holiness. I take holiness to mean in this connection the same as purity of character. A Christian man is set apart to a high and holy use. God requires us to be holy in order to service—heart service, mind service, conscience service, living service, continual service. He also brings out the idea that our calling is of heaven, hence we are called that we may set our affections on things above. Peter brings out the same idea (II. Pet., 1: 3, 4), and in the sixth chapter of Hebrews it is declared that we taste of the word of God and the powers of the world to come. In trying to swing away from the old Calvinistic Baptist idea of Christian experience—seeing visions, hearing sounds and experiencing miraculous power—we have swung to another extreme, and many of us think such a thing as Christian experience is unknown to the word of God. If by "experience" we mean

what one really enjoys as a result of labor, this conclusion is not without foundation ; for many of us do but little and therefore experience but little. I build the Christian life on one proposition: God is, and Jesus Christ is His Son and our Saviour. A man may, by giving himself unselfishly to service, test the truth of this proposition. He may know that he has passed from death unto life ; he may know that his calling is of heaven ; he may experience the presence of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit with him and in him. I call this Christian experience. Paul, in his letter to the Romans (Chap. 5: 1-5), brings it out in this fashion: first, justification by faith, which of course includes obedience ; second, the peace of God ; third, access into God's grace ; fourth, rejoicing ; fifth, tribulation ; sixth, patience ; seventh, experience ; eighth, hope ; ninth, boldness because of the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given to us. We should place more stress on the fact that ours is a heavenly calling. Ours is not a meat and drink religion, but a religion of unselfishness, of righteousness, of service, of suffering. O, the beauty, the security and the grandeur of this heavenly calling ! Make this the object of your life, and subordinate everything else to it. The heavenly calling is something of which we partake. We are invited to sit down at the table of the King and eat, drink and be satisfied. There is no coercion in this heavenly calling. The calling is voluntary ; the partaking is also voluntary. Note the drift of the writer's thought: "Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider." To consider requires serious, deliberate thought. We are expected to look at things from every standpoint.

What are we to consider? Not a doctrine, not a theory, not a speculation, not a system of theology. What then? Jesus Christ. I might sum up the entire Bible in one sentence: Consider Jesus Christ. Every teacher who led his pupils along the highway of knowledge; every priest who offered sacrifice for himself or others; every prophet who told of coming ages; every poet who tuned his harp to Jehovah's praise; and every martyr who gave his life for the cause of right, was contributing what he could to the bringing in of the day when all religion, all faith, all hope, and all unity should find its common centre, Jesus is Divine. Our religion brings us face to face with Jesus Christ. The question of a man's salvation therefore hangs on the one question: "What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ (Matt., 27: 22)?" It is not a question simply of acceptance. By the authority of heaven, by the crying needs of our sinful condition, we have Him on our hands. What shall we do with Him? It is not a question of law; it is not a question of repentance; it is not a question of baptism, but what think ye of Christ? Whose son is He? I re-assert, we have Him on our hands. He comes to us utterly unlike all men because He had nothing and made no effort to accumulate; because He loved in all tenderness even when that love was apparently lost. He stands peerless and alone in the centuries. No one has ever appeared like Him by nature, and the best we can do is to poorly imitate his example. We are commanded to consider Him. What object could He have had, save the one He expressed? He could have been crowned king of His own people if He had so desired. He threw away the crown of the nation and expressed himself as satisfied with the

contents of the woman's alabaster box. He was a great toiler, but it does not appear that He toiled in order to be certain of the next meal or the next night's lodging. He considered that this world was part of His Father's home, and He was therefore at home whether on the mountain top in prayer, walking on the boisterous waves of Galilee, or resting in the little home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus at Bethany. We can well afford to consider Him as the Apostle and High Priest of our profession. "Apostle" means, sent. His Father sent Him. Where? To earth. For what purpose? The general answer to this question would be: To save us from our sins. This witness is true, but in relation to the disciples there was another great object. He came to show us what to do with ourselves; how to spend our lives. In David's day men spent their lives as a tale that is told, but the Master came to show us how to spend our lives in helping others, and therefore in helping Him. He taught men how to live. He taught men how to give. He taught men unselfishness. I lay it down as a proposition that will not admit of contradiction that whoever comes in touch with His character, His wondrous life, and His great object in coming to this world, will be delivered from selfishness. All redemption might be summed up in the simple statement or prayer: Lord, deliver me from myself! Jesus was sent to do this, but, I say it with reverence, he cannot deliver you from selfishness while you constantly look out for your own interest. You must put yourself in line with Him; that means, you are to love what He loves, think of that of which He thinks, approve that which He approves, say what He says, go where He would go and do as He does.



VERSES 2-6. The writer here lays emphasis on the faithfulness of Jesus Christ. He was faithful as the apostle of His Father. He is faithful as the High Priest of our profession. He is here compared to Moses. Moses was a type of Jesus in several respects. He forsook the riches of the court of Egypt for his people. Jesus forsook the glories of heaven that He might redeem us from our sins. Moses voluntarily identified himself with the despised people of an earthly potentate. Jesus voluntarily identified Himself with the slaves of sin. Moses led his people through the great and terrible wilderness to the borders of the land of Canaan. Jesus proposes to lead His people through this world of sin and selfishness to the land of promise beyond the grave. Moses was distinguished for his meekness. Jesus was likewise, for he submitted to indignity without retaliation. Moses was the law-giver of Israel. Jesus is the law-giver of the world for all ages. Moses predicted that the Messiah should be like unto him (Deut., 18: 15, 18). The writer in these verses, however, lays the emphasis on the faithfulness of Moses. I like that word "faithfulness." Several years ago I received a card from Henry Schell Lobingier. In closing the card, he used the simple words, "faithfully yours." It was a photograph of his heart, life and experience. I was greatly impressed. I set the two words up as a standard for life and living, and since that day I have written the words thousands upon thousands of times. It is difficult to measure the meaning of "faithfully yours;" this was what Moses was to Israel and what Jesus is to us. The faithfulness of Moses is seen from the day he turned his back on the court of Egypt until the Lord buried him in the land of Moab. Let

me emphasize the faithfulness of Jesus. He came to do His Father's will (Heb., 10: 9). He prayed, "Thy will be done (Matt., 6: 10)." He declared that He came in His Father's name (John, 5: 43); and in the garden of Gethsemane He prayed over and over again that His Father's will might be done (Luke, 22: 39-46). He never lost sight of this during His entire life. I call your attention to one peculiarity of the Master's mission here: He served God in every place and under every circumstance. His audiences were numbered from one up to the thousands. He had but one object. He did not send appointments ahead. He was not advertised in the daily press, by flaming hand-bills or biographical sketches, but he preached as he went and went as he preached. Some of us work at religion like some of the old-time folk planted potatoes. We wait until the sign gets right! I am waiting until the sign gets in the pocket-book. We may learn from the faithfulness of the Master that we are not called to please ourselves, that we are not called to make money, that we are not called to achieve a great name, that we are not called to do a great work, but that we are called to work for Him and to keep at it. I think we may also learn to be faithful in little things. The greatest things recorded of the Master during His personal ministry involve very few persons. This is proven by His treatment of the woman at Jacob's well, by the woman taken in sin, and His conduct at the grave of Lazarus. What an unpromising prospect that woman was when He asked her for a drink at Jacob's well! Yet His kindness to her opened the gates of Samaria to a hated Jew. Life is not made up of big things, but of little things. Try to be faithful to

every trust. The fact is, so-called little things have played a mighty part in the destiny of the world. Fill your place well. Prove that you are worthy of something better by uncomplaining faithfulness, for promotion always lies along the line of doing the best your circumstances allow. The faithfulness of Moses has made him the contemporary of every generation, and his achievements are recorded for our help and encouragement. Christ is worthy of more honor than Moses because Moses was servant and not lord. Christ is a son over His own house; we are His building. We are exhorted to steadfastness, confidence and the rejoicing of hope. Let me emphasize this word confidence a little. Speaking after the manner of men, one must be profoundly convinced of his ability in order to accomplish any great end. The author here says we must hold fast to confidence and hold it to the end. In order to do this we must be faithful in little things and persistently faithful.

VERSES 7-10. It is not a question of what we may do to-morrow. No one living or dead has ever seen "to-morrow." The Holy Spirit's voice is to us "to-day." When we hear His voice now we are not to harden our hearts. Note that even a Christian can harden his heart. In order to enforce the importance of hearing and doing to-day, reference is made to the faithlessness of those who fell in the wilderness. The Lord was grieved with them. Why? Because they erred in their hearts. Apostasy always begins in the affections. As soon as those people ceased to love God they forsook Him and He condemned them to die outside of the land of promise.

VERSES 11-18. Here is a lesson for us. We are commanded to take heed. For failing to do this, un-

belief shall lead us away from the living God. We are to look out for ourselves and we are to help each other. We are commanded to exhort one another every day. An exhortation is not an argument; it is not an explanation, but it is an appeal that comes red-hot from the heart. How many of us obey this commandment? We generally exhort our brother every day by getting behind his back and exalting his faults in the presence of others! We are not called to exhort him to-morrow or next week or next year, but to-day, for the reason that there is danger of his being hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. O, the deceitfulness of sin! It insinuates itself into the very centre of our being and from thence works its way in every direction, leaving blight, ruin and destruction in its path. Paul's exhortation to the Galatians is an exhortation to the Christian in every age: "Be not deceived (Gal., 6: 7)." We are on trial here. In reality we shall only be made partakers with Christ if we continue unto the end. Paul exhorts the Corinthian brethren to be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord (I. Cor., 15: 58). I will give you a prescription which, if taken in time, will absolutely prevent indifference, backsliding, apostasy, and quench the very fires of hell so far as you are concerned: Keep busy in the service of the Lord. If you want to keep from loving the world, love the Lord. If you want to avoid thinking about that which is unclean, set your thoughts on the Master. If you wish to avoid filthy conversation, use your tongue in exhorting your brother, in warning the impenitent and in extolling the Lord.

VERSE 19. The writer says, "We see." See what?

That those who have fallen, fell because of unbelief. If faith leads to obedience, faithlessness leads to disobedience. If faith opens the gate of heaven, unbelief opens the gate of hell. If faith makes us unselfish, unbelief turns all our thoughts on ourselves.

I draw from this chapter eight lessons:

I. Jesus is the Apostle and High Priest of our profession.

II. He was sent by His Father to us.

III. We are Christ's house if we hold fast unto the end. A good ending is as good as a good beginning.

IV. Christians can, and do, harden their hearts against the calls of duty. This tempts and grieves the Lord.

V. An evil heart of unbelief leads away from God into the deceitfulness of sin.

VI. This day is the day of duty and salvation. You can not postpone present duties or shift present responsibilities.

VII. Unbelief closes the gates of heaven to man. We can not substitute hospitality, morality or liberality for it. We must believe the word of God or perish!

VIII. The Divine side of redemption is complete. Its provisions are inexhaustible. Its assurances are infallible. An eternal salvation, therefore, depends on one thing—faithful continuance in well-doing unto the end. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

## SERMON XIV.

TEXT: "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, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

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

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.

8. For if Jesus 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.

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* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

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 (Heb., 4: 1-16)."

INTRODUCTION.—The writer begins this chapter as usual with "Therefore." At the beginning of the second chapter he said, "Therefore we ought to give the most earnest heed." At the beginning of the third chapter he said, "Wherefore consider." At the beginning of this chapter he says, "Therefore fear."

VERSE 1. The Christian is exhorted to fear because of the awful destiny of those who, in other ages, feared not. We have a promise of entering into eternal rest, but there is much danger of falling by the way. The author here has in mind the journey from Egypt to Canaan. Those who feared God and persevered reached the land of promise. Those who did not, fell as an example for ages to come.

VERSE 2. The fact that the gospel has been preached to us, and that we have heard, believed and obeyed it, plays only a minor part. It is not a question whether you were saved ten years ago but whether or not you are saved now. The word "gospel" in this passage carries the simple idea of good news. The phrase, "But the word preached did not profit them," refers to the report, the honest report, made by Caleb and Joshua when they returned in search of the land (Num., 13: 1-33; 14: 1-12). In-

deed "word" in this passage means report. It is a fact that they were not profited by this report, although it was true, because they did not mix their faith with the word. I like this statement because it emphasizes the combining of the human and the Divine. They were the people of God; they heard good news; they refused to accept it, and fell. A child of God is, under similar circumstances, in the same danger.

VERSE 3. I take it that there are two kinds of rest implied and promised in the Christian system. Jesus invites the weary sons and daughters of earth to come unto Him and find rest (Matt., 11: 28-30). This rest we may have here—if we trust. I mean that we may have rest from doubt and anxiety. Of the other rest I shall speak further on. This is confessedly a difficult passage. On the whole I take it to mean that God having laid the plan to save them on the way from Egypt on condition of obedience, turned from them, and in His indignation declared that they should not enter into the rest prepared for them. The fact that God has planned to save us or that Jesus has died to save us, does not imply that unbelief will not shut us out of the kingdom at last. If this is not true, it seems to me that the Lord puts a premium on slothfulness and rebellion.

VERSES 4-10. The author here contemplates the perfect rest beyond the grave. He illustrates it first by the Lord finishing His work in six days and resting on the seventh; second, by allusion to the few who triumphantly passed out of the great and terrible wilderness to the land promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. In the eighth verse it is intimated however that this was not a perfect rest. The word



“Jesus” in this passage is evidently another name for Joshua, who succeeded Moses as the leader of Israel. He led them into the land of promise but did not give them permanent rest, for no earthly habitation is secure, no earthly rest is perpetual, and no earthly joy is unceasing. Joshua gave them homes of their own after their long and perilous pilgrimage, but they were still beset by foes on every side. There is a rest for the people of God beyond the simple consideration of earthly foes and cares. In that rest we shall cease from all our labors.

VERSE 11. We are here commanded to labor to enter into rest, and exhorted to avoid falling on account of unbelief. Taking God at His word solves the whole question of present and eternal redemption. The reason that there are so many lame, blind, lazy, stingy Christians is, they think the word of God was written for somebody else, or some other age. When they come across a promise that their ignorance and unbelief fail to take in, they conclude that it was intended for Peter, Paul and men of their day. This is the very essence of error. Only one proof of it is needed. If the promises of the New Testament on which I lay particular emphasis had been only intended for the apostles and their contemporaries, it would not have been necessary to record them and transmit them to other ages, and the part of the New Testament that seems applicable to us could be condensed into a very few chapters. Paul launched out on the promises of God, and in the Epistles he tells us his experience, or rather experiences, and I cannot see what benefit the Epistles are to us unless the Lord meant to say to us through the heart, mind and pen of Paul that He will look after our interests if we

will do as Paul did. Paul goes so far as to say along this line that everything written previous to the age in which he lived was to be helpful to us (Rom., 15: 4). The difficulty with us is, our little dry hearts refuse to measure up to the greatness of God's love, mercy and care. A man of Paul's faith, devotion and self-sacrifice is truly a light in a dark place. We do not need Paul's brain half so much as we need Paul's faith and zeal. Faith and zeal always find a way, even for the dullest mind. To be a great preacher depends, in my judgment, largely on one thing—faith! Faith unlocks the human heart to its own possibilities. I never dreamed of my possibilities until I discovered in reality the truth that when the Lord makes a promise He means to fulfill it if we comply with the conditions. Cultivate your faith. Try to enlarge your heart power. Be like the Master—weep with those who weep. The rest comes after labor. There are thousands of disciples singing to-day:

“O land of rest, for thee I sigh,”

who have never done enough work for the Master to make them tired. I am not prepared to say that there will be degrees of reward in heaven, but it is certain to my mind that the man who wears himself out in the service of the Master will find the eternal rest very sweet. There is no excellence without labor and this is true everywhere and in everything.

VERSES 12, 13. The phrase “word of God” covers a vast territory. The author here, however, had in mind the sentence passed on the primeval pair—resulting in the dissolution of man as he now is. Man is a double being. In his present state he is body, he is spirit—the union of body and spirit make

a living soul. God made man of the dust of the earth; He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and He told him that if he sinned he should die. He sinned, and thus the body goes back to the dust, and the spirit to God who gave it, according to His word. I emphasize the last part of this passage. The word of God is a searcher of the thoughts and intents of the heart. For this reason we should read it persistently with our hearts that we may measure our lives up to its demands and thus find rest. Read the word of God. Open your heart and let God speak to you. The human heart is deeper than the deepest sea, and yet there is no place in it where you can successfully hide the least sin from the piercing eye of God. Ask God every day to search your heart and keep you clean.

VERSES 13-16. Passing from the terrible sentence leading us to the grave the apostle lifts our hearts to our great and faithful High Priest, and exhorts us to hold fast our profession. This is a beautiful description of the earnestness and mercy of our priest. He was tempted in all points like as we are (Matt., 4:1-11). In reality there are only three points in which we can be tempted: The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. Our Redeemer was tried in every point, and He knows how to sympathize with us when the terrible temptations of the world beat upon us. We are exhorted not simply to come to the throne of grace, but to come boldly. I understand by this that we are to come with full assurance that we will find exactly what we need. Paul in addressing the elders of the church at Ephesus, commended them to the word of grace, and here he commends everybody to the throne of grace. Go

to the word of grace for instruction or for spiritual food. Go to the throne of grace for consolation, encouragement and favor.

I draw from this chapter four lessons:

I. Those who have fallen in the past because of unbelief, warn us.

II. Those who have gained the victory through faith, encourage us.

III. Rest is sweet to those who labor. We must labor in the cause of Christ in order to enjoy the rest that remaineth for His people.

IV. We are doomed to death and the grave, but in hours of temptation, pain and sorrow we are exhorted to draw on heaven for what we need. God grant that individually we may be able to do this.

## SERMON XV.

TEXT: "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, as *was* Aaron.

5. So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest ; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee.

6. As he saith also in another *place*, Thou *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 (Heb., 5: 1-14)."

INTRODUCTION.—The writer of this book was evidently a Hebrew, and the book is well named; and the drift of the argument is to show these Hebrew Christians how they should live. They were all familiar with Moses, the law, and the Levitical priesthood, hence it was easy for them to see that the priesthood of Jesus Christ had a similar yet higher object.

VERSES 1-3. The high priest of Israel was taken from among men. He was frail, ignorant and infirm as his brethren were. Jesus our High Priest, was made like unto the children of men, but He is strong, wise and ready to help. There must be a bond of sympathy between the priest and the people. The high priest of Israel realizing his own frailties was able to offer up sacrifices for himself and his people. Jesus having been tempted in every point in which we are tempted, is really concerned about us and able to help us in time of need. The high priest of Israel was ordained for this very purpose. He offered gifts and sacrifices for himself and his nation. Jesus offered himself for the entire race. The great idea underlying the priesthood is mercy. Every bleeding victim from Adam to the cross of Christ was an earnest plea on the part of the subject for God's mercy. The high priest of Israel was expected to study the needs of the people. He thought of them constantly and was therefore able when presenting a sacrifice for them, to have compassion on the ignorant and those that were out of the way. Jesus our Master and High Priest devotes His time to our necessities. He knows our hearts; He knows our weaknesses—He knows all about

us. He is ready to help us day and night continually. Indeed I wish to emphasize the fact that His reign in heaven is one of favor, sympathy and mercy; and I am assured that He is more willing to help than the children of men are to be helped. The writer here holds out the idea that in the hour of temptation He thinks of the days of His flesh when He also was tempted, and therefore helps us out of pure compassion.

VERSES 4, 5. The calling of Aaron is here emphasized. Aaron did not take the honor to himself, but God called him to this office and made it perpetual in his family. Jesus was also called to a perpetual priesthood by the Father. I emphasize the fact that He was made a priest, hence the supposition that He was always a priest is without foundation in the word of God. I here call attention to the fact that the words, "Jesus," "Saviour," "Son," "Priest," "Mediator" and "King," express the relation of the Redeemer to us as men under the dispensation of Grace. He was made a priest in order to carry out the Father's gracious plan to bring all nations back to faith, love and purity.

VERSES 6, 7. Jesus was not made a priest after the order of Aaron, but after the independent order of Melchisedec. The Levitical priesthood was established in Aaron and perpetuated in his descendants. The priesthood of Jesus began when He entered heaven by His own blood. During the natural life of Jesus He was subject to fear, to pain, to death; and He cried earnestly unto God to save Him from the bitterness of the cup that awaited Him.

VERSES 8, 9. During these days He was learning obedience through suffering. If He learned it through

anxiety, physical pain, and the Cross at last, do you think there is an easier way for us? He was perfected through suffering, and after having reached this perfection through the blood of the Cross, He became the author of eternal salvation. Is this salvation conditional or unconditional? Conditional beyond a doubt, for it is promised only to those who obey Him. We may learn an important lesson here. In a general sense God blesses all men alike, but the special blessings of God are always suspended on conditions. We can not expect to be blessed on easier terms than Jesus was blessed, for the servant is not greater than his Master.

VERSES 10, 11. These verses emphasize the calling of our High Priest. Paul had many things to say to his brethren about that high priest, but he refrained because their ears were dull. It takes years of training to enable us to always hear the voice of God when we read His word. Sometimes I read it and hear the cows low, the mules bray and the boys growl. The difficulty with me is that I am not always as hungry for it as I ought to be. What dull pupils we must be at times in the estimation of our Father! "Lo, the poor Indian whose untutored mind sees God in the cloud and hears Him in the wind," but we Christians often find it difficult to see or hear Him anywhere. Oh, the coldness, the dullness, the stupidity of the so-called Church of Christ!

VERSES 12-14. These people had enjoyed excellent opportunities. They had heard enough to have become teachers but they still needed to be taught. They even needed to be fed on milk. Poor, little, weak babies! The phrase "first principles" as found in the twelfth verse, we erroneously apply to the con-



ditions of pardon to the unconverted. "First principles"—what does this mean? Evidently the things that have been so beautifully discussed in the preceding chapters; the underlying principles on which the conditions of pardon are based. Every man on entering the church is a babe, and is represented as growing to strong manhood. I wish to call your special attention to the phrase "By reason of use have their senses exercised." Man does not simply need food in order to grow. You could feed him to death. He must have exercise, and this exercise broadens his capacity to the point of always discovering evil where evil is, or discovering good wherever it is. I take this to be an exercise involving the heart, the mind, the conscience. It must be regular, systematic, persistent.

I draw from this chapter five lessons:

I. The high priest of Israel was not simply ordained for his own good but for the good of others.

II. Jesus was called to an independent and perpetual priesthood after the days of His earthly pilgrimage, and He is able to help us in every time of need because He knows what temptation is.

III. Jesus learned obedience through suffering, and we must be perfected in the same way.

IV. We fail to grow because we do not take advantage of the opportunities that are given us. The only two conditions of growth are food and exercise.

V. Growth not only delivers us from our Christian childhood but gives us a capacity for greater and better things in the service of God and the elevation of man. Amen.

## SERMON XVI.

TEXT: "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.

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

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

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 labor 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 swear by himself,

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

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 the immutability of his counsel, confirmed *it* by an oath:

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 (Heb., 6: 1-20)."

INTRODUCTION.—The first three or four verses of this chapter constitute a conclusion drawn from the preceding chapters. We must constantly bear this in mind in order to the solution of the difficulties that confront us. "Principles of the doctrine of Christ" is the same as first principles. First principles do not exclusively embrace faith, repentance, confession and baptism, but rather the principles that underlie them as enunciated in the five preceding chapters. First principles, strictly speaking, includes: (1) God has repeatedly spoken to the children of men down through the ages; (2) in the latter times He has spoken unto us by Jesus Christ; (3) the mission of Jesus and His ambassadors has been established by miracles, wonders and signs; (4) Jesus is our High Priest in the court of Heaven after the order of Melchisedec; (5) it is our privilege to come boldly to the throne of God's grace at all times and ask for what we need.

VERSE 1. "Therefore leaving"—this does not imply the abandonment of the first principles of the

gospel, but rather that we are to leave them as the building leaves the foundation. It is a fact that we build as we climb and climb as we build. It is a fact that our divine life has its roots in the rich soil of the elementary principles of the gospel. It is a fact also that, deriving our strength from them, we advance in spiritual strength and power. It is absolutely foolish to saw forever on one string. The word of God presents to us an endless variety of nourishing food, hence we are to constantly dig downward and grow upward. We are to go on. We can not stand still in the Christian life—to stand still is to die. We are to go on in the direction of perfect manhood and womanhood in Christ, and though our progress may be rapid, it is a fact that beyond us always, we shall see the perfect character of Jesus Christ our Lord beckoning us onward to holier aims, higher achievements and greater triumphs. The phrase “repentance from dead works” re-emphasizes the truth that this book was written for those who knew the law of Moses, and while his name is not specifically mentioned I see in it the profound learning, the matchless eloquence and the burning zeal of Paul. By dead works here is meant the works required by the law of Moses in contrast to the works of the gospel. “Faith toward God”—we may learn the important lesson here that God our Father is the object of faith and repentance, and that as Jesus is our mediator we must believe and repent through Him.

VERSE 2. By “doctrine of baptisms” here is meant the various washings of the law, for under the gospel there is but one baptism. “Laying on of hands” doubtless refers to the custom both under the law and the gospel. “Resurrection of the dead” was the one great question of the dispensation of grace, and yet it

is not necessary that we dwell upon it and consider it constantly to the exclusion of the practical things that lie about us. The phrase "eternal judgment" carries with it the weight of awful meaning. It is not judgment for a day, a year, a jubilee, or a millenium, but an everlasting judgment—a judgment whose results can never be changed. It strikes me that this statement alone ought to put an everlasting quietus on an after-death gospel, for after death comes judgment (Heb., 9: 27).

VERSE 3. Man proposes; God disposes. We should be careful not to claim strength in, by, and for ourselves. The question of where I shall be, or what I shall do, to-morrow is in God's hands alone. I like to hear a man say when speaking of his plans for the future, I will do thus and so, if it be the will of God. It seems to me there is a tendency even on the part of Christians to keep Him out of our daily lives. It is a fact that we get ashamed of our faith sometimes. I pray you, avoid this. Man was made to know God and glorify Him forever. See that you do this and do not wait until after death to begin.

VERSES 4-6. The early Hebrew converts to the gospel were in constant danger of apostacy. Every consideration of religious instinct, national pride, and fear of persecution and death, made their pathway one of thorns, and stones, and briers. The book of Hebrews is really an exhortation to faithfulness and steadfastness. It came red-hot from a heart that knew experimentally the difficulties that were in the way. The plan of the argument is admirable: (1) He instructs; (2) he exhorts; (3) he threatens. The apostacy of a Hebrew meant, not only the abandonment of the gospel, but the return to the blood of the first testament and

the law which could not, nor never did, give life. A careful reflection on these passages will indicate that the apostle had in mind not simply babes in Christ, but those of mature thought. He had already exhorted them to go on to perfection or maturity. The parties included in this terrible sentence or denunciation had been enlightened, had tasted of the heavenly gift, had partaken of the Holy Spirit, had tasted of the word of God, had realized in their souls the power of the world to come. It is easy to see that people who had enjoyed such opportunities and privileges as these could only apostatize wilfully. Wilful sin, that is the utter abandonment of Christ and his atonement is probable therefore only in the case of those of matured Christian character. The writer certainly does not have in mind the weak Christian who errs through extraordinary temptation. The men of mature Christian character who wilfully go away, can not come back, for the simple reason that they have crucified to themselves anew the Son of God and have put Him to open shame. You may say that the writer puts the matter very strongly, and it surely deserves it. Is redemption so cheap that we may maliciously throw it away? Is the blood of Christ such an unholy thing that we who know its cleansing power may, without temptation, deliberately turn to the blood of goats and calves? Is the heavenly gift of so little importance to us that we may voluntarily surrender it for something else?

VERSE 7. This verse is very striking indeed. The Lord gives us the earth; He sends rain and sunshine upon it; He looks approvingly upon us when we labor, and encourages us to expect an abundant harvest as the result of our co-operation with Him. How bitter

the disappointment when after the long summer the harvest fails ! The lesson is, that the Lord gives us the gospel. He fills us with His Spirit ; He lets us taste of the heavenly gift and the power of the world to come, and expects of us an abundance of fruit. How it must please His great and loving heart when we launch out into the unfathomed depths of His promises ; but speaking after the manner of men, how great must His disappointment be when we, the objects of His love, care and redemption, wilfully turn away from Him ! If you say the penalty for wilful apostacy, is severe ; I answer, the price of redemption greatly overbalances the severity.

VERSE 8. The supreme test of discipleship is fruit-bearing. The Lord of the harvest not only expects this but demands it of us, for the simple reason that the seed planted in our hearts is designed to do this ; but if we so far forget ourselves as to bear the thorns and briers of hate, of malice, of division, of selfishness, we are nigh unto cursing. Briers are a curse literally when borne by the earth. How much greater the curse when borne by the professed disciples of the Lord ! I have seen Christians who were so fully covered with briers and thorns that it was next thing to impossible to approach them. How true it is that the Devil mixes his seed with the good seed of the kingdom. We gather up briers and thorns and burn them, and the end of the professed Christian who bears thorns and briers, is to be burned. I think that this verse contains a warning for us all. May the Lord help us to heed it !

VERSES 9, 10. The apostle expected better things of his brethren, yet, he felt that it was necessary to warn them ; and this warning is accompanied by the

assurance of the constant interest and protecting care of God our Father. God can not forget our work of faith and labor of love, hence as long as we struggle against temptation He will think of us in mercy, and help us if we put our trust in Him. He may keep us waiting when we cry to Him, but He cannot keep us waiting always, for in doing this His promise would fail. I emphasize the fact that we must labor in the name of the Lord. The supreme question relative to everything of doubtful propriety is, Will God approve this or can I honestly say that I am doing it in His name and for His glory? The Christian life raises many difficult questions. The man of God must be careful and deliberate. Ask yourself often, Is this the line of duty; is this pleasing to God; is this for the promotion of His kingdom? Meditate upon the word of God. Be patient; wait for the coming of the Lord. If you lead this kind of a life, God can not be God, true, loving and kind, and forget you in the hour of trial. We are to look after the wants and troubles of others. The one great design of discipleship is service. He who serves his brother best, serves his Maker most. He who gets nearest the aching heart of the fallen and forsaken, gets nearest the tender heart of the glorious Redeemer. Whatever else we may say of the service of God, it at last resolves itself into the service of our fellow-man. Let me emphasize the fact that we are called unto service and sacrifice, and through them to everlasting salvation. This service is not to be spasmodic, but hearty, earnest, continual. The disciples addressed here had administered to the saints and were continuing to do it.

VERSES 11, 12. The apostle's great desire was that these disciples should be diligent unto the end.



He brings out a beautiful thought in the expression, "full assurance of hope." Uncertainties melt away under the inspiring hope of the gospel. It is not a question of what you did last year, yesterday, or even to-day, but a question of holding out in faith to the end. In the eleventh verse he emphasizes the need of diligence. In the next verse he emphasizes the danger of slothfulness. As an encouragement to diligence he alludes, without giving their names, to the long line of worthies who, before his day, had honored and obeyed the Lord. He declares that they inherited the promises through faith and patience. Faith is taking God at His word. Patience is self-control. With me it is difficult sometimes to believe, but it is always hard to wait. You would do well to take for your motto: Learn to believe and patiently wait. We want results to-day, but in working out the intricate plans that our Master has for us it is best for us often to wait far into the day to come, or the night that lies beyond it. We are exhorted to follow the ancient worthies. We should follow Abel in bringing the first and best to the altar of the Lord. We should follow Enoch in calling ourselves by the name of the Lord and walking with Him even in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. We should follow Noah in believing that God will do what He says even when everything natural seems to be against it. We should follow Abraham in forsaking home and country when the cause of the Lord demands it. We should follow Isaac in leading a quiet and peaceable life. We should follow Jacob in taking hold of our Father and holding on even in physical weakness until we obtain the promise. We should follow Moses in faith, patience and undying love for others. We

should follow Joshua in trying to take the land, the whole land, for the kingdom of our God. We should follow Samuel in growing in favor both with God and with man. We should follow David in constantly and earnestly confessing our sins. We should follow the prophets of God in the faithful discharge of every duty as God gives us light to see it.

VERSES 13-20. It is difficult to follow simply because we are told to do so, hence the encouragement in another reference to God's faithfulness in dealing with Abraham. Men swear by a greater, and an oath to them is an end to contention. God swore by Himself and this settled the question of His faithfulness to all generations; but the fact that God swore that He would give the blessing to Abraham did not make it necessary for Him to give it to him that very day. The fact that He says He will do it, is enough for us. Abraham patiently endured and then received the blessing. This is written for our encouragement. God deals with us bountifully. He confirmed the promise with an oath. First, He made the promise, then He confirmed it. His promise and His oath are both immutable, that is, the same to all ages and generations. The design of this confirmation is, not simply to give us consolation, but strong consolation. We receive this consolation by fleeing unto the Redeemer as unto a great refuge, and thus heartily lay hold of the hope that is set before us. This hope is an anchor, yea, it is an anchor of the soul. It is sure and steadfast. It takes hold on our hearts and on Jesus our great High Priest. It reaches from that which is natural to that which is spiritual. It reaches from that which is transient to that which is eternal.

I draw from this chapter six lessons :

I. Our constant aim should be perfection or maturity.

II. We may have part of our heaven or hell here.

III. There is no danger of falling if we avoid stumbling.

IV. We should constantly aim at bearing some fruit for the Master.

V. It is right to follow in the footsteps of a good man.

VI. God's faithfulness to us is established by His unchangeable promise and oath. We may forget Him but He can not forget us.

## SERMON XVII.

**TEXT:** “For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him :

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 with 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 our Lord sprang out of Judah ; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood.

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, Thou *art* a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

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

19. For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope *did* ; by the which ~~we~~ draw nigh 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 suffered 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 (Heb., 7: 1-28).''

INTRODUCTION. In the preceding chapter the

writer introduces Melchisedec, king of Salem and priest of the most high God. In this chapter he gives us the most extended notice of him found in the oracles of God.

VERSES 1-4. Melchisedec was undoubtedly a remarkable man. Many theories have been advanced as to his identity. Some have declared that he is the one true and eternal God. Others, that he is the Son of God. The first cannot be true for the reason that he was the priest of God. The second cannot be true because he was made like unto the Son of God. I think the chief difficulty lies in a failure to grasp what the apostle has here in mind. He is not trying to write a biography of Melchisedec, but to emphasize some of the peculiarities of his priesthood. Melchisedec was contemporary with Abraham and was both king and priest. In this time in the general sense every man was his own high priest. For some reason not given, Melchisedec was a priest in some very important sense. There was no record kept of his installation as priest, nor of his death. In the priesthood he was without father, without mother, without beginning of days or end of life. In this respect his priesthood stands out in bold contrast to the Levitical priesthood under which the people received the law. For this priesthood being established in Aaron was perpetuated in his family from one generation to another. Melchisedec's priesthood was independent. The Aaronic priesthood was dependent. As further proof of the correctness of these statements I have only to say that Jesus was made a priest after the order of Melchisedec and that Melchisedec was a man.

VERSES 5-10. The Aaronic priesthood was supported by the gifts of the people as specified in the law. Abraham acknowledged the superiority of Melchisedec by giving tithes to him, and thus the writer draws the lesson that Levi, the head of the priestly tribe under the law, paid tithes to Melchisedec before he was yet born. In the sixth verse, emphasis is laid on the question of descent. Under the law it was necessary for a man's genealogy to be correct; otherwise he could not officiate as priest. But Melchisedec did not count his descent from Aaron, and was by virtue of Abraham's tribute greater than he.

VERSES 11, 12. This is the same as to affirm that perfection could not be attained under the law, and in view of this fact it was necessary for another priest, Jesus Christ, to arise after the order of Melchisedec and not after the order of Aaron. The change of the priesthood necessitated a change also of law. This principle underlies all revelation. First, we have the patriarchal dispensation and every man his own priest; second, the dispensation of law and the Levitical or Aaronic priesthood; third, the everlasting priesthood of Jesus and the gospel of life. The first was distinguished by the independent priesthood of Melchisedec; the second was distinguished by the dependent priesthood of Aaron; the third is distinguished by the independent and everlasting priesthood of our Lord. Bear in mind that Jesus was not made a priest after the order of Aaron but after the order of Melchisedec. The establishment of this fact is evidently the design of the apostle's argument. The priesthood of Jesus is without father,

without mother. No one preceded Him in His priestly office in the skies, neither will any one succeed Him when His work is done, but under the law, as soon as one priest died another one was installed as his successor.

VERSES 13-17. Jesus did not belong to the tribe of Levi. He belonged to the royal tribe, or the tribe of Judah. He could not be a priest on earth for He did not belong to the priestly tribe, and further, because the Levitical priesthood continued in full force up to the time of His death. He was not made a priest by the offerings and washings of the law, but by the word of the Father's oath. This was predicted by David and you will find the record in the 110th Psalm. It was easy to the prophetic eye to see that man needed a priest, not on earth, but in heaven.

VERSES 18-21. The commandment to make Aaron and his sons priests was disannulled or repealed before Jesus became priest. In other words the Levitical priesthood was abrogated and with it the law it was designed to explain and enforce when Jesus expired on the Cross. The writer brings out very plainly the fact that our priest has brought in a better hope, and having one to represent us who knows all our frailties we can draw nigh unto God. The Levitical priesthood was largely ceremonial. The priesthood of Jesus is real and practical. Aaron and his sons were not inaugurated by any oath of office, but Jesus was made priest by his Father's oath. Being recognized as our representative in the Courts of Heaven we may approach Him with boldness in time of need.

VERSE 22. Men broke the first covenant and men break the second covenant. The difference lies in the



fact that Jesus is the surety of the new and better institution. If we fall He lifts us up. If we repent He pleads our cause in the presence of the Father.

VERSES 23-25. Under the law there were many priests, and they were just as frail and uncertain as any one else; but the priesthood of Jesus is both unchangeable and everlasting. From this the lesson is drawn that He is able to save all those who come to God by Him, for He ever lives to make intercession to those who are striving to enter the fold. I lay stress on that word "intercession." His sleepless eye is ever ready to see; His tender heart is ever ready to feel and His wondrous tongue is ever ready to plead our cause. How true it is that we must approach the Father through Him, and that we cannot do this without believing on Him with all our hearts.

VERSES 26, 27. Man not only needed a priest, but he needed a priest who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, higher than the heavens; one who, surpassing the priests of old, could effect our everlasting reconciliation by presenting Himself once to God. Our High Priest has a complete and unfailing remedy for sin.

VERSE 28. The law made men priests in spite of the fact that they were infirm and sinful, but the Father's oath made the Son priest who is consecrated for ever more. In the eighteenth verse of this chapter it is asserted that there was a disannulling of the commandment that made priests under the law. In the last verse of this chapter it is asserted that the word or oath that made Jesus priest was since the law. Taking these two passages together it is clear that the Levitical or Aaronic priesthood ended at the crucifixion, and that the everlasting priesthood was

established when Jesus entered heaven by His own blood.

I draw from this chapter four lessons :

I. Melchisedec was similar to Jesus in the independent order of His priesthood.

II. Aaron and his sons being infirm could only make ceremonial satisfaction for the sins of the people.

III. Jesus is similar to Melchisedec in the independent order of His priesthood.

IV. Jesus will remain in heaven as priest unto the end of the world.

## SERMON XVIII.

TEXT: "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, See, 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, Behold, 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 neighbor, 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 waxeth old is ready to vanish away (Heb., 8: 1-13)."

INTRODUCTION.—We must bear in mind that the object of this epistle was to set the Hebrew Christians right touching the relationship of the old covenant to the new.

VERSE 1. The argument is completed with the close of the preceding chapter. What follows is a summary or re-statement. In the patriarchal dispensation there were many priests. Under the law of Moses there were also many priests. Under the gospel dispensation there is only one priest. His place is on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens. This verse brings out very clearly His present glory. It also emphasizes the thought that being located in the heavens He is the high priest of the whole race.

VERSE 2. A tabernacle was erected in the wilderness under the supervision of Moses. In this tabernacle temporary atonement was made for Israel. In it God manifested His glory and revealed Himself to the high priest, but this was not the true sanctuary. It was material, earthly, and therefore subject to decay. The true tabernacle is on high. It is heavenly, spiritual and eternal. There, arrayed in vestments dipped in blood, the holy, harmless and undefiled priest of the Christian institution represents the children of men. The Lord pitched this tabernacle and installed this priest by the word of His oath. In this, man was neither His counsel nor assistant.

VERSES 3-5. After the tabernacle was set up, offerings were made for individuals and for the nation

perpetually. This service was inaugurated at Mt. Sinai and continued unto the death of the Redeemer. Jesus was born under the law. He lived under the law and abolished it in His death. The law excluded Him from the Levitical priesthood because of His tribal relationship with Judah. He could not therefore be a priest on earth. Let me emphasize the fact that while He was alive He was not eligible to the priesthood, and that He did not have anything to present. On the Cross He was not a priest. There He was the victim or sacrifice bearing away our sins. The old service required by the law was typical of the new and better way. Moses was admonished to make everything according to the pattern, and the new institution is in many respects similar to the old. Yet I assert with emphasis that the new is new!

VERSES 6, 7. This passage refers to Jesus Christ. He is a high priest after the independent order. His ministration is in heaven. His ministry is better than the ministration of Aaron. The word mediator emphasizes the fact that as our high priest He stands between the race and the Creator. He is not the mediator of the old covenant. He is the mediator of the new covenant, which was established upon better promises. This new covenant is not the stretching out or perpetuation of the old with changes, but it is all its name implies.

VERSES 7-13. The covenants are presented in their numerical order; the first covenant which implies the second. The first covenant had its promises, commands, obligations. It promised the land of Canaan to the descendants of Abraham, and the rolling away of sins every year at the annual atonement. This institution had its faults because it was dedicated by

the blood of animal sacrifices, but the covenant was better than the people, for they were a perpetual disappointment to their benefactor and king. The new institution is said to be established on promises, yea, better promises. If the first covenant had remained faultless no necessity would have arisen for the second, but the Lord found fault with it and declared through Jeremiah the prophet that at some future time He would establish a new covenant. The last half of this chapter is almost a word for word quotation from Jeremiah, 31:31-34. We have therefore the testimony both of prophet and apostle to the one fact, namely, that the first covenant has filled its place in the economy of Redemption and that another has been established. It is a striking fact that the new covenant was made with the same people who broke the first. Much paper and ink have been wasted by people who have tried to establish the identity of the two covenants. Two things may be similar but I cannot see how they can be identical. I admit that the two institutions are similar in some respects, but emphatically deny that they are the same. It is expressly stated here that the new covenant was not to be according to the old, or like it. Israel of old disregarded God's covenant and He turned away from them. The summary here given of the fundamental principles of the covenant practically takes in the whole gospel. Under the old covenant the law was written on cold and pulseless stone. Under the new it is written in the minds and hearts of those who voluntarily become parties to the covenant. Moses was the mediator of the old covenant; Jesus is the mediator of the new. The Lord not only proposes to write His law in our hearts but also declares His

intention to be our God, and take us to be His people. Under the law much ignorance prevailed among the people because they became members of the covenant by birth, and it was perpetually necessary to exhort them to "know the Lord." Under the gospel they must know the Lord in order to become parties to the covenant. Under the law there was a remembrance of sin with each recurring year. Under the new covenant our sins are really blotted out and remembered against us no more forever. It is a fact that sins were not, nor could not, be blotted out until Jesus became a priest on high. They were simply borne away ceremonially each year after having been put upon the head of the scape-goat. The old covenant has finished its work and passed into its eternal record, and we as the disciples of Jesus are building upon better promises while He stands for us an everlasting surety, and when in weakness we fail or fall He bears our names in perpetual memory and mediation before the Father's throne.

I draw from this chapter five lessons :

I. Our High Priest now sits on the right hand of the Father and pleads for us.

II. He was not a priest on earth. He entered His priestly office when he entered heaven.

III. The New Covenant is better than the old because its promises relate to spiritual and eternal things while the promises of the first were largely temporal.

IV. We are under a new and distinct covenant. All of its members have the law of God written in their minds and hearts, and therefore we know the Lord.

V. The old covenant was abrogated by the death of Christ and men are no longer held by its obligations or provisions.

## SERMON XIX.

TEXT: "Then verily the first *covenant* had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary.

2. For there 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 mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly.

6. Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle accomplishing the service of God.

7. But into the second *went* the high priest alone once 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 meats and drinks, and divers 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 death, 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, he 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 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 (Heb., 9: 1-28)."

**INTRODUCTION.** This chapter begins with an allusion to the preceding chapter and may be considered a continuation of it.

**VERSES 1-5.** The first thought is that the things that are herein discussed pertain to the first covenant or first testament; covenant and testament having precisely the same meaning. In the eighth chapter we have presented to our consideration the old covenant in contrast with the new, in relation to their laws. In this chapter we have them contrasted with reference to the worship. The Lord never stops with the bare command. He requires our worship, our homage, our praise. The tabernacle was Jehovah's temporary dwelling place. It was not only adapted to the necessities of the Hebrews as they wandered in the wilderness, but it most appropriately and pictorially enforced and illustrated the temporary character of the entire institution. In other words, with respect to the question of permanency the tabernacle and its worship were of the same character. I emphasize the fact that the tabernacle was a worldly sanctuary. Counting the court with the tabernacle the institution had three distinct apartments: First, the court; second, the holy place; third, the holy of holies. The court may be taken as a type of the world; the holy place as a type of the church, and the holy of holies as a type of heaven. The articles of furniture occupying these different apartments were admirably adapted to the designs of the Great

Architect. Their position was also significant: First, the altar or sacrifice; second, the laver or washing; third, the first veil or line of separation between the world and holy place; fourth, the table or bread; fifth, the candlestick or light; sixth, the altar of incense or worship; seventh, the second veil or death; eighth, the ark and cherubim or the presence and glory of God. There are a number of allusions in these passages to the important incidents in the life of the Hebrews. Aaron's rod that budded was a constant reminder of the danger of rebellion and the sanctity of Aaron's commission. I call your attention to the fact that the stones on which the ten commands were written are designated the tables of the covenant, that is, the first covenant to which direct allusion is made in the first verse of this chapter.

VERSES 6-7. God made a covenant with the Hebrews when He brought them out of the land of Egypt. This covenant included the establishment of the Levitical priesthood. Allusion is first made to the sons of Aaron who attended to the daily administration, the morning and evening sacrifices, and the free-will offerings of the people as they were presented from time to time. To my mind one of the most striking features of the law is that it provided for a daily service. Sacrifices were always in order and always acceptable if presented in the right spirit. This service was carried on in the court and holy place, but on the great day of atonement the high priest of Israel, took off his garments of glory and beauty, arrayed himself in spotless linen and carried blood into the holy of holies, thus making reconciliation for the sins of the people for the period of one year. This was the most important and solemn day

of the year. On this day every man was required by statute to refrain from labor and afflict his soul ; in other words, he was to give one day to penitence on account of his sins.

VERSES 8-10. The Holy Spirit indicated by this ritual—the daily and annual service, that the way into the holiest of all or heaven itself, was not made manifest while this service continued. This is an important point. Bear it constantly in mind and you will never have any difficulty in rightly dividing the word of truth. The service was a figure for the time then present and however conscientious the worshipper might have been in performing the service of God, the service could never give him perfect peace of conscience. This can be seen easily if we will reflect that the service consisted of the presentation of meats and drinks, numerous washings and carnal ordinances, and that these things were only imposed until the time of reformation. The inauguration of the gospel is here by intimation called a reformation.

VERSES 11-14. Christ has now become a high priest of good things to come. He has entered into the great tabernacle on high not made with hands—“the tabernacle which God pitched and not man.” He entered not with the blood of goats and calves as did the high priest on Israel’s great day of annual atonement, but by His own precious blood. The high priest of Israel on the great day of atonement procured for the nation a rolling away of sins for one year. Jesus, when He entered heaven, obtained for us everlasting deliverance. Our sins are not rolled away for a time but forever blotted out in His blood. If the blood of animal sacrifices could stop the effects of sin even for a moment, how much more can the

blood of Jesus who offered Himself to God for us cleanse our consciences from dead works and sanctify us to the service of God. To my mind this chapter presents some striking contrasts: First, the old or first covenant, and the second covenant; second, the blood of animals and the blood of Christ; third, yearly redemption and eternal redemption.

VERSES 15-17. In consideration of the fact that our Lord has obtained eternal redemption and the cleansing of conscience for us, He is the mediator of the first, of the New Testament, but not of the Old; of the second but not of the first. He died for the redemption of the transgressors who lived, sinned and died before His coming. With all the imposing ritual peculiar to the law of Moses that service never blotted out a single sin. Those who lived up to the requirements of the law received the benefits of the only atonement when Jesus entered heaven by his blood. A testament or will cannot be enforced during the life of the testator. Jesus unfolded His testament during His natural life, sealed it by His death and left the unfolding of its provisions in the hands of others.

VERSES 18-21. It is a self-evident truth that a testament cannot be enforced until the death of the testator. The law of Moses could not be enforced until the substitute for Moses the testator had been slain. We have a detailed account of the dedication of the old covenant in the twenty-fourth chapter of Exodus. Moses was very careful to explain to the people all the provisions of the covenant. After he had done this he sprinkled the blood of animals upon the people and upon the Book of the Law, and declared to them that it was the blood of the cov-

enant that God enjoined on them. He also sprinkled this blood upon the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry.

VERSE 22. The character of the covenant is fully revealed in the blood that was used to dedicate it. The blood itself was unclean having in it the elements of decay. How fully it emphasizes the temporary character of the law of Moses, the Levitical priesthood and the tabernacle worship. The shedding of blood is proclaimed as indispensable; without it there could not be even temporary remission under the law; neither is everlasting salvation possible without it under the gospel. Man forfeited his life by sin, hence it takes life or blood to redeem it.

VERSES 23, 24. God's will was gradually unfolded from the transgression to the death of Christ. The sacrifices and offerings of the law were types, patterns or shadows of things yet to come. Every sacrifice in some sense pointed to the gospel and to heaven. When Jesus came He did not enter into the temple made with hands thus perpetuating the old Aaronic order, but suffered without the gate and afterwards entered heaven by His own blood to appear in the presence of God for us. This, to my mind, is the most striking thought in the entire book. Every fact, every command, every promise, every hope of the gospel hangs upon it. We indeed have a High Priest who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. We indeed have a loving Brother who is ever ready and willing to help us by pleading our cause in the presence of our Father.

VERSES 25, 26. The history of the human race from Adam downward is dotted with altars stained with the blood of innocent victims. The perpetual

consciousness of sin was the heritage of every man, hence those who had some knowledge of God coupled with the disposition to serve Him kept their altar fires burning. These things were in a sense regulated by statute under the law, and yet realizing that the altar or the law could not give a good conscience the Lord made provisions for free-will offerings so that the devout worshipper could come any hour of the day he chose and present his offering to his God. The necessity for this arose because the sacrifices could not take away sin. With Jesus it is different. It was not necessary for Him to offer Himself repeatedly, for the one offering was, and is, and will be, sufficient to remove every stain of sin. The phrases "foundation of the world" and "end of the world" in these passages do not necessarily imply the foundation and end of material things, but rather the foundation and abolishment of the law of Moses. In the fourth chapter of Galatians and third verse we have "elements of the world" and it doubtless refers to the same thing. Jesus appeared at the end of the old dispensation or rather ended it with His death. The object of His death is radical, far-reaching, universal, eternal. "He appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." He does not roll it away for a few days, but forever puts it out of sight. We can not lay too much emphasis on this fact. There are many whose ideas of salvation are very unsettled and uncertain. I present to you a Saviour who will really put your sins away if you will trust and obey Him. If you are a Christian it is certain that you can never be damned for the sins you committed before you became one.

VERSES 27, 28. It is appointed unto man to die. No earthly skill can prevent this. It is one of the

results of sin that cannot be cured except by the resurrection from the dead. After life comes death; after death comes judgment; after judgment the flight of eternal years. Jesus was once offered—offered once to bear the sins of many. “Many” in this passage means the whole race, for He tasted death for every man in every age and every country. He is to come again but not as a Saviour, neither as a sacrifice for sin, but He is to come in triumph taking vengeance on those who know not God and obey not His Son.

I draw six lessons from this chapter :

I. Notwithstanding the day of atonement provided for by the law, great emphasis is laid on the daily ministration, and this emphasizes the truth that daily service is well-pleasing in the sight of God.

II. The way into the holiest of all or heaven itself was not made known while the first tabernacle was yet standing.

III. A testament cannot be enforced until the death of the testator, hence the law of Moses was not fully enforced until its dedication at Mt. Sinai, and the gospel could not be preached in its fullness until after Christ arose from the dead.

IV. Jesus offered Himself once for sin, and then departed from earth to appear in the presence of God for the sons and daughters of men.

V. The three great words of this chapter are, salvation, death and judgment. May we enjoy the full benefits of the first that we may escape the dangers of the second and third!

VI. Amen.



## SERMON XX.

TEXT: "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, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst 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 wouldst 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. This 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 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.

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?

30. For we know him that hath said, Vengeance *belongeth* unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The 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.

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

38. Now the 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 (Heb., 10 : 1-39)."

INTRODUCTION.—This chapter may be considered as a summing up or a conclusion of the argument in the previous chapter.

VERSES 1-4. "The law having a shadow of good things to come." This evidently refers to the law of sacrifice as the ten commandments could not in their nature be typical of anything. It is thought by many that the gospel is only a continuation of the law, but this is without foundation in fact, for the law bore to the gospel the relation that the shadow bears to the tree. Indeed the law did not perfectly foreshadow anything in the gospel. There were many things that the law could do : (1). It bound the nation together. (2). It gradually prepared them for the day of the Messiah's coming. (3). It made them

superior to the nations around them. There were many things that the law could not do: (1). It could not give justification. (2). It could not give life. (3). It could not give righteousness. (4). It could not give perfection. (5). It could not produce a good conscience. When it came to the real or vital question, the remission of sins, the law, at best, to the most devout worshipper could give only temporary relief. Indeed, this was Jehovah's plan from the beginning. The ever-returning day of atonement proved that under this system man was continually conscious of sin. This can be clearly seen when we reflect that if the worshipper had been once purged of his sins, the necessity of the repetition of the offering by which it was done would have been forever abrogated. The worshipper was not only personally conscious of sin, but the ever-recurring sacrifice for sin reminded him also of that fact. The law afforded a good temporary remedy, but it was nothing more, for in the very nature and constitution of things it was impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin.

VERSES 5-10. It is asserted that we are redeemed by the blood of Jesus, as a lamb without blemish and without spot. He was foreordained before the foundation of the world, and every bleeding sacrifice offered on Hebrew altars was a prophecy of His coming. When He came into the world He recognized the fact that the Father no longer desired of men the presentation of animal sacrifices. The Father had previously taken pleasure in these sacrifices because they afforded temporary relief to His children, but now He desires not these sacrifices, hence the words of His Son on coming into the world were: "I come to

do thy will, O God." Note the statement, "A body hast thou prepared for me." He doubtless had done the Father's will before coming to earth, but the Father prepared Him a body like unto ours that He might demonstrate before men and angels that the will of God may be done even by man in the flesh. In the ninth verse it is asserted that He (Jesus) took away the first that He might establish the second. What first? I answer, the first covenant or will of God revealed through Moses. Second what? His second covenant, or will of God in Christ. Jesus did not enlarge; He did not reconstruct; He did not perpetuate the old institution. He took it out of the way. In other words, He dissolved all previously existing relationships and caused both Jew and Gentile to stand in precisely the same relationship to Him. The fact that the Jews had previously enjoyed the revelations of God did not change the fact that they needed the gospel just as much as anybody else. The fact that the institution under which the Jew lived constantly reminded him that he was a sinner did not make it any less necessary that he should be convicted of sin under the gospel. Notwithstanding the fact that, by tradition, revelation and choice he had been of the chosen race for generations, it did not give him a passport into the new institution, or the privilege of partaking of a single one of its blessings without compliance with the conditions on which they were promised. I lay great emphasis on two facts—first covenant or will; second covenant or will. The first filled its place, was rolled up and laid away preparatory to the proclamation of the second. God's gradual unfolding of His will had ripened man's heart and experience to the point where

he was ready for more than temporary relief from sin, and the day having arrived it was impossible for the temporary measures to play any longer even a minor part. By the will of God is meant, His desires arbitrarily given without consulting a human being. His government is a despotism, but it is a despotism of love. His throne is eternal and His sceptre righteousness. The tenth verse contains a lesson which the world seems to have overlooked. The body of Jesus was offered as a sacrifice for our sins, and we are sanctified by the will of Christ. We are not sanctified by the blood of goats and calves, but we are sanctified by the blood of the everlasting covenant shed by Jesus Christ once for all, in all ages, all men. By the word "sanctify" the writer teaches the lesson of setting apart to salvation and to the glory, honor and service of God.

VERSES 11-14. The priests of the old institution were numerous, earnest and persistent. They presented their sacrifices day by day continually. Not only this, they repeatedly offered the same sacrifice, but this could not remove a single sin. When Jesus came He offered Himself once and sat down at His Father's right hand to reign until all of His enemies are put down under His feet, and by the presentation of one perfect offering He has perfected once for all those who are sanctified by faith and obedience unto Him.

VERSES 15-18. The Holy Spirit is perpetual witness to one fact—God, from the beginning, intended in the last days to really take away sin. He declared that He would put His law in their minds and hearts and remember their sins against them no more for-

ever. While the gospel differs from the law in many respects, the great difference lies just here: The sins of the Hebrew on his day of atonement was rolled away for one year; our sins when rolled upon Christ are borne away forever. The offering that has been presented for us not only removes past sins but delivers us from the love and dominion of sin, hence we can not, nor do not, need any more sacrifice for sins. The new remedy for sin is at once radical, perpetual and eternal.

VERSES 19-21. The one great theme of the gospel of Jesus Christ is, present and everlasting deliverance from sin, and the one thing needful to the disciple of Christ is to realize what this salvation means to him personally, for without this he can not be expected to do much for the salvation of those about him. The way into the holiest of all, which is heaven itself, has been opened by the blood of Jesus Christ. It is a new way, a living way, a consecrated way. It is a new way because utterly unlike any other way. It is a living way because it is perpetual and along it is life. It is a consecrated way because it was first trodden by the Redeemer Himself. This way begins at the Cross and ends at the crown. We have a High Priest over the House of God. The House of God is the Church of God, the pillar and support of the truth. Our High Priest was made and is like unto His brethren. He is able to save and ready to be merciful to those who are out of the way. His mission and truth have given, and do give, great dignity to the children of men. We are delivered through Him from sin and selfishness into the marvelous light of liberty to the children of God.

Through Him we have boldness in approaching the throne of grace and plenty. Without Him we can not approach the Father in any sense or way.

VERSES 22, 23. In view of the throne of plenty, the great High Priest and the living way, we are at liberty to draw nigh unto God. How strikingly this contrasts with the conduct of the children of Jacob when they fled from the presence of the Lord at Mt. Sinai! The result of drawing nigh to the throne of God depends upon the spirit in which we come. We must come with a true heart—a heart true to ourselves, our fellow men and our God. We must come in the full assurance of faith, which means we are to come dependent upon the promises of God. We must come, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience. We must come, having our bodies washed with pure water. The twenty-second verse is a brief statement of turning unto God and living unto Him. We have here a change of heart, Christian baptism and the life of trust. God is faithful. In view of this we are exhorted to hold fast the profession of our faith. If we lose our grasp on the truth we at once lose our interest in the service of God. The expression “faith without wavering” is a volume condensed into a few words. Few of us realize our possibilities in serving and saving because we do not realize or grasp the full and living meaning of the living promises as set before us.

VERSES 24, 25. We serve God by serving those about us. The one great secret of the happy Christian life is to find Christian employment for all our faculties. In the first verse of the third chapter we are exhorted to consider Jesus. Here we are exhorted to consider one another. The man who considers



Jesus only, is apt to become a dreamer, while the man who considers men only is apt to become discouraged. Consider Jesus as the source of light, strength and help. Consider man as His brother. We are to provoke or encourage each other to good works, and in order to do this successfully we should assemble ourselves together often. We are to exhort one another, and to increase in fervency as we see the day approaching. It is difficult to tell what day is meant here, but for our present purpose it is sufficient to say that we should do what we can now, for the day of opportunity shall soon end.

VERSES 26-29. It is very difficult to define willful sin. John declares that there is a sin unto death (I. John, 5: 16), and this statement must be accepted as final. It is a fact that we all sin and that the will is, in a sense, invariably involved, but by willful sin, I think, is meant the calm, cold, deliberate, and eternal abandonment of Christ. Few men do this, but there must be danger, otherwise warning would not have been given. I think the statement was made primarily for the Hebrew Christians. It is a fitting climax to the long argument made in Romans, Galatians and Hebrews. The Jew had fully tried the sacrifices required by the law of Moses and the Christians among them had also received the knowledge of salvation by the blood of Christ—abandoning Him therefore they were left without hope and without God in the world! Some were tempted to do this because they were weak; others did it because they did not like the price demanded in perpetual service. A terrible picture follows. The man who despised the law of Moses died without mercy. What shall we say of the enlightened Christian who shall turn his back upon

Christ and deliberately plunge into sin again? Language utterly fails me and imagination trembles at the thought.

VERSES 30, 31. Vengeance is in the hands of the Lord. The power to take vengeance belongs to Him and He never has in any sense authorized us to do it. He is a good pay master and will bring every man to a full settlement at last. It is a fearful thing to fall into His hands. Mercy calls and judgment threatens, and the choice lies with you.

VERSES 32, 33. The first Hebrew converts abandoned much for the cause of Christ. Practically they forsook their religion, their country and their nation. Conversion here is called illumination. I like the word. The ancient disciples here mentioned endured a great fight of affliction. Persecution, stoning, prison and death were the portion of many of them. The eyes of the world were upon them. They not only suffered personally but suffered in seeing those they loved persecuted. It cost something in those days to be a Christian. The price paid by the early Christian for the privilege of serving God was the abandonment of all unlawful fleshly appetites and desires, and a willingness to dare and do even in the presence of the open prison doors or the open grave. We have much to say about apostolic Christianity—let us have more to say about apostolic zeal and self-denial.

VERSE 34. This passage establishes the fact that Paul is the author of this book. When he stood before Agrippa he was in chains (Acts 26: 1-32). When he wrote his letter to the Phillipians he was still in bonds or chains (Phil., 1: 7), and when he wrote his second letter to Timothy just before his

death he referred to the fact that Onesiphorus had often refreshed him and was not ashamed of his chains (II. Tim., 1: 16). In the statement under consideration it appears that many had sympathized with Paul in his chains when they knew that by recognizing him their property would be destroyed. This devotion is commendable and is worthy of imitation. Incidentally we have an allusion to heaven here that should be profitable to us. It is not a dreamland, neither is it a place of baseless visions. It is a place of enduring things.

VERSES 35-37. In view of the sacrifice that these people had made in standing by Paul and their faith, he exhorted them not to cast away their confidence. In reality, earth afforded no compensation for what they had done. Reward is promised to those who are faithful, but we must be patient. The promise lies at the end of a faithful life whether it be long or short. It is not a question simply of being saved but rather a question of schooling ourselves up to the point where we can enjoy eternal salvation. The contest may be fierce. The days of our training may be long and wearisome, but in a little while the Lord shall come and earth's troubles shall be forever swallowed up in heaven's joys.

VERSES 38, 39. The just, which is another name for the Christian, lives by faith—faith in God, faith in the promises, faith in the better time that is sure to come. Faith looks forward, onward and upward. Unbelief looks within, backward and downward. Paul's heart was set on those whom he had been instrumental in saving. The expression, "My soul shall have no pleasure in him" makes this perfectly clear, for what joy could he or any one else get out

of an apostate. While he gave this warning he had great confidence in his brethren. They had been well taught; they had been confirmed in the faith; they had been well admonished. Men are saved in an important sense when they take upon themselves the name of Jesus in obedience to His gospel, but everlasting deliverance does not come until the end of the journey.

I draw seven lessons from this chapter :

I. The law prefigured or foreshadowed the gospel of Christ. We must make our appeal therefore to the gospel and not to the law.

II. The offerings made in obedience to the law of Moses could never permanently take away sin, hence the necessity of the coming and death of Christ.

III. The priests of old stood day after day at the altar presenting oftentimes the same sacrifices. Jesus presented Himself once and then sat down at the right hand of God.

IV. The law put off the penalty of sin from day to day and from year to year. The sacrifice of Jesus puts it away once and forever.

V. The way to heaven is a new and living way, hence we can not find the way save by listening to the direction of Jesus and the apostles.

VI. We are warned against willful sin. This warning was primarily intended for the Hebrew Christians. I take it to mean the deliberate turning away from the blood of Christ for remission of sins.

VII. Vengeance belongs to God. He has not delegated to us any authority in this matter. He is patient, but those who scorn Him will at last find out it is a fearful thing to fall into His hands.

## SERMON XXI.

TEXT: "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.

4. By faith Abel 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 Enoch 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.

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 Noah, 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.

8. By faith Abraham, 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.

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

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

11. Through faith also Sara 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.

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.

17. By faith Abraham, 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 in Isaac shall thy seed be called :

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 Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.

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

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

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

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

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

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 he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them.

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

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

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

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 things for us, that they without us should not be made perfect (Heb., 11 : 1-40).''

INTRODUCTION. This chapter forms a fitting climax to all that preceded it. After having argued clearly, scripturally and conclusively that men cannot

be justified or saved by the law He proceeds to show that faith has been the magic influence that has opened the door of salvation from the beginning downward. While we are living under pre-eminently the dispensation of grace, it is true that those who were justified in other ages were justified by faith.

VERSE 1. The Bible is not a book of definitions. In this respect it is unlike all other books. It treats men upon the supposition that they are capable of understanding their own language, and therefore proceeds to unfold its plan and purposes as if every man was familiar with the terms used. However, a brief definition is here given of faith. Faith is a "substance," a firm conviction, a full persuasion, with reference to things that are to come. Sight takes hold of temporal things; faith takes hold of spiritual things. Sight takes hold upon things that pass like a cloud, away; faith takes hold on that which is enduring and everlasting. Sight gratifies our passing fancies; faith is a spring of perpetual joy. In brief, faith is taking God at His word (Rom., 4: 13-21).

VERSES 2, 3. After giving us this brief definition of faith the apostle proceeds to show us what it is, by demonstrating what it has done for others. Right here I wish to emphasize an important fact: It is not faith in the heart, but faith reaching out into the conduct that tells. It is like giving up a bad habit; the work must begin in the heart and the rest of the work will be easy. If we set our hearts on the things of God, our lives will inevitably show that we have done it. The long line of persons mentioned in this chapter made their names immortal by living and



walking by faith, even before God's revelation was completed. By faith the elders obtained a good report or name. I am not sure who these elders were, but I presume they were those who served God whose names are not recorded in this chapter. Faith alone did not secure the blessing, but by faith, which always includes obedience, they attained to it. To the unbeliever, the origin and existence of the universe are profound mysteries, but we, by faith, perceive that all things were framed by the word of God—He spoke and things that were not, were. The latter half of this verse is considered difficult. I think I can make it clear to you. All things that we see are made of previously existing material. Man by combining and re-combining material furnished him by nature, presents to our consideration an endless variety of evidences of his own genius, but he cannot create a single thing. There was a time when all this material was not. God spoke and the universe was! He spoke again and its numberless tenantry yielded unto Him incense, devotion and praise! He speaks again and the refreshing showers come down upon us and grass and flowers crown the hills and carpet the valleys! I cannot explain the process by which He spoke these things into existence. All I know is, that He is Almighty, and when He speaks His will is done.

VERSE 4. This chapter does not simply discuss faith; it also discusses what men did by faith. This is an important distinction and I suggest that you bear it constantly in mind. By faith we take hold of the person and promises of Jesus, and by faith we do what He commands when we cannot see any reason for the doing, save His authority. Abel believed God,

and thus offered his sacrifice by faith. The acceptableness of the sacrifice was, and is, determined by two things ; first, exact and unreserved obedience to the Lord's commandment, and, second, the spirit in which it is done. All good deeds begin in the heart. Intrinsically, I cannot see why an animal sacrifice is any better than a vegetable sacrifice save that God commanded the one and thus prohibited the other. Cain and Abel stand forever in the annals of time as illustrations of hearty and heartless obedience. By offering his sacrifice in the proper spirit Abel obtained witness that he was righteous, for God testified of his gifts. From this we may learn that there is a point in hearty obedience where the soul of the creature fully responds to all the attributes of the Creator, and thus each obedient soul has the witness in himself. Abel doubtless presented his sacrifice without a thought of fame, but by that simple act of faith he made his name immortal, and from the morning of time he has spoken and yet speaks.

VERSE 5. Enoch was a man of faith, and by faith he walked—walked with God. God recognized the faith that he exhibited and took him unto Himself. We cannot escape physical death, but by a close walk with God we may escape many of the temptations to which flesh is heir.

VERSE 6. No man has ever been able to please God without faith. This forever excludes the moralist. God requires more of us than simple justice and charity. In attempting to serve God there are some things we must do. We must believe that He is, "without an exception and without a doubt." We must believe that rewards are in His hands and we must seek Him diligently. Faith opens up to us the

possibilities of human nature under the redeeming love of Jesus Christ.

VERSE 7. Noah's faith was in his heart first. God spoke to him. He believed and feared. The Lord did not go into particulars, but simply declared what He was going to do. Noah did not ask for particulars but proceeded to obey. He was moved by fear. Faith, fear and love form a trinity that forever plays a part in the redemption of man. Noah believed, feared, loved and obeyed, and salvation followed. He did not endeavor to save himself by faith alone, but spent many years in a laborious effort to prepare an ark to save both himself and house. By doing these things he became the heir of righteousness which is by faith.

VERSES 8-16. The story of Abraham and Sarah is a spring of perpetual delight. By faith Abraham left his native country and went out not knowing his destination. It was not faith in his heart simply but faith exhibited in his conduct that has made his name a household word in every age and country. "By faith Abraham \* \* \* obeyed." He did not stay at home by faith, but he went promptly by faith at the command of God. He is our father and we should therefore learn of him. His life illustrates the greatest possible confidence in the word of God. It also illustrates the importance of prompt obedience. By faith he made the long journey from Ur to the land of Canaan, where, notwithstanding the fact that God had promised him the land, he willingly became a sojourner with the heirs of the promises. Why did he do this? How did he do this? The tenth verse answers these questions fully. He believed in a hereafter and sought a city of permanency whose Archi-

tect and Builder is God. I am almost ready to say that nothing is impossible to the man or woman of faith. By faith Sarah recovered strength to conceive and bear a son in her old age. From the human standpoint this seems well nigh incredible, but from the Divine standpoint all things are possible. Sarah "judged" Him faithful who had promised. If you will do this, many of life's difficulties will be taken out of the way. The chief trouble with us is that we attempt to solve our problems without faith or by weak faith. The faith that freely, fully, unexceptionally takes God at His word sees no difficulties. For long years Sarah waited in deepest anxiety for a son. She even laughed incredulously at the promise, but at last she measured up to the full meaning of the words that fell from Jehovah, and thus she became the mother of a family as numberless as the sands of the sea. Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham and Sarah died in the faith without having realized the fullness of the promises of God. They only saw them afar off. They were fully persuaded of the truthfulness of all that God had said, although they had not lived to put it all to the test. Their conception of the power and goodness and truthfulness of Jehovah amazes me. O, the beauty of the life of trust! Would to God that we could attain to the sublime heights to which they climbed! Would to God that we could take Him at His word as did they! We seek after this world. They confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims in the earth, yet they always had plenty. They had a higher object than the accumulation of the things that perish. They sought something more permanent than this earth affords. Abraham and Sarah who left their native

country did not lay any plans to return. They showed themselves perfectly willing to relinquish it without any hope of ever visiting their friends and relations again. Only God our Father can give a reward for such a sacrifice as this. God is not ashamed to be called the God of those who believe and obey, for He is preparing for them a city.

VERSES 17-19. Faith must grow. In order to growth it must be fed. It feeds upon the words or promises of God. It must be cultivated. It is cultivated by obedience to the Lord's commands. It must be tested. It is tested by our trials. Abraham was put to the test. God told him to offer Isaac his son upon the altar. He arose promptly on the following morning and proceeded to the mount of sacrifice. Isaac was his only legitimate son and the heir of the promises, and yet he hesitated not. He proceeded as he did when he left his native country, not knowing what the end would be. He inferred that God was able to raise Isaac from the dead. It seems remarkable unto us that a man would be willing to sacrifice his only son on an inference, and yet this was what Abraham proposed to do. Jesus declared that Abraham saw his day (John, 8: 56-58). He must have seen it on the mountain of sacrifice. Paul says concerning Isaac that Abraham received him as from the dead. The expression "from whence also he received him in a figure," taken in connection with the words of the Master, indicate to my mind that from the summit of Mount Moriah Abraham beheld the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. A man never sees much until he loses sight of himself. On the mountain of sacrifice Abraham's will was completely

subjugated to, and swallowed up in, the will of God. Salvation from sin certainly does imply salvation from self.

VERSES 20-22. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob did not live to see the fulfillment of the two promises. 'Isaac in his old age blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. I drop the thought here that although Esau was rejected from being the medium or means of fulfilling the promises he was not rejected from the blessings of God. Isaac was fully persuaded that the promises were true although he did not live to see their fulfillment. Jacob when upon his dying bed blessed the sons of Joseph and told of the better times that were to come. Joseph's faith in the promises of God was unshaken down to the end, for he gave commandment to his people to carry his bones up out of Egypt when the day of their deliverance should come.

VERSES 23-29. Moses descended from people who were fully persuaded that the promises of God were true, although, at the time of his birth, death and sorrow reigned everywhere among his people on the account of the cruel edict of the king of Egypt. His mother saw something in his face that made her fearless of the king's decree; probably she saw in him by faith the future deliverer of Israel. She cared for him until at last, under the Providence of God, he was adopted into the family of the king. Moses grew toward manhood, but he did not forget his early training. I doubt not that his mother had impressed upon his mind her hope that he would lead his people back to the land of promise. When he became a matured man he refused to be recognized as Pharaoh's grandson. He made a deliberate choice. He gave

up riches, honor and royalty forever, and publicly identified himself with the people of God.' A man's conduct is the test of the strength of his faith. By faith Moses gave up everything for the cause of those he loved. You can test your faith by measuring it by the amount of sacrifice you are willing to make for the cause of the Lord. He identified himself with an oppressed, helpless and enslaved people. History does not furnish a parallel to the sacrifices he made. He chose afflictions and reproaches, and thrust from him the pleasures of Egypt. Moses, like many of his faithful ancestors, looked forward to the day of Christ. He had respect unto the reward that he believed was sure to come. A man cannot do as Moses did without the help of a mighty faith. A shepherd's crook in the hand of a believing man became more powerful in the palace of Pharaoh than the royal sceptre. By faith he struck ten mighty blows, and the shackles fell from the sons and daughters of Jacob; and the first note of universal liberty rang throughout Egypt. He endured because he saw Him who is invisible. His faith looked beyond the veil. True faith always takes hold on God. Through faith they kept the Passover and when the angel of destruction passed through Egypt on the last eventful night of their sojourn there, Israel escaped unhurt. Moses' faith enabled him to sing the lullaby of a new-born nation and enabled him to carry it in his bosom forty years. By faith they passed through the Red sea because the angel of God went before them and opened the way. Moses had imperfections, but when we consider his faith, his courage, his patience, his labors, his unselfish devotion to others, I hesitate not to say that next to the

Son of Man and Saul of Tarsus he is the world's best illustration of what one man can do.

VERSES 30, 31. The results of faith cannot be estimated or measured. Under the old dispensation the results were often of a physical character. By faith the walls of Jericho fell, and by faith the harlot Rahab escaped the destruction of the city. This woman stands out in bold contrast to the degeneracy and corruption of her times.

VERSES 32-38. It seems that it is scarcely necessary to say anything more, for the examples that have already been given should inspire us to stronger faith and greater faithfulness. With one stroke of his pen the apostle practically takes in all the good that were before him. Gideon, with his faithful band of three hundred, by blowing trumpets, breaking pitchers, lifting their lamps on high and shouting, "The sword of the Lord and Gideon," put the Midianites to flight. Barak led the Israelites against the Canaanites and gained a great victory in the name of the Lord. Samson did many wonderful things, for the spirit of the Lord moved him. Jephthae magnanimously led the children of Israel against their foes even after he had been insolently thrust out of his father's house. David led the armies of the Lord against His enemies and victory followed victory. Samuel led the people out of the depths of corruption and developed them into a nation of intelligent freemen, and at the time of one of his great victories he set up a stone between Mizpeh and Shen and called it Ebenezer, declaring that hitherto the Lord had been their helper. The prophets and people of God have done wondrous things by faith. By faith David pushed his conquests from the river of Egypt to the river Euphrates, and



thus was the promise of God fulfilled. By faith Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel walked in the ways of God. By faith Daniel escaped the lion's den unhurt. By faith, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego walked through the fire unhurt. The faithful armies of Israel were always victorious. By faith we grow from weakness to strength. By faith men were and are inspired to fight the armies that are opposed to the right. By faith women of God received their dead back to life. Myriads were persecuted, tortured and afflicted, but they endured them because they believed the promises of God.

VERSES 38-40. The world was not worthy of these devoted men and women, and yet they were wanderers or pilgrims in the earth; but they pushed energetically onward in the service of the Lord and received a good report, but died without receiving the promise. God has provided better things for us, and these things are to be found in the gospel of his Son.

I draw from this chapter six lessons:

I. Faith, true Christian faith, has always been and is yet, taking God at His word. It may be different in degree but never in kind.

II. Faith effects our hearts and consciences first, but the faith that justifies is the faith that shows itself in our conduct.

III. Faith solves all the problems of the universe by resolving them all into the power and sovereignty of God. To the earnest believer there are no difficulties in either spiritual or temporal things. God knows all things and always does right.

IV. It is impossible to please God without faith. The moral man may be a public benefactor or a good neighbor. He may lead relatively a clean life but he

cannot be a servant of God. All pleasing service has its roots in the promises of God.

V. Patriarchs and prophets achieved wondrous things by faith. Many of them, under the kindness of God, grew rich in the things of this world, but in making up the roll of the truly faithful and famous, the apostles leaves out material things, demonstrating beyond a doubt that a man's life is not to be measured by the things he possesses.

VI. The best of men and women recognize their own frailties and imperfections. Abel, Enoch, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Gideon, Barak, Jephthae, Samuel, and many other illustrious saints whose names are not mentioned, were men of frailty like unto ourselves, but they triumphed by believing.

## SERMON XXII.

TEXT: "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, My 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 *you*, and thereby many be defiled ;

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

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

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

19. And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words ; which *voice* they that heard entreated that 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 firstborn, 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, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.

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 (Heb., 12: 1-29)."

INTRODUCTION. "Wherefore"—many of the lessons of this chapter are the outgrowth of what is said in the preceding chapter. Paul was a great reasoner, and he never lost an opportunity to draw a practical lesson.

VERSES 1, 2. The great cloud of witnesses here mentioned are referred to by name in the preceding chapter. A witness is one who testifies in behalf of some person or cause. Abel, Enoch, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Gideon, Barak, Jephthae, Samson, Samuel, David and the numberless prophets and people of ages past, testify out of their abundant experiences that the promises of God are true, and that it is a good thing to unselfishly do the will of God. The early Christians had the testimony of the ancient saints. We have the benefit of those who testified to the truthfulness of the gospel in all the Christian ages. Paul has in his mind here the ancient races in which men ran for earthly prizes, while thousands of spectators gazed on and applauded. In the race for the immortal crown God, angels, saints and men look on. The race track has been smoothed by the millions of feet that have pressed it in ages past. In the ancient races the contestants made great preparations by physical training.' They ran with weights for practice in order that when the grand day came on they could run the more successfully. When the day came for the contest they laid

aside every weight; they all ran. Some stumbled and fell; some fainted and gave up; only one obtained the coveted prize! The Christian should be thoroughly prepared for the race by exercising himself unto godliness. Each Christian has a weight peculiar to himself, but there is only one besetting sin and it is peculiar to the whole race of man. One man's weight is the love of money; another man's weight is the disposition to lie; another man's weight is slothfulness; and another man's weight is thirst for power. Contradictory as it may appear, a man's weakest point is his greatest weight! What is the besetting sin? Take a view of the past and note those who have fallen—it is the sin of unbelief. Each man is therefore exhorted to fortify himself at his weakest point and avoid the awful sin of unbelief. Your faith will surely measure your success in the Christian life. We are exhorted to “run with patience the race that is set before us.” It is equally dangerous to run too fast or too slow. We should strike a steady gait and keep at it. Many stumble, many faint and many fall in the Christian race. The Christian race differs from the ancient race of which I have spoken, for in them the contest is narrowed down to one, but for us there is a crown awaiting for each one who reaches the goal. The ancient runners looked to a fading or corruptible crown. We look to Jesus. He is the author and finisher of the Christian faith. He holdeth the riches of the world in His hand. He set us an example of patient waiting and endurance. Anticipating the glory at His Father's right hand He endured the Cross.

VERSES 3-13. Jesus endured the hatred, contradiction and antagonism of sinners. This He did, not

because He needed it, but for our sakes. This is the second time we are exhorted to consider Him. The thought of what He endured should inspire us to a service in which we should neither weary nor faint. The battle is a bloodless contest. We strive against sin within us and sin all about us. We should not follow the example of those who have fallen and forget the Lord. We should not despise the chastisements of the Lord. Jesus set us the example of patient and uncomplaining submission to the will of God. We must follow in His steps. His trials were bitter ; His pains were excruciating ; His disgrace in the eyes of men was indescribable, and yet He complained not and threatened not. He appealed His case to the Righteous Judge, and the Cross of shame became the synonym of universal triumph and unending glory. Our fathers chastise us in our childhood for our good. Present troubles or chastisements indeed seem grievous, but in the end they strengthen our faith, deepen our courage and brighten our hopes. Just as the earthly father knows the needs of his child better than the child itself, so our Father, the Father of spirits, knows what His adopted children need under all circumstances. Everything tends to ultimate and eternal good. This is true of us as individuals if we trust and work, and it is equally true of the whole earth. The trials of our faith exercise us unto the peaceable fruits of righteousness. Present chastisements are indeed hard to bear, but there is a sovereign and unfailing remedy : First, after sorrow comes joy ; after the battle comes peace ; after tears comes rejoicing ; after the night comes the morning ; and second, and most important, we must lend ourselves to the necessities of those about us.

There are many feeble hands. We must hold them up as Aaron and Hur held up the hands of Moses. There are many knees that appear to be insufficient for the burden—lend a hand. While helping others we must be careful not to forget our own interests. We must make straight paths for our feet, and thus set an example to those who, on account of lameness, are in danger of being turned out of the way.

VERSES 14–17. The Christian age is designed to be pre-eminently an age of peace. Jesus left His peace with the disciples, and the obedient soul is promised the peace that passeth all understanding. We are to be at peace with all men, and this surely includes ourselves. If you will do as you would be done by, you will never have a protracted quarrel with any man. Absolute holiness is an attribute of God. Without holiness no man shall see the Lord. Holiness is purity. Jesus said, “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God (Matt., 5: 8).” I think that it is impossible for a human being to attain absolute holiness in this life, but by setting his affections on things above he may walk through the fires of persecution without being scorched; he may invade the ranks of corruption without being defiled, or run the Christian race without stumbling or growing weary. We are exhorted to diligence. In Jesus Christ we have an inspiring example of this. He was always about His Father’s business. He never turned aside unto vanity. He never stopped to think where the next meal would come from. Diligence is needed for two reasons: First, it intensifies our zeal; and, second, it divorces and delivers us from outside influences. It keeps down bitter and bad influences and therefore prevents personal or general defilement.



We should be as diligent in the Lord's business as in our own ; indeed, personal interests should always be subordinated to the kingdom of Christ. Diligence, like every other good thing, begins in the heart. As your heart is so shall your life or usefulness be. Esau is held up to us as an example of profaneness and fornication. He practically sold his birthright for nothing. He lightly esteemed that which was worth to him more than all other worldly interests. When he awoke to his loss he changed his mind, but found no place of repentance in the mind of his father. Esau's regret and remorse were vain. I hold him up as a warning to you to-day. If he sold the birthright to an earthly estate, may we not be in danger of selling our everlasting birthright for a mess of pottage? This illustration teaches us that sometimes men and nations go one step too far. It is a great risk to take steps in the direction of danger hoping to retrace them. Beware of the first step in the wrong direction. Avoid rashness, and be deliberate. Count the cost and keep yourself in the love of God. In questions of doubtful propriety it is better to do nothing than to take what is apparently the wrong side. The Bible means much when it exhorts us to stand fast (Gal., 5 : 1).

VERSES 18-21. We have here a very forcible description of the occurrences at Mt. Sinai at the giving of the Law, coupled with the assurance that we have not come unto the mount that might be touched. There the trumpet startled the people and the voice of God spread terror throughout the camp. The statement here attributed to Moses is not to be found in the Old Testament, but I have no doubt he said it, for Paul evidently knew what he was talking about.

The New Testament constantly emphasizes the fact that Christians are not under the law, yet many of them vainly linger round about Mt. Sinai vainly hoping to find the way of life. There never was any life in the law of Moses. Life is in Jesus Christ and no where else.

VERSES 22-24. To what are we come? The answer is unmistakable. We are come unto Mt. Sion or Zion, from whence the gospel first began to be sounded to all nations (Isa., 2: 1-3; Acts, 2: 1-47). Not only this, we are come unto the heavenly Jerusalem and to an innumerable company of angels. The general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, belongs both to earth and to heaven. Part of the children of God are on the other side and part are lingering here. We are hastening to the presence of the Judge of all. The spirits of just men made perfect are the spirits of those who lived according to their light in other ages. Abraham was counted righteous when he believed God (Gen., 15: 6). He was justified when he offered his son Isaac on the altar (Jas., 2: 21-23). His justification was perfected or finished when Jesus entered heaven by His own blood. There has never been or will there ever be salvation outside of Him (Heb., 9: 15-17). A mediator is one who comes between parties at variance in order to effect a reconciliation. Jesus gave Himself for us and He stands between us and the Father even unto this day. The blood of sprinkling is the blood of Jesus. It has been asserted that He shed all of His blood. His blood doubtless began to flow when He was scourged. The crown of thorns doubtless cut His noble brow. The nails in His

hands and feet opened the flood-gates of His life-blood during the long hours of His suffering, and the cruel spear was the last act in the awful tragedy. Abel's sacrifice spoke of confidence in a Redeemer to come. The blood of Jesus speaks of present, perfect and perpetual salvation.

VERSES 25-27. Those who refused to hear Moses who spake on earth were put to death. He was in a large sense a temporal deliverer. Jesus speaks from heaven. His authority cannot be denied. His power can not be resisted, and His vengeance can not be prevented. The voice of Omnipotence in the days of Moses caused the earth to tremble, and the same voice will yet shake heaven and earth. This proves that earthly things are unstable, uncertain and doomed to destruction. Material things shall pass away, but a good character—a character sanctified by the presence and power of Jesus Christ, will outshine the sun long after the god of day has gone out in eternal darkness.

VERSES 28, 29. The kingdom of God is now an established fact. We are citizens of His kingdom. His kingdom can not be moved. It is here contrasted with material things which shall certainly be destroyed. May the grace and favor of God be multiplied unto us! We must serve God acceptably. Acceptable service grows out of the heart. It is compounded of faith, hope, unselfishness and persistence. Reverence and fear temper the whole compound. Our God is a great God. We must approach Him humbly and with trembling. He is a consuming fire. Woe unto the man who heedlessly rushes into His presence!

I draw from this chapter seven lessons :

I. Each man has his own peculiar weight, but the besetting sin is unbelief, and is peculiar to the whole human race.

II. Patriarchs, prophets, apostles and martyrs bear testimony to the truth of the promises of God and the blessedness of His service.

III. The Christian race is before us. Those who have fallen, by their example exhort us to patient continuance unto the end.

IV. The chastisements of the Lord are for our good. While our sufferings may seem grievous now they tend to our ultimate and eternal good.

V. We are exhorted to hold on to our birthright. Esau sold his for a mess of pottage, but he was not able to regain it at any price.

VI. We should not confound the law of Moses and the gospel of Christ. We are not come unto Mt. Sinai but unto Mt. Zion. Let us appreciate our blessed heritage.

VII. All terrestrial things must perish. Truth, holiness and love are eternal. Choosing the better part, we shall outlive all things about us.

## SERMON XXIII.

TEXT: "Let brotherly love continue.

2. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some 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 whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

5. *Let your conversation 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* conversation.

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 meats, 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 without the camp.

12. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood suffered without the gate.

13. Let us go forth therefore unto him without 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 communicate 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. (Heb., 13: 1-25)."

INTRODUCTION.—The beginning of this chapter contrasts very strangely with the ending of the chapter before it. In the last verse of the twelfth chapter we are assured that our God is a consuming fire. This chapter begins with a brief allusion to brotherly love. Love is of God, but a God of love will at last judge us all.

VERSES 1, 2. If God is love, love is the highest expression of human kinship to Him. Brotherly love, like every other good thing, begins in the heart. If the God of love touches us on the one side, we should

touch our brother on the other, and thus shall love flow from heart to heart. Hospitality is often emphasized and commended in the word of God. Life is short, but opportunities to do good are all about us. Abraham, our father, was a hospitable man. He entertained angels unawares. "Unawares" in this passage indicates that he did not know whom he was entertaining, and this gives us a better idea of the genuineness of his hospitality. Almost any one would be glad to entertain an angel! It would be profitable to you to take your Bible and search out the word "stranger," for this would enable you to know how to treat him the next time he appears at your door. In early times the enemies of Christianity admit that their contemporary Christians were given to hospitality.

VERSE 3. We are commanded to remember them that are in bonds. Many are bound in poverty; many are bound in obscurity; many are bound in hopelessness; many are bound in chains, and many are behind prison doors. We can not sympathize with them as we should without mentally exchanging places with them. Let us reflect that being in the body that misfortune may overtake us in an hour. Only those who have and do suffer can fully enter into the sorrows and troubles of others. I heard a very touching story illustrative of this. A woman lost her only child, and in consequence was almost heart-broken. Many of her friends and neighbors came with flowers and kind words and did what they could to console her, but still her tears flowed in bitterest grief. At last a poor woman, who had lost her baby, came into the chamber of the dead, and without a word sat down by the little coffin and wept. Tears

answered unto tears; grief answered unto grief; moan answered unto moan, and the stricken mother was consoled. Sorrows and trials school and prepare us to help others. It should be our constant aim to be of real use to the poor and distressed about us. We serve God by serving those whom He has afflicted.

VERSE 4. All men seek after honor. The marriage relation was instituted by the Almighty, endorsed by His Son, and is therefore recognized by them still. Paul foresaw the great tide of corruption that was coming, and therefore warned his brethren against the breaking of the marriage vows and ties. True marriage begins in the heart, and it perpetually has its roots there. From my standpoint it is extremely difficult for people who are not Christians to measure up to the fullness of the sanctity, the privileges and responsibilities of the marriage relation. The phrase, "and the bed undefiled," means rather, "let the bed be undefiled." I give it as my deliberate judgment that there are thousands of professing Christians who, though legally married, are living in adultery in the sight of God. The abuse of the marriage relation is a sin beyond all expression and calculation. God sees not as man sees. He looks on the heart. The majority of those who are personally impure escape the laws of men, but God, who is a consuming fire, will bring whoremongers and adulterers into judgment at last.

VERSES 5, 6. The word "conversation" here means manner of life. We converse out of the abundance of our hearts. A man's conversation is the exact photograph of his inner life. We must be pure. Our manner of life must be without covetousness. Our lives do not consist in the abundance of



temporal things, but if we could glance over our records for a single month as they are made by the recording angel we would discover that to get, to have or to hold, is the burden of the conversation of the majority, even of professing Christians. If the professing Christians of our day will give as much attention for one month to the extension of the kingdom of Christ as they do to the accumulation of that which may pass away in an hour, nothing short of a revolution will be the result. We want more than we need, and as a result our lives are like the lives of the unbelievers about us. Why join in the mad rush after the world? Why fight so valiantly for the meat that perisheth? Is not the Lord our Shepherd? He has promised that He will never forsake us. We are at liberty to boldly proclaim this to the world. He can not be false to us and true to Himself.

VERSE 7. We are constantly to bear in our hearts and in our minds the needs and the responsibilities of the elders of the Church. We are to follow their example and consider their manner of life.

VERSES 8-16. Jesus is unchangeable. As He was, as He is, so shall He ever be: He is still Emmanuel—God with us. He is still Jesus—Saviour; He is still the anointed Son of God; He is still the light and life of men; He is still the good Shepherd of the sheep; He is still the sacrifice for our sins according to the will of God; He is still the glorified Prince of earth and heaven; He is still the Searcher of the hearts of men; He is still the High Priest over the House of God; He is still the Head of the Church; He is still our Advocate, Friend and Brother. In view of this we should be settled in our convictions, unmovable in the faith, steadfast in our aims, burning

in our zeal and patient in our tribulations. Here the distinction in the law of Moses and the gospel is again emphasized. Let the heart be established in the grace of God and not in the meats and drinks of the law. Those who had tried these things were not profited by them. The things needful for the perpetuation of animal life are not imperative in the Church of God. In other words, the ceremonial requirements of the law in reality did not effect the spiritual life of a single individual. There were some in Paul's day who tried to serve the tabernacle, but this did not entitle them to the privileges of the House of God. Here follows an allusion to the burning of the offerings outside of the camp, and the lesson that Jesus, our High Priest and example in order to sanctify us unto His service, suffered without the gate. His suffering without the gate cut Him off from the people of the covenant, and His relation to them came not through it but by way of the Cross. In view of the facts that we have no continuing city here and that He bore our reproaches, let us go forth bearing the reproaches of His name and the responsibilities of His cause everywhere. Let us go with thanksgiving in our hearts and praises on our lips. Forgetfulness is again condemned. If we forget those about us who are needy, we forget our God from whom all things come to us. God is pleased with the sacrifices we make. How many real sacrifices have you ever made for the cause of Christ?

VERSE 17. This is the second allusion in this chapter to the duties and responsibilities of the elders of the Church. In the first, we are exhorted to bear them in perpetual remembrance and affection. In this place we are commanded to obey them. Their

responsibilities are great and grave and perpetual. They watch for and must give an account for the souls of men. One of the most learned and eloquent preachers who ever lived, declared that these responsibilities kept him in constant fear. It is not profitable to us to antagonize those who are striving to do so much for us. Let us be unselfish and hold up their hands.

VERSES 18, 19. The most able and successful ministers of the word of God need the prayers of his people. Paul endeavored to live in good conscience before God and men, and yet he constantly felt the pressing need of the prayers of the people of God. These verses are strikingly like the great apostle of the Gentiles.

VERSES 20-24. The end is in sight. The farewell is about to be spoken. To me the twentieth and twenty-first verses are the sweetest, deepest and most uplifting in the word of God. The peace of God is as gentle as a river, deep as an ocean, broad as immensity. He brought from the dead the good Shepherd of the sheep and made Him the first fruits of them that slept, and the good Shepherd will bring us all up from the dead on the day of His second visitation. The new covenant, the better covenant, the covenant dedicated by the blood of Jesus Christ, is everlasting—everlasting in its results upon sin and everlasting in its great rewards. The author of this covenant is leading us on to perfectness. He works in us by His word, by His Spirit and by His providence, and at last sanctified, purified, transformed, immortalized, we shall join all intelligences in ascribing to Him “glory for ever and ever.” This salutation furnishes additional and stronger evidence that

Paul is the author of this book. If you are interested, compare it with the salutations that close his other epistles.

I draw from this chapter six lessons :

I. God is love, and brotherly love is the highest earthly expression of kinship to Him.

II. Hospitality is repeatedly and emphatically enjoined in the New Testament. We should imitate the early Christians in hearty obedience to this command.

III. The recognition of the sanctity of the marriage relation underlies all good society and practical Christianity. The good influences of this world are generally traceable to the home where virtue and sobriety prevail.

IV. Covetousness is one of the damning sins of this age. Many Christians strive for what they do not need, and when they get it, it is a curse to them.

V. The elders of the churches are responsible for our souls. They must answer to God, and so must we. Modern laxity in church discipline is the parent of numberless evils.

VI. The God of peace and the good Shepherd of the sheep are working in us and leading us. Let us strive to please them in our conduct, do what they command and follow where they lead.

“GRACE BE WITH YOU ALL. AMEN.”













