

Hebrews: Bible Class Notes

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Foreword

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Foreword

Hebrews: its depths never plumbed; its height never reached; its mysteries never solved; its wealth never fully realized! But what has been gleaned is food, rich and satisfying; water, refreshingly vital.

The author of these notes has been studying and preaching and writing on the book of “Hebrews” for many years. Throughout my Christian experience it has been my rare privilege to hear his addresses on this and other books of the Bible, and it has been a real pleasure to work with him in the formation of this book.

His personal file under “Hebrews” is replete with outlines, notes, illustrations, etc., drawn from his own meditation and an exhaustive library on this epistle. Why all this? Just that from this storehouse of wealth, you hold in your hands choice bits (“notes”)—refined gold—refined from material that would make volumes.

The author’s previously published “Notes on Romans” has passed into several editions and has been translated into several languages by missionaries for use with their converts. We anticipate for this volume a similar usefulness.

—J.N.S.

Introduction

The Epistle to the Hebrews has been called “The Epistle of the Opened Heavens.”

Believers are journeying through a desert world but the glory shines from heaven above and brightens the pathway and cheers the heart as we travel on to the glory land.

We are going to travel through the book together, and as we do, we will notice that the heavens are opened to us, and “we see Jesus” crowned with glory and honor, seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high. He is there for us, our Great High Priest.

It is good for us to look up and see Him there, and have our gaze fixed on Him; for thus our hearts are weaned from this world. We follow where He has gone before and “His strength is ours on the road” as we pass through this weary scene to where He is in the glory.

The word “Hebrew” means “one who goes,” that is a pilgrim. Abraham was the first Hebrew (see Gen. 14:13) and the father of the faithful. It was a word from heaven that made him a pilgrim and a stranger in the earth. The God of glory appeared to him. If we have heard the voice of God calling us and if we have followed the heavenly call and vision, we too are Hebrews. We are those who “go on.” That phrase is one of the keynotes to our Epistle—“Let us go on.”

What powerful, mighty voice so near

Calls me from earth apart—

Reaches with tones so still, so clear,

From the unseen world, my heart?

That is why this letter begins with God speaking to us. He is calling us apart from earth. He would have us view the glory of the unseen world. He would have us walk in separation unto Himself and with Himself.

That is why the human author is out of sight although Peter suggests that Paul wrote a letter to his Jewish brethren. Hebrews is the book of the sanctuary, and in the sanctuary God's voice is heard. With unshod feet we enter and listen. The book of the sanctuary in the Old Testament—Leviticus—begins as does our Epistle with the voice of God: "And the Lord called unto Moses, and spake unto him out of the tabernacle of the congregation" (Lev. 1:1).

God who at sundry tunes, in olden days
Spoke through prophetic lips, made known His ways,
In the Incarnate Son, to whom all knees must bow
Spoke to make known Himself, is speaking now.

The simple fact that God does speak to us is amazing. Why should He condescend to do so? But He does speak and the heart rejoices in hearing His voice. To some the speech of God is simply the accepted fact of a creed and has become commonplace. To others it is the most wonderful of all facts, for God has told out all His heart in His speech. He speaks directly to us. He speaks fully, revealing all His counsel. He speaks finally, there is no need for further speech once He has spoken. His words are words of love, words of salvation, words of Lordship, and words of hope.

God spoke in times past. Even Adam heard His voice in the garden, but He could not say all He wanted to say in

the old days. God was giving the various letters of the alphabet then, but now we have the entire alphabet in His Son. He is Alpha and Omega, the sum total of all that God has to say to us. The narrow river of God's revelation running through the ages has widened into a majestic ocean.

After Christ, God has no more to say. One has said, "A climax is reached. If the diapason of God's creation closed on man, the diapason of His revelation closes on a Man, the Head of a new and regenerated race, Christ Jesus."

Some years ago a young man lay on the operating table in a hospital. A skilled surgeon stood near. A group of students stood round about. Presently, bending over the patient, the surgeon said, "My friend, if you wish to say anything you now have the opportunity; but I must warn you that your words will be the last words you will ever utter. Thinkwell, therefore, what you wish to say."

The young man, apparently lost in thought, waited. A deep solemnity settled over the faces of the onlookers. What words would he choose for such an occasion? Some time passed; then the lips parted, and at the sound of his voice tears came to the eyes of those present; "Thank God, Jesus Christ." Those were his last words.

God's last words to man are summed up in Jesus Christ. Long He paused before He gave them utterance. Four hundred years of silence elapsed between the last of the prophets and the Son. Then came those wonderful three and a half years of glory, the great heart throb, the solemn climax of the revelation of God to man. After them God could say nothing more. All His wisdom, all

His power, all the depths of His fathomless love had been exhausted.

Gathered Gleanings

1. THE AUTHOR. Anonymous in contrast to the other epistles. Traditionally Paul's. Internal evidence—author associated with Timothy (Heb. 13:23). External evidence—Paul wrote a letter to the Hebrews (2 Peter 3:15).

2. THE DATE. Written before the destruction of Jerusalem, thus before A.D. 70. See chapter 10:11; 8:4; cf. 9:8.

3. THE THEME. The priesthood of Christ at the right hand of God, and the superiority of Christianity over Judaism.

4. THE ARGUMENT. Christ is superior to all that pertained to the old dispensation. Angels give place to the Son; Moses, the servant of the house, gives place to Christ who is the Builder; Joshua the ancient captain who led Israel into Canaan, gives place to Christ the Captain of salvation who is now conducting the children to glory; Aaron, the earthly and dying priest, gives place to the true Melchisedek who lives and serves in the heavenly temple forever. The old covenant gives place to the new which Jesus administers; and at the same time the old carnal or earthly ordinances give place to the spiritual and efficacious ministrations of the heavenly Priest. Finally, the blood of the victims gives place to the blood of Christ, offered through the eternal Spirit.

* * * * *

"A photograph is the shadow of a mansion but a legatee would not be satisfied with a photograph. He would go on to take possession of the mansion of which the photo

was the shadow. The Hebrew Christians were inclined to be satisfied with the photo, the shadow.”

In chapters 1-7 we Consider Christ. In chapters 8-10 we find ourselves Accepted in Him. In chapters 11-13 we are Rejected with Him.

In Romans we have a court scene. The law speaks, but the Judge justifies on the ground of redemption. The keyword is Justification. We are cleared.

In Hebrews we enter the Holy Place. The law is hid beneath the mercy seat. The keyword is Sanctification. We are holy.

Lesson One—Hebrews 1:1-4 The Son Of God#8230; Superior to Prophets

In the first seven chapters of this letter it is the Person of the Son of God who is presented to us, displacing all else—the Man in the Glory of God. In the next three chapters we are introduced to the Place where He serves as our High Priest—The Sanctuary of Glory. In the last three chapters it is The Path of Faith that leads to the Glory. To enable us to follow Jesus in the outside place the Lord gives us a sight of Him in the inside place within the veil of heaven.

The Glory of the Son (vv. 1-4)

As soon as our attention is directed to the Son of God, His glory flashes upon us. We gaze upon Him through the opened heavens and notice: first a sevenfold glory encircling His brow (vv. 2, 3), and then sevenfold praise surrounding His Person (vv. 5-14) as God sets Him forth as the Lord of the angels. In seven quotations from the Psalms we follow Him along the pathway of the purpose of God and His triumphal progress is accompanied by a rhapsody of praise. From Bethlehem's manger to the throne of glory His pathway is marked by the Father's infinite delight in His Son. Angels wonder as they gaze upon a Man who is their Lord. We worship and adore Him as those who are His companions sharing His glory through infinite grace.

1. The Heir of All Things

The first glory of Christ as displayed here is that of heirship. If He is the Son of God He must be the Heir.

Isaac was Abraham's well beloved son and Abraham gave all that he had to that son. He had laid him on the altar of sacrifice. He was spared the actual experience of laying his hand upon him, but who can fathom the depths of anguish that father endured as he lifted the shining blade ready to plunge it into the heart of his beloved? Received back from the altar to Abraham's heart and home Isaac is made the heir of all things. Abraham says, "He shall have all things." And of our Lord we read in John 3:35, "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand." Therefore the Son could say, "All things that the Father hath are Mine." And all that the Son possesses He shares with His loved co-heirs. What wondrous grace!

2. The Creator of the Universe

The second ray of glory takes us back to creation. The Son of God is the Creator of the universe. He made all things. We are told that there are more than twenty million worlds sown through the vast spaces of the universe. Every bit of their illimitable resources is the product of His wisdom and power, and we exclaim, "What glory is Thine, O Lord."

And not only is the Son the great Architect and Builder of the Universe, He is also the Planner of the Ages. All cycles of time as well as all worlds were made by Him. Not only the vast reaches of infinite space but also the equally vast expanses of infinite time. The mind staggers in seeking to grasp the vastness of the physical universe, but much more overwhelming is the thought of those times and ages through which the purpose of God is gradually unfolding to its glorious climax and consummation. All history is simply "His story," and at

the end of the story, when all is told, we shall read it in the light of the glory; and learn that all was one vast disclosure of love; and that grace triumphed over all the work of the enemy. What a comfort this is in a dark and evil day when evil seems to triumph and the righteous are brought low. Our Lord sitteth o'er the waterfloods directing their course. We have nothing to fear.

3. The Effulgence of God's Glory

The third ray of glory takes us back into the distant reaches of a past eternity before the pendulum of time began to swing. Christ ever was and now is the outshining of God's glory. It is displayed in Him and inherent in Him. Effulgence is the word used here. It can also be translated "beam." The Son of God is the glory of God poured forth like the sun's rays that greet us in the morning. The sun when it rises drives away the lords of darkness that have ruled the night. Jesus said, "I am the Light of the world." The darkness is passing, the true Light now shines.

The Son of God created the universe and is to inherit it so that He may fill it with the glory of God. He is the Center and Sun of a vast universe of bliss, where every trace of sin, every bit of darkness will be banished from it forever by the full and blessed display of the glory of God. The believer enjoys that light now; with unveiled faces we behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. The early church sang of Him, Hail gladdening Light, of His pure glory poured, Who is th' Immortal Father, Heavenly, Blest.

Being judged for sins is with Christ a thing of the past, and so it is for all who are Christ's. He bore the judgment we deserved. He was judged for our sins, died

for our sins, and saved us from the judgment our sins incurred, and assures us that, "He that heareth My Word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John 5:24). For as He is, so are we in this world.

This then is the fruit of God's perfect love to you, that He has waylaid you by His love, saved you by His grace, and made you as safe as Christ Himself. God could not do more, but His perfect love would not do less.

4. The Revealer of God

As we gaze upon the blessed Person of the Son of God we discover in Him the fourth glory. He is the very impress, the image of God's being. He is "God manifest, God seen and heard."

Since no man hath seen God at any time (John 1:18), how is it possible for us then to know Him? "The only Begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, HE hath declared Him."

In Him most perfectly expressed,
The Father's self doth shine.

Someone said, "I had been converted and trusting in the Lord for months but I had an undefined fear of God. I loved the Lord and could trust Jesus anywhere: but I had an idea that God was a little different from Christ, and thus I could not feel the same confidence in Him. But it's all different now. I have got hold of Christ as the image of the invisible God, and it has made me happy. I look at Jesus in the thirty-three years of His life here below in this sorrow-stricken, sin-stained world, where He was the Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief, and I

say, There is the One who tells me what God is. I remember that scene outside the little town of Nain. A group were wending their way to the village cemetery. That is a sad sight at any time anywhere. But this was especially sad and pitiful, for the one carried to the grave that day was the only son of a poor widow. The Lord Jesus was nigh unto the gate of the city, and when He saw the woman, He had compassion on her. The heart of Jesus was arrested, and then He arrested the funeral. 'Stop' said He. And then He said to the sorrowing woman, 'Weep not.' And when He had thus said He came and touched the bier, and said to the young man, 'Arise.' Now He might have restored that young man without touching him, but that touch told a story of love. Nor did that touch defile. He had God's relationship to evil. He stood not only apart from the actuality of sin, but from the possibility of it. And then He restored the young man to his mother. How tender, how gracious, how compassionate was the Saviour, and that tender compassionate Man was the blessed, perfect expression of what God is in the very springs of His nature, for God is love" (Dr. Wolston).

We see Christ at the grave of Lazarus. He weeps. His heart was touched with sorrow and sympathetic love. He fully expressed the heart of God. He sighed in communion with the heart of God as He saw what sin had done. He wept in sympathy with the sorrowing sisters. All that God is in the essence of His being and nature is expressed in the words, the sighs, the tears, yes, in every movement of the Man Christ Jesus.

As the impression made by a seal on molten wax is the exact resemblance of that seal, so Christ is the

exhibition in His Person of the full character of God, the very expression of His substance, for He is God.

5. His Providential Power

This is the fifth ray of glory. He upholds all things by the word of His power. All things “hang together” by the word of His power. He keeps the universe going. Who could do that but God? But He is God, and whether it be the falling of a sparrow to the ground, or the rotation of the earth on its axis at 1,000 miles per hour as it speeds through space in its tremendous orbit at 1200 miles per minute, it is the same word that regulates all.

Let us consider a simple illustration suggested to Job by Jehovah. “Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds, the wondrous works of Him which is perfect in knowledge?” (Job 37:16). Have you ever wondered how water gets into the clouds? If you take a large microscope on a sunny day and focus it on shallow water, you will see some sun-heated, small, thin, filmy vapors shoot up. These vapors form the clouds above, and millions of tons of water are held in place suspended in the heavens by the word of His power. By that same word they empty themselves upon the earth. He lifts up His voice and abundance of waters cover the earth (Job 38:34). By the “word of His power” Peter walked on the stormy deep as if it were solid pavement.

Once a year, the longest day of the year, a crowd gathers at Stonehenge, on the plains of Salisbury, England. A curious group of ancient monoliths, supposed to be of Druidic origin, are situated there. At some distance from the main group of stones a single stone stands. Early in the morning, just as the sun clears the horizon, the shadow from this isolated stone creeps across the plain

but once a year and touches a central stone, supposed to have been an altar, where human sacrifice was offered when the shadow thus fell. The phenomenon of the shadow tip touching the altar just that once each year is due to the perfect timing or synchronization of the rotation of the earth on its axis with its revolution round the sun. Who is the One who thus guides the earth in its motion? What power! What precision! He upholdeth all things by the word of His power.

6. The Purger of Sins

Without the shedding of blood there is no remission. Therefore how exceedingly wonderful it is that the One to whom is ascribed every attribute of divine power, is the One who in dying put away all our sins. As we gaze at this sixth bright ray of glory we bow in worship.

Gazing on the Lord in glory,
While our hearts in worship bow;
There we read the wondrous story
Of the Cross, its shame and woe.

We have a special interest in the heavens for He who has gone into the glory is the Saviour of sinners. The Man who has opened the heavens to us and who fills them with His glory was on the cross for us. He went to the glory via Calvary where He left all our sins, having put them away once and forever.

If all the sins that men have done,
In will and word, in thought and deed,
Since worlds were framed and time begun,
Were heaped on one poor sinner's head:

The blood of Jesus Christ alone
Could for that mass of sin atone
And sweep it all away.

He sits enthroned on high as the One who has settled
forever the question of our sins.

7. The Lord of Glory

Thus we see the final ray—four times in this epistle we find Him at the right hand of God. He sits there as the Purger of our sins and thus we are cleansed and have access to the Holy Place. He sits there as our Great High Priest and thus He represents us on high and enables us to journey on to the glory. He sits there as the Offerer of the unique sacrifice, in view of complete victory over all His enemies. He sits enthroned as the Author and Finisher of our faith, with the prospect of eternal joy when He shall realize that for which He suffered. And the pearl of His heart's deep longing shall be seen resplendent in heavenly glory.

The universe exists only as the scene for the display of His glory, and the glory to be displayed soon is revealed to faith now.

Surely He is “better than the angels” and His name is more excellent than theirs (v. 4).

There is no name so sweet on earth,
No other name in heaven,
The matchless Name before His birth
To Christ the Saviour given.

The mention of other names strikes no such response in these hearts of ours as does the name of JESUS.

Jesus of all things Heir, God hath ordained;
All things were made by Him, by Him sustained.
Brightness of glory He, Effulgence of God's love,
Image of Deity sent from above.
When He had purged our sins with His own blood,
He took His seat at the right hand of God.
There at the Father's side—the Majesty on High,
He sits who was made man, for man to die!
Angels were praising Him—sang at His birth:
“Glory to God on high, Peace upon earth!”
Angels shall praise again when in the Victor's train
Heirs of salvation come with Him to reign.

It is said of Samuel Rutherford that the mention of the name of the Lord Jesus would cause him to burst forth in a very rhapsody of praise in which all the glories of the blessed Son of God would be blazoned forth in glowing words. The mention of “The Son” causes the writer of the letter to the Hebrews to burst forth in praise.

Lesson Two—Hebrews 1:5-14 The Son Of God—Superior to Angels

In describing the excellencies of the Name of Jesus beyond that of the angelic hosts, the writer of the Hebrews makes use of the “Pilgrim’s Song Book,” the Psalms of David. We have seen the sevenfold glory of the Son of God; now we listen to the sevenfold praise that surrounds His blessed Person. Seven quotations, or references from the Psalms are in this section. They are like seven strings in a golden harp of grace on which the Holy Spirit sends forth sweet strains to delight our hearts as we follow the pathway of the Son of God along the line of God’s purpose.

That pathway led from the poverty and glory of the manger, through those thirty-three and a half years of suffering love and the darkness of Calvary’s awful night on to the resurrection morning, the glorious ascension, the throne of glory and the gracious ministrations of the heavenly sanctuary.

1. Incarnation (v. 5)

The first quotation is from Psalm 2 and refers to the birth of the Son of God in Bethlehem. The fact is merely stated here. The Son of God was born, but the implications are infinite, however simple the statement may be made. It was the great epochal event of all time for both God and man. Heaven’s gaze centered on that Babe, wrapped in swaddling clothes, laid in the manger. God’s heart is satisfied, man’s need is met, God’s love is made known—God manifest in flesh.

O Mary, bending by that cot,
With tender rapture in thine eyes,
Could'st thou but know what wonder lies
Beside thee in His humble lot,
Thy spirit weighted down with awe,
No words could find to voice its praise—
No harp to sweep with dulcet lays
And shoreless seas of love outpour.

2. Relationship (v. 5)

The second quotation is from Psalm 89:26, 27 (cf. 2 Sam. 7:14) and brings us into communion with the heart of God the Father: "I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son." In the secrecy of the silent years at Nazareth, in the activity of the short years of ministry, in the closing days of His sojourn here below it was the delight of God to be a Father to such a Son. From the bosom of God He came, and yet that bosom was ever His dwelling place even while He was a stranger "in the world His hands had made."

John tells us the story of a Father's love giving all things into the hands of His Son; of a Father's will expressed in that Son who delighted to accomplish it to His glory; of a Father's word, "The Father showeth Him all things that He doeth"; of a Father's work, "My Father worketh hitherto and I work." In his Gospel we are privileged to listen in as the Son unburdens His heart to the Father on our behalf. In effect He says, "Father, be Thou a Father to those whom Thou hast given Me as Thou hast been to

Me.” It is God’s delight to be a Father unto us; may it be our delight to do our Father’s will.

3. Heirship (v. 6)

The third reference is from Psalm 97 (v. 7, gods-angels) and refers to the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is going to bring His First-begotten into the world amid the praises of the celestial choirs. Angels, “a multitude of the heavenly host,” sang at His birth. When He comes again, all the angels of God worship Him. He comes to silence the discord of earth. He comes to claim the inheritance lost by the first man. The Father will place it in the hands of the Second Man, and when He does it He calls upon the myriads of angels to join in the great chorus of adoration. All heaven rings with His praises.

4. Exaltation (v. 7)

The fourth quotation is from Psalm 104:4 and describes the “Hosts” over which Christ is “Lord.” Created by Him they live to serve Him. His messengers and His ministers, they accompany Him when He shall “be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thess. 1:7, 8). Psalm 104:35 tells us that the sinners shall be consumed out of the earth, and the wicked shall be no more. The angels, as being made “a flaming fire” are ministers of judgment as well as mercy.

5. Dominion (vv. 8, 9)

The fifth quotation is from Psalm 45 and presents a wondrous scene. Christ is seen seated upon the throne

of glory, ruling over the millennial earth. He is not alone on that throne, there are those who are His fellows, associated with Him on the throne on which He sits as God.

He whose throne is for ever and ever was in the place of testing. He loved righteousness and hated iniquity while among us, and in grace He has brought us up as His fellows out of our iniquity.

He of whom Jehovah speaks as “My Fellow” calls us His fellows. He was “wounded in the house of His friends” and anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows.

Hark, my soul, thy Saviour sings,

Catch the joy that music brings

And in His sweet flood of song

Pour thy whispering praise along.

6. Immutability (vv. 10-12)

The sixth quotation is from Psalm 102 where we have a Man, a suffering, dying Man, owned of God to be the Maker of heaven and earth. He, the holy Sufferer, is Jehovah, the Creator and Disposer of all things. What a testimony to His unchangeable deity. Creation is limited and changing but not the One who gives them their limit. Like cast-off garments all things will be set aside, but He remains.

7. Triumph (vv. 13, 14)

The seventh and final quotation is from Psalm 110 and it gives us the highest note in this medley of Psalms. “Sit Thou at My right hand till I make Thine enemies Thy footstool.” Final and eternal victory is His who finished

the work of redemption, and seated in the highest place He rests, awaiting the action of God in bringing all in subjection beneath those feet once pierced and bleeding on the accursed tree. Thus will the Father minister to the Son until the end of the journey is reached. Perfect peace and righteousness will not only reign, but dwell, where God is all in all.

No angel ever was addressed thus. It is God, not angels, who serves the Son. Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister to those that shall be heirs of salvation? They serve, but theirs is not the service of love. We know the love of One who is not like an angel who only does his work when told. His is the service of love poured out even to death.

O glorious, O blessed Lord God of Salvation,
Thy name let us praise from the depths of the heart;
Let tongue sing to tongue and nation to nation,
And in the glad hymn all Thy works have a part.
The tops of the mountains with praises are ringing,
The depths of the valleys re-echo the cry;
The waves of the ocean Thy glories are singing,
The clouds and the winds find a voice as they fly.
The weakest, the strongest, the lowly, the glorious,
The living on earth and the dead in the grave,
For the arm of Thy Son over death is victorious,
With power to redeem, with mercy to save.
O glorious, O mighty Lord God of Salvation,
To Thee let us sing from the depth of our heart,

Let tongue tell to tongue and nation to nation,
How wonderful, gracious and holy Thou art.

Gathered Gleanings

Paul, a Pharisee, believed in the resurrection and in angels, and associated angels with the glory of God, but after the Damascus road experience, for him, the glory was filled with one Man—JESUS.

Scripture is not a systematized theology. It is living truth, as a vine in nature interlacing one with another. “Many parts” and yet the one end of all—CHRIST.

God has spoken. A living God and a loving God must needs speak. The Old Testament is HIS WORD. “Times past” is time up to Christ. The “last days” is after Christ. He is the Center of all history. There is no further revelation. The SON fully revealed God (v. 1).

“By Himself.” Accomplishing His own glory and for His glory. The verb has the meaning or sense of throwing the glory of the thing accomplished back on the One who did it (v. 3).

The highest titles are Christ’s by right but He passed them all by and selected a Name, the dearest of all—Saviour (v. 4).

Lesson Three—Hebrews 2 The Son Of Man… Superior to Adam

As we study the Epistle to the Hebrews together we notice that again and again we are called aside from the main theme of the letter to listen to a word of exhortation, a word of warning. These digressions are called the parenthetical portions of the book. Like red lantern flashes they warn us of danger and encourage us to keep to the King's Highway, for detours are dangerous. It is so easy to slip away from the things we have heard and drift into the byways of sin. If only we keep the eye on Christ and our ear open to His voice all will be well.

They tell me there are dangers
In the path my feet must tread,
But they cannot see the glories
That are shining round my head,
For 'tis Jesus leads my footsteps,
He has made my heart His own,
And I would not dare to journey
Through this wide, wide world alone.

“For this reason we should give heed more abundantly to the things we have heard, lest in any way we should slip away” (N.T.). You see that vessel moored to the dock, if the anchor should slip it could easily drift to near destruction. Cords of love bind us eternally to our Blessed Lord, but we are responsible to hold fast to the written Word of God. This is the link between our souls

and Christ, this is the anchor that steadies us amid the tides and the hidden currents that have carried many people to shipwreck.

Run the straight race through God's good grace,

Lift up thine eyes, and seek His face:

Life with its way before thee lies,

Christ is the path and Christ the prize.

In this Epistle, the Epistle of the Opened Heavens, we behold His glory. In chapter One we behold Him as the Son of God displacing all else and filling the scene with His glory. All the holy angels follow in His train serving as the background for the display of His superior excellencies. He is their Lord and the object of their worship. In chapter two we see Him as the Son of Man set over all creation—not a man in Eden as was Adam, but a Man in heaven. How wonderful to see a Man in the highest spot in the universe, a Man in the glory of God! And that Man is Jesus whom we know, Jesus whom we love. Stephen saw Him there; and here on earth he reflected the glory of the Man in heaven. His face shone with heavenly light. Saul of Tarsus saw Him there, and that Man in heaven won his heart that day as he was journeying toward Damascus. What a discovery it was for him to find that the God of glory was the Jesus whom he hated, Jesus whom he persecuted, but Jesus who knew him and who loved him. From that moment his was a captured heart. Wherever Paul went he said, "Have you seen Him, have you heard Him? Oh, how you would love Him if you only knew Him! There He is in the Paradise of God, God's beloved Son. Hear me,, weary men and women, sinners sad and lonely, there He is in heaven, a Saviour in the glory." The heavens have

received the Man earth refused, the Man who died on the cross for sinners, the Man of God's purpose.

In Genesis 2 we see a man in all the beauties and glories of an earthly paradise—Adam in Eden. What a lovely sight as Eve, the object of his heart's desire, the sharer of all he possesses, walks beside him. But the shadows of night creep in upon that scene. Sin entered paradise, and its glories faded all too soon. Man was banished from that garden of delights to wander in the land of loneliness, the distant land of famine. We lose sight of Adam the first as he enters the portals of death, returning to the dust out of which he was taken. And ever since Adam's transgression, and because of it, this world has been a place where the dead bury their dead.

In Hebrews 2 we are introduced to another Man. He steps out of the darkness of death, having robbed it of its power by submitting to it. Entering its dark domain He comes forth as Conqueror, leading captivity captive. "Up from the grave He arose with a mighty triumph o'er His foes." He takes His seat amid the glad acclamations of heaven's hosts, in the very highest place, above all heavens. That Man is the center of a vast universe of bliss, the Leader of a great company of men who are His fellows, His companions—

Fairest of all the earth beside,
Chiefest of all unto His Bride,
Fullness divine in Him we see,
Wonderful Man of Calvary.

As we study this chapter together we will gather our thoughts around The Man of Calvary. Again, as in chapter one, we notice a sevenfold glory. First of all:

1. The Man of Calvary Is the Man of God's Purpose (yv. 5-8)

In the purpose of God there is a future for man upon this earth, a glorious future. The world to come is not heaven, but the kingdom age. Heaven is the scene of Christ's glory now, in the age to come creation shall bear the impress of His glory. There will be a new order of things, everything will be in subjection to our Lord Jesus Christ, He is the Man set over the world to come. God placed the world that was, in the hands of Adam. He lost the dominion that was committed to him. The present world is in subjection to angels, the world to come will be in subjection to Christ. Jesus is crowned with glory now, and when we too are crowned God's plans for this world will be fulfilled, and not till then. The crowning day is coming by and by. Meanwhile the Head is glorified but the members are down here in suffering. Christ is sitting at God's right hand, waiting until His enemies are made His footstool.

Then in verse 9 we learn that

2. The Man of Calvary Is the Object of Faith's Vision

"We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man."

Not now do we see all things under the feet of our Lord Jesus Christ. The banner of rebellion is being carried high today, the flood tide of evil is rising and will soon reach its climax, the forces of evil are surging ahead, but above and beyond the dark clouds the eye of faith

sees Jesus. What a lovely sight! What a glorious and encouraging vision!

In the dark days of Valley Forge, when the cause of the Colonies seemed so hopeless, one of the continental soldiers came back from headquarters to his comrades who were sad, downhearted, and thoroughly discouraged. "Cheer up, lads," he said, "our cause is not lost; victory is sure. I have seen the face of George Washington; we cannot lose with such a leader."

We see Jesus there in the glory; He is the pledge and the proof of final and complete victory. Behold Him! He is clothed in a seamless robe of beauty, and surrounded by glories secured in the dark hour of His passion and the bright hour of His triumph. As we gaze we read the story of amazing grace, and trace the pathway that led from the lowly manger and the shameful cross to the throne of glory. Where our sins bring us, grace brought Him; and where the glory of God raised Him, grace brings us. in and with Him.

And then the sight of Jesus should separate our hearts forever from the world that nailed Him to the cross. It should change our thoughts and feelings completely by transferring them all to Him who is up there. All we love is there; all our interests are there, not down here. "O fix our earnest gaze, so wholly, Lord, on Thee, that, with Thy beauty occupied, we elsewhere none may see." We behold Him robed in the garment of spotless beauty, surrounded with the glories secured in the dark hour of His passion and the bright hour of His triumph. He bears in heaven the marks of His anguish, the anguish He endured for our sakes.

Oh, that we may calmly, sweetly, happily, continually gaze on Jesus, thus crowned with glory and honor. Had Peter kept his eyes on Jesus he would not have feared the wind and the waves. Thank God we can walk on the waves when we see Jesus.

Nor can the dark shadows of sin or sorrow dim the light that reaches us. He breaks through the darkest clouds with the light of His grace—He who entered into the dark night of sin and sorrow for us. Where our sins bring us, grace brought the Lord Jesus.

3. The Man of Calvary Is the Captain of Our Salvation (v. 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.”

In man’s thirst for power others suffer. Here the All-powerful One submits to suffering that we, the weak ones, might be delivered from it. He, the Captain of our Salvation, becomes perfect for the office He fills by tasting of the cup of sorrow and trial. He was perfect in power, perfect in love, perfect in wisdom, but He must become perfect in experience also. He never knew suffering in the glory above, but now in that He has suffered being tried He is able to help those who are tried. He has passed through the furnace of affliction, He knows what sorest trials mean, and He saves us now by His sympathy with us and the example He has set before us.

It is not the salvation of our souls that is referred to here, but our lives after we have believed. We sing, What

a Friend we have in Jesus, All our sins and griefs to bear,
What a privilege to carry Everything to God in prayer.

He bore the load of our sins when hanging on the cross,
He carries our sorrows now, seated on the throne of glory.

The Friend most dear to us is the one who shows us the utmost confidence when everything seems against us. And surely our Lord Jesus loves to have us trust Him even when everything seems wrong. Job could say, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him." We can surely say, and He loves to hear us say it, "Lord, I know that Thou doest all things well. It seems as if Thou art treating me with most shameful neglect, but Thy cross has taught me Thine utter love, and I know that Thou canst never leave me."

4. The Man of Calvary and We Are One (v. 11)

Those bound for glory are a united whole, one with their Leader. The One Son and the many sons are all of One. That glorified Man at God's right hand is our Kinsman-Redeemer. He is not ashamed to call us "brethren." "Tell it out that earth and heaven may hear!" writes a dear saint of God. Not merely because of His grace, but because of our dignity as the sons of God, He is not ashamed to be found in our company. To Him we are "the excellent of the earth."

5. The Man of Calvary Leads Our Praises (vv. 12,13)

Moses sang in the midst of his brethren when the children of Israel began their journey from Egypt to Canaan. Our Saviour takes His place as the Leader of song in the midst of His own.

It is with voice of singing we leave the land of night, To pass in glorious music far onward out of sight.

O children, was it sorrow though thousand worlds be lost? Our eyes have looked on Jesus, and thus we count the cost.

He sings and we listen to His voice in three quotations from the Old Testament.

The first quotation is from Psalm 22:22. His voice is heard in resurrection. The darkness and loneliness of Calvary is past; how sweet to hear Him sing after the storm. In the upper room there was the song before the sorrow, then that awful cry of Psalm 22:1, "While the sun was enwrapt in night," and now He praises in the assembly, now the sorrow all is passed; His the earnest of our portion, we must reach the goal at last. Yes, He praises! grace recounting all the path already trod— We associated with Him—God our Father and our God.

The second quotation is from Isaiah 8:17. It tells of the path He trod. He leads in the pathway of faith. His was a life of implicit trust—cast upon God from the womb—the cross registered the full triumph of that truth. And now we follow where He led the way and "His strength is ours on the road."

The third quotation is from Isaiah 8:18. Here He anticipates the joy of the homecoming of the many sons. When Cornelia, a noble Roman matron, was asked by a visitor to show her jewels, instead of displaying a store of dazzling gems, she presented her three sons, and said, "These are my jewels." And we are His! "Behold I and the children which God hath given me." We sing, "Thou gavest us in eternal love to Him, To bring us back to God." What a day when He makes up His jewels!

6. The Man of Calvary Is Our Kinsman-Redeemer (vv. 14-16)

To bring us to glory He had to save us. This deliverance involved Incarnation, identification and death. But in death He conquered. Even as David in the valley of Elah grappled with the mighty giant, so our Captain has entered the gloomy cave of death and wrested from the grim jailer his scepter and delivered his captives. For those who follow Him the death march is reversed. Adam led the way from the tree of life down to the tomb. Christ leads the way from the darkness of death to the glory.

7. The Man of Calvary Is Our Gracious High Priest (vv. 17, 18)

To bring us to glory He must keep us all the way. I need Christ for my sins and Christ for my sorrows. He made propitiation for my sins on the cross (v. 17), He has sympathy and succor for all my sorrows (v. 18).
“Faithful” to God whose sons we are, we need never fear we will miss the goal, He will bring us all safe to glory.
“Merciful” to us, we are assured we will never lack help by the way.

Gathered Gleanings

In chapter one, Christ is seen as the Son of God. In chapter two as the Son of Man. In chapter two we look into heaven and see that God has put A MAN there in whom all His purposes will be fulfilled. The Man is the Center of a vast universe of bliss and the Captain of a vast company who are on the way to glory.

Verses 1-4 is a parenthesis. It is as if the writer says, “I am teaching you wonderful things, take heed that you do

not let such things fall on a careless ear. We must not be mere scholars. If we are disciples of a living Master in the school of God, we shall have our consciences exercised while we are pursuing our lesson.

Christ is my Preacher in Hebrews. His theme is salvation. God's salvation is so simple that a little child can take it in; so profound that all eternity will not exhaust it (v. 3).

We have a nautical term here (v. 1). Its meaning can be twofold.

1. Like water from a leaking vessel we are in danger of letting precious truth slip away from us.
2. Like a vessel drifting from its mooring it is so easy for us to slip.

One keyword of the Epistle is, "Let us go on." Moses said, "We are journeying."

There are currents that carry us away from the anchorage of faith—the great words that we have heard.

1. That of time. We forget so soon.
2. Familiarity with truth. It loses its power in our lives.
3. Pressure of duties and pleasures of life.
4. So-called Christian work.
5. The opinion of others (2 Timothy 4:4).

In Christ, God's delight in man is abundantly justified (v. 6).

The habitable world to come is the sphere of the first man, but it is in the hands of the Second Man (v. 5).

God will yet establish a new order of things on the earth; there will be “the world to come.” This is because His death was in behalf of everything as well as everyone.

A Captain is one who initiates and carries to completion. An “originator” (v. 10).

We have here our entire emancipation from our foes and our complete association with the Victor.

Our Captain (1) SINGS; (2) He LEADS in the path of faith; (3) as the Head of a new race, He ANNOUNCES our coming. Thus as we follow our Leader we begin the journey with a song. Then we learn the secret of overcoming all the difficulties of the way. And finally we reach the desired haven where He displays us as His own forever.

The shadow of death is dispelled by the Light of Life descending into it (vv. 14, 15).

The humanity of fallen man was not His, neither was sin with its consequences. Death could have no power over Him except as He might submit Himself voluntarily to it; and this He did.

Temptation to Him was suffering, and only that (v. 18).

The thought suggested in chapter 1 is developed in chapter 2—Christ has fellows.

He the Son is bringing many sons to glory.

He the Sanctifier, and they the sanctified, are all as men in the same nature and position together before God.

He the Saviour redeems a race from destruction to present them in glory.

He the Singer surrounds Himself with brethren of whom
He is not ashamed.

He the Succorer maintains a people on the wilderness
road.

Lesson Four—Hebrews 3 The Son Over God's House; Superior to Moses

The journey of the children of Israel through the wilderness gives us the background for the lessons of this chapter. God's power and grace is seen in bringing a people out of Egypt and sustaining them for forty years in the wilderness, a trackless desert waste, a place where nothing grew.

When the children of Israel were in Egypt they suffered under the lash of the taskmaster. Their lives were made bitter with hard bondage. The story of their deliverance is the story of God's salvation. When they were in Egypt God placed them beyond the reach of judgment by the blood of the Lamb, but their deliverance was not complete until they had crossed the Red Sea and were delivered from the dominion of Pharaoh. Standing on the other side of that sea they could look back to the scene of their former bondage. They were out of Egypt and slaves no longer. The waters of death rolled between them and their former masters. They were not only in a new condition, but also in a new position.

But they were not yet in Canaan, the land flowing with milk and honey. Egypt was behind them. Now a wilderness is not a pleasant place to live in, but it is a wonderful place in which to learn priceless lessons. It was there that Israel discovered what a wonderful God they had—how patient, how loving, and withal how holy. They failed in trusting Him, but He never failed in His grace towards them. He not only guided them, going

before them in the cloudy pillar, but He sent them the manna from above, and the water from beneath. He dwelt among them. He gave them two men, Moses and Aaron, to be their shepherds, to lead the flock of God through the great desert, up to the promised rest of Canaan. Moses was their apostle. Aaron was their high priest. Christ Jesus is the Apostle and High Priest of our profession. He combines in His Person these two offices. Now if we are to go on well in this world, we must consider Him; we must have the eye fixed on Him; we must listen to His voice; we must travel the road in company with Him. Only thus shall we continue steadfast unto the end of the journey.

In our study of this chapter we shall gather our thoughts around two words that direct us to His Person. The two words are “consider” and “hear.” The word “consider” implies an awakened interest. It means to observe closely. All the Israelites were to watch for Moses as he served in the house of God. Moses was faithful in that house.

1. We Are to “Consider the Apostle and High Priest of Our Confession Christ Jesus” (v. 1)

Israel, a brotherhood in the flesh, companions in an earthly calling from Egypt to Canaan, had Moses for their apostle and Aaron for their high priest. “Thou leddest Thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron” (Psalm 77:20). Thus they were sustained in the wilderness.

We are “fellows of a heavenly calling,” a brotherhood of saints, and to “consider Jesus” is our whole business down here. He is both “Moses and Aaron” to us, fulfilling in His own Person the two offices. Through

Him, God's revelation reaches us, and by Him we approach unto God. He Who came from the glory to reveal the heart of God to us has gone back into that glory that we might be at home there. Look at Him in His faithfulness up there. If Moses was faithful in the house on earth, Christ is faithful in His heavenly ministry, and as everything depends upon His faithfulness, what a joy it is to behold Him there. Like Ruth, we can "sit still... for the man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing." Nor are we to give just a passing glance or receive a mere glimpse of His glory. We are to consider, and with awakened interest, observe closely, as expressed in the hymn we love to sing:

O fix our earnest gaze
So wholly, Lord, on Thee,
That with Thy beauty occupied,
We elsewhere none may see.

God fills our vision with Christ serving there in the highest heaven. Then as we gaze we learn that our Apostle is far greater than Moses.

We have a series of contrasts in the following verses that delight us (vv. 3-6).

Moses' face was aglow with the glory of God's presence, but Christ is worthy of greater glory, a glory in the light of which the former grows strangely dim.

Moses served in the earthly house, Christ is the Builder of all that has ever been made to the glory of God.

Moses was only a servant, Christ is the Son.

Moses testified of things to come, Christ brought them in.

The house in which Moses served was but a picture of the heavenly sanctuary in which Christ serves and over which He is Administrator as Son. We are that house over which He presides and our responsibility is to be subject to Him (v. 6). He is our Confidence and our Hope. "Cling to Him day by day until the wilderness journey is over. Then you are part and parcel of that house He claims as His own." Our safety and strength lies in dependence upon Him. Consider Him. Then we have the second word:

2. "Today If Ye Will Hear His Voice, Harden Not Your Hearts" (vv. 7, 8)

Here is another red signal flash that bids us stop and listen. We are out of Egypt. We are on our way to Canaan. But there are dangers on the way. The Holy Spirit speaks and bids us listen to the Shepherd's voice. The word is from Psalm 95 where Israel acknowledges Jehovah and says, "He is our God; and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand" (v. 7). And then the Spirit adds, "Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." Israel went astray because they heeded not the voice of their Shepherd. Had they heard they would have enjoyed the green pastures where He ever leads His flock. As it was, they perished in the desert sands.

Their history serves as an object lesson to us. The sprinkled blood is behind us, the cross is our yesterday. The glory shines before us, there will be our glorious tomorrow. But "today" we travel the desert road. With Christ in the heart we journey on. The way may be rugged but it cannot be long. In God's reckoning it is called "Today"—a day in which we "hear His voice" (v.

7); witness His works (v. 9); prove His love (v. 10) and are “companions of Christ,” for He who called us by His grace walks beside us in the way (v. 14).

In verses 12 and 13 we learn that the foes that confront us are “unbelief and the “deceitfulness of sin,” but the point of attack is one, “the heart.” The Holy Spirit would keep our hearts for the Man who won them, and they are both won and kept by the loving voice of Jesus.

From the noonday darkness His solemn voice

Told of my judgment borne—

And it calls to my soul to sing and rejoice

From the glow of the first day morn.

Unsilenced yet to the ear that hears,

Thou Voice of eternal bliss,

Thou speakest in speech that is deeper than tears,

And sweet as the Father’s kiss.

Since He has spoken, ours is a captured heart and with Peter we say, “Lord, to whom shall we go? THOU hast the words of eternal life.”

We are to “exhort [or encourage] one another daily, while it is called Today” (v. 13). There would be fewer spiritual shipwrecks to lament over were our harps more tuneful. Discouraged and despairing brethren would be revived and rejoiced, and the heart of our Lord would not be grieved by the hardness of our hearts.

This chapter that opens with the glorious sight of “yon lovely Man” in heaven closes with the gruesome sight of “carcasses fallen in the wilderness.” What a tragedy, as we see all along the desert way bones whitening in the

blazing, scorching sun and we ask the question, “How is this, and why?” The answer comes, “They could not enter in because of unbelief.” Israel failed because they did not hear the voice of their Shepherd. We have the record of this failure in the Book of Numbers, and other voices are heard. The Shepherd of Israel went before them to search out a resting place for them (Num. 10), but the people complained (11:1), and we have the voice of the flesh. Then the mixed multitude that was among them fell to lusting (Num. 11:4) and their voice is heard, the voice of the world. Then the leaders spoke against Moses (12:1) that was the voice of self-will. In chapters 13, they despised the pleasant land and the voice of the people is heard. In chapter 14, “All the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness!” And God gave them what they wanted.

Gathered Gleanings

An Outline Of The Chapter

1. The Lesson Of The Sanctuary (vv. 1-6).

1. A Blessed Relationship (v. 1). “Holy brethren.” A brotherhood based on sanctification.

2. A Marching People (v. 1). “Heavenly calling.” Called from above.

3. A Wondrous Vision (vv. 1-6). “High Priest.” Serving in the house.

Apostle, speaking for God.

High Priest, bringing to God.

Faithful, in service for God.

2. Lessons Of The Wilderness (Vv. 7-19).

1. An Object Lesson (vv. 7-11). Do not do as Israel did.

2. A Warning (v. 12). Watch your step.

3. An Appeal (v. 13). "Encourage yourselves each day" (N.T.).

4. An Inducement (v. 14). Companionship with Christ. What could be better?

5. A Danger Signal (vv. 15-19). Doubt is disastrous.

In chapter one God speaks to us and He speaks "Sonwise."

In chapter two the Son speaks and His theme is Salvation.

In chapter three the Spirit speaks and He says, Listen to Christ.

V. 1. Make Jesus a reality before the eyes of your mind and then tell what you have seen. "Profession" here is "confession."

Vv. 1-6 says, "He is faithful"; vv. 7-19 says, "You be faithful."

As Apostle, Christ speaks peace to me; as Priest, Christ speaks praise to God.

There is a difference in seeing the moon in the heavens or seeing it in a ruffled pool. Behold Christ where He is, not in our own muddy water.

Satan fills men's heads with ideas; God fills our vision with Christ.

V. 6. There is a house in the wilderness and a path through the wilderness. The house and the household are one. The house of God is a dwelling place where rest is found: a banqueting hall for feasting and thanksgiving; a temple for the display of glory; an armory for conquest against the gates of hell; a sanctuary for communion and worship (v. 6).

V. 13. Sin is like Jael who, when asked by Sisera for water, brought forth milk—"butter in a lordly dish—but had a hammer and nail hidden behind.

Lesson Five—Hebrews 4 The Giver Of Rest… Superior to Joshua

In striking contrast to the desert graves that marked the wanderings of unbelief in the wilderness, in this chapter we view the glorious land into which faith enters. The keynote is rest, God's rest. Glad tidings have reached us from the glory, telling us of this land of rest that is fairer far than Canaan—the land from whence came such a glowing report, when the spies brought back the luscious fruit from its bountiful vines. Israel came short of it, but all the while they wandered in the desert Caleb and Joshua carried Canaan in their hearts. Having once seen the land of their inheritance, they could not rest outside its boundaries.

And thus it is with us. We have gazed upon the Man in the glory, He is our promised land of rest; having the promise of entering into that rest where He is, we cannot be satisfied elsewhere. The dove found no rest for the sole of her foot until the waters had completely abated from off the face of the earth. There can be no rest where there is sin and sorrow. God rests where all is according to His heart, where Christ is all. We are treading the path that leads to that rest of God; meanwhile our hearts find their rest there.

Three things we notice in our chapter. The rest of God, the goal of faith; the Word of God, the test of faith; and the Son of God, the resource of faith.

1. The Rest of God (vv. 1 -11)

Down the course of the ages we are directed to this rest. God had it ever in view as the climax of blessing, the goal of all His labors.

Rest was proclaimed in Creation (v. 4). God spoke of a rest there. He was able to survey all His works and pronounce them very good. He delighted in and rested in a finished work. But man, whom He called to share His rest, disturbed it. God became a Worker where He had provided Himself a rest. "My Father worketh until now, and I work also," said the Lord Jesus when He was on earth.

Rest was prefigured in Canaan (v. 8). Joshua led Israel into the Promised Land, but neither they nor God rested there. If the serpent entered the first garden, he was found already in possession of the second Eden. But the rest remained to be enjoyed. Many years later God speaks of it through David as still future, and the invitation to enjoy rest with Him assures us of the fulfillment of the promise.

Rest was procured at Calvary (v. 10). God has a rest that is undisturbed by man. When the work of Calvary was finished, when the true Ark of the Covenant, passing through the dark waters of Jordan, finally reaches its resting-place on the holy hill of Sion., God can say, "This is My rest forever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it" (Ps. 132:14). We turn our eyes to the glory-circled throne, and point to the Man that sits there, the Man of Calvary, and say, "There, there is our rest." It is a threefold rest, enjoyed now by faith: rest of salvation, for He has made an end of sin; rest of submission, in taking

His yoke upon us; rest of satisfaction, in contemplating His Blessed Person.

Rest is promised in Christ (v. 11). One has said, “The secret of the whole Book of God is: God retreating into Christ as the One who has worked out that rest, and who holds it now, and it remains with Him both for God and for His saints.” Canaan does not picture for us our final entrance into the rest of God, but rather our present enjoyment of it by faith. There is a rest that remains, when God shall bring in the full result of the travail of Christ’s soul.

Then shall Thy love find perfect rest,
Where all around is bliss;
Where all in Thee supremely blest,
Thy praise their service is.

2. The Word of God (vv. 12, 13)

We have not yet entered into final rest. Surrounded as we are by the many pitfalls and the snares of the road, harassed by the enemy who ever challenges our progress, and encumbered by the flesh, ever a traitor to Christ, we need the Word of God to carry us through. It is the “light divine that surrounds our goings,” pointing out the way, silencing the enemy, and dealing death to all the creatures of darkness exposed to its searching rays. A fourfold description of the Word is given here.

It is living, as coming from the Living God and imparting life to all who receive it by faith into their hearts. It is powerful, or energetic, like the seedling that forces its way through every barrier into the upper region of sunlight and air. The transforming power of the Word

has been realized in countless lives. It is sharp, penetrating where no surgeon's knife can reach; convicting, cutting, not sparing the flesh, as did Saul with Agag. It is a discernor—critic or judge is the thought here. All that ever we did and all we are, our inmost thoughts, all are laid bare by the Word. Nor would we have it otherwise when we know the grace of our God. We can say, "Search me, and try me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

3. The Son of God (vv. 14-16)

The woman at Sychar's well said to the Samaritans, "Come, see a Man, which told me all that ever I did." The light that exposed her, attracted her; revealing her sin, it also revealed the grace in which her sinful soul could rest. Such is also our experience. The Word of God is like the surgeon's lancet, unrelenting, probing deep down into the wound, removing all foreign matter. The grace of our heavenly High Priest is like the ointment applied for healing, antiseptic and soothing. Because we are a sinning people, we need the Word of God to judge us. Because we are a stumbling, struggling people, we need the grace of the High Priest to sustain us. We need both the rod for correction and the staff for support; and it is from the Son of God that we draw support and succor for all the needs of the pilgrim way.

The greatness of our High Priest is seen in His exalted place on high (v. 14). We trace His footsteps in the sanctuary as He passes from the blood-stained altar, through the heavens, to the throne of glory. Our eyes are directed to Him there while His eyes are ever upon us here as we struggle onward to our rest.

The goodness of our High Priest is seen in His compassion towards us as we trudge along the weary road (v. 15). He has been over the road before us and has passed through every difficulty and every trial that any saint encounters, and ten thousand more. True it is that He knew no sin, but I do not want pity for my sins; I want sympathy for suffering, and this He gives me. He has not forgotten the sorrows of the path He trod, nor does He forget those who are His companions, following in His steps.

The grace of our High Priest is seen in our access to the very throne of God (v. 16). Where the cherubim gazed in wonder at the sprinkled blood, and where the glory shone, there was God's throne in Israel. But angels spoke not of sympathy, and that glory furnished no resting-place. With trembling the High Priest performed his duties and then hastily withdrew. Christ sits enthroned where angels gazed, and the glory of God shines in all the splendor of His grace. That throne is a mercy-seat, a throne of grace, to which we may come in holy boldness.

Gathered Gleanings

Jesus, I rest in Thee, in Thee, myself I hide,

Laden with guilt and misery, where can I rest beside?

'Tis on Thy meek and lowly breast

My weary soul alone can rest.

Thou Holy One of God, The Father rests in Thee,

And in the virtue of that blood which speaks to Him of me: The curse is gone, through Thee I'm blest, God rests in Thee, in Thee I rest.

We are now in the wilderness, we also wrestle with wicked spirits in heavenly places. A blessed rest remains for us in which our hearts will repose in the presence of God. Faith lays hold on what is future for present enjoyment.

The Creator provided Himself a rest after Creation. He promised Himself a rest in Canaan. Adam disturbed His Creation rest, Israel His Canaan rest. He has found rest in Christ.

“Soul and spirit” can only be the two parts of the immaterial nature of man. In spite of what many think, Scripture everywhere clearly distinguishes one from the other. The soul is the lower, sensitive, instinctive, emotional part; the spirit is intelligent and moral, that which knows human things (1 Cor. 2:11).

“Joints and marrow” convey to us the difference between the external and internal, the outward form and the essence hidden in it.

The Word of God surveys with critical judgment. If its eye is keen, its range of vision is also wide. Every created thing is seen and manifested. The surface is bored and depth within is opened up before it.

Grace was here in Jesus. Grace is on the throne now.

We look from earth and self to the sanctuary above and find there nothing but love, grace, sympathy and fullness of blessing.

For my weakness and difficulties I seek sympathy, and that from One whose nature is capable of appreciating my pain.

Lesson Six—Hebrews 5 The Sympathizing Priest… Superior to Aaron

Shadow and substance are before us in this chapter. In the earthly shadow of the human priest we trace the features of our Heavenly High Priest. We behold Aaron, appointed by God to sustain the people in the wilderness, but our eyes are directed from him to One who is greater, and a Priest of another order. The comparison drawn has contrasts as well. The picture is faulty, but in it we find the qualifications required to serve as a priest for the people before God. Christ combines in His Person every possible qualification to be our High Priest. We notice four of these in verses 1-4.

1. The High Priest Must Be Taken from Among Men (v. 1)

In order to have fellowship with us the High Priest must be one of us. To represent man, and minister to man, and sympathize with man, He must be Man. An angel would not do! Gabriel might deliver a message to us, but he could never sympathize with us. He neither understands our hearts nor God's; he could never feel for struggling saints nor plead our cause before the throne of God. Listen to Job in his sufferings; he longs for one who could understand his case, one who could lay his hand upon both himself and God—a daysman. What Job desired, we have in Christ. He is the Son, and therefore competent from God's side; He is Man, and therefore suited to us in our need.

Before the throne of God above
I have a strong, a perfect plea—
A great High Priest whose name is love,
Who ever lives and pleads for me.

2. The High Priest Must Represent Man in His Service to God (v. 1)

If His service is “to God,” it is “for men.” Israel could look at Aaron in his garments of beauty and say, “He is for us; God accepts us in him and the sacrifice he brings.” Entering into the presence of God, Aaron bore the names of all the children of Israel upon his shoulders and upon his breast. Thus they were represented before God, the priest’s services were on their behalf.

We see Jesus in the heavenly sanctuary, appearing in the presence of God in virtue of His finished work, and we may ... come with singing, Because our great High Priest Our names to Thee is bringing, Nor e’er forgets the least.

Yes, He is there for us, and presents us to God in all the efficacy of His shed blood, and in all the fragrance of His Holy Person.

3. The High Priest Must Be Compassionate (v. 2)

One with the people, he must “bear their griefs and carry their sorrows,” plead for the weak, sympathize with the ignorant, and restore the wayward. But the very infirmity that gave the high priest his power of sympathy, made sacrifice necessary for his own sins. Nor was the sinful priest always sympathetic. Hannah, in the

deep sorrow of her soul, while praying in the temple, was misjudged and misunderstood by Eli. And priests that were appointed to plead for weakness, accused and condemned our blessed Lord. Too often, where there was deep need, they “passed by on the other side.” But our High Priest is perfect in sympathy as well as holiness. Not His infirmities but His sufferings, not His sins but His sorrows, enable Him to be a compassionate High Priest.

4. The High Priest Must Be Vested with Divine Authority (v. 4)

All the qualifications we have noticed would not suffice to make one a high priest, apart from the divine call. No one could be self-elected to that office, he must be formally appointed by God Himself. The exercise of the priesthood, although for man, is in the line of the will of God. From among the children of Israel, God called Aaron to minister before Him in the priest’s office; so God called His own beloved Son, as One who took His place among the children of men.

5. Our Great High Priest Is Better Than Aaron

We leave the shadows now to gaze upon the more excellent glory of our High Priest (vv. 5-10). The glory of His Person and exalted position are brought into bright relief, as along with the earthly picture we hear the voice of God in the Old Testament Scriptures. It is the word uttered long ago that tells of His divine appointment as our incomparable High Priest, glorious in resurrection.

Aaron, in the presence of Moses and Eleazar, laid aside his priestly glory. He was stripped of his garments, and

was lost sight of amid the gloom of the grave, while Israel mourned for him thirty days.

Out from death's gloomy portals the Son of God rises, to be vested with robes of glory and beauty that distinguish Him as our exalted High Priest. There will be no laying aside of His garments; He is "a Priest forever after the order of Melchisedek."

There are three panels in the picture presented here. We behold Him entering into the dignity of His office in verses 5 and 6. We see Him wearing the stainless robe in which alone the sanctuary could be entered (vv. 7-9). Then we behold Him in the garments of royal splendor and priestly grace, that adorn Him as God's Anointed (v. 10).

6. The Foundation of Christ's Priesthood Rests Upon the Divine Call (vv. 5, 6)

God calls His own Son into service; the call recognizes the glory of His Person and the dignity of His office. He was ever the Son of God, and God owns Him such in Incarnation. When the Babe lay in Bethlehem's manger, the God of Heaven said, "Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee." Jordan's waters and Hermon's glory-lit peak witness alike to His majesty. But resurrection called forth the brightest rays of His glory. The bands of death are loosed, the last mile of the road of suffering has been trodden, and He receives anew His divine commission. "He is appointed by God to look after us."

7. The Preparation for the Exercise of His Priesthood

Was in His Experience as Man (vv. 7-9) Christ's glory gives Him His place at the right hand of God, but that does not bring Him near to us in our miseries down here. "His sorrows and His cross record what makes us know Him near."

As we trace His pathway, that led ever onward to the cross, "uncheered by earthly smiles," we learn how competent He is to take part in all of our sorrows. There is not a bit of the road that He is not acquainted with, and He is ready to sustain us when it is our turn to tread the weary way. "The days of His flesh" were the school in which He, whose prerogative it was to command, learned "obedience." It was a school of suffering. We are privileged to hear Him as He drew near the close of the pathway. The prayers, supplications, strong cryings and bitter tears of the Garden reveal the depths of the sorrows He endured. Dark Calvary looms up before Him with the clouds of wrath gathering round its brow. The path leads thither, and He knows what it means to go on. The full weight of the wrath He must endure presses upon His holy soul, yet He turns not back. He is perfect in obedience, submitting to everything, though with holy abhorrence of the sin whose judgment He is going on to bear.

Thus we are called to see Him in the white linen robe of the Day of Atonement. Having satisfied the claims of the altar, He ascends to His seat, and occupies the throne.

And now He is able to save those who obey Him from all the evil that is in the world. Present salvation is found in

obeying Christ. "Fix your eyes on Jesus" is the theme of this Epistle.

8. The Glory of His Priesthood Is Witnessed by the Welcome He Received (v. 10)

"Called of God" is really publicly greeted or "saluted by God." What a glorious climax to the story of His sorrows! Graduated in the school of suffering, He receives the honors due Him. To quote another, "The linen garments are now exchanged for the garments of glory and beauty, His priesthood now assumes the Melchizedek character."

With what loud acclamations of praise the sanctuary received Him! What joy there must have been when the Man of Sorrows reached home! And now within the portals of heaven, He who is the Author of our eternal salvation presents Himself to every opened eye.

Gathered Gleanings

Human priests were as sinful as the people they served. The infirmity that gave sympathy made sacrifice necessary for the priest also. Hence there could be no forgiveness. Our Priest must of necessity be not only sinless but divine so as to impart forgiveness and blessing.

Standing to conduct both eucharistic and expiatory services before God He is there to conduct our interests with God in whatever form is needed.

He learned obedience to His commission by traveling from Gethsemane to Calvary, and now presents Himself to the eye of every sinner on earth as the Author of

eternal salvation. The altar satisfied, the heavens received Him.

He whose prerogative it had been ever to command was pleased to become the obedient One on earth. Having obeyed in a world of self-will, ruled by Satan, He is qualified to now command us so that in obeying Him we find salvation from all that is evil here. Present salvation is found in obeying Christ.

V. 7. He crossed Jordan in reaching the land to which He brings us. He faced death in all its bitterness.

V. 5. The garments of beauty and glory (vv. 7,8). The garment of linen, spotlessly white.

He is our Priest because He has gone before us on every road of sorrow and loss and is ready to sustain us when our turn comes to tread it.

He is our Companion in sorrow and supplication. He is our Pattern in submissive reverence.

His glory gives Him His place in honor before God, but does not bring him near to the miseries of men. It is His history on earth which makes us feel how truly able He is to take part in them.

Verses 11-14 of chapter five belong to chapter six. We have the condition of the Hebrew Christians in relationship to the truth concerning Christ's ministry on high. They were dull hearers, lacking in spiritual experience—aged babes. There is no greater hindrance to progress in spiritual life and intelligence than attachment to an ancient form of religion. Under the influence of such a system piety itself—expended in its form—makes a barrier between the soul and God. These forms which surround, pre-occupy and hold the

affections captive, prevent the affections from enlarging,
and become enlightened by means of divine intelligence.

Lesson Seven—Hebrews 6 The Saviour Within The Veil; Superior to Judaism

As we journey on through this Epistle we reach another danger signal in this chapter. It is the third “red lantern flash,” warning us of a very serious detour leading to a precipice over which the fall is fatal. It is the cliff of apostasy.

The wondrous theme that the writer of the Epistle desired to develop was the present exercise of Christ’s priesthood as typified in Melchizedek (5:10). But the Hebrews were dull hearers, slow scholars—they were “aged babies,” they had never grown up (5:12-14). And the pity of it was that they had not always been thus; this dullness had crept over them, “Ye are become such as have need of milk,” says the apostle. They were sitting at the lowest bench when they should have been teachers, advanced in the apprehension of these heavenly truths. Fearing spiritual degeneracy, the apostle sounds the alarm in chapter 6.

1. The Admonition to Press On (vv. 1-3)

The Hebrew Christians were like children at their A-B-C’s. They should have gone on to perfection—that is, Christ in glory. The Greek word here is literally, “Let us be borne on.” It suggests being carried on the wings of faith into the clear upper air where the full glories of our heavenly High Priest are seen. They were content to be amid the shadows. The six foundation truths mentioned in verses 1 and 2 are good to build on but not to rest in, for they stop short of the Person—the Lord Jesus Christ

in glory. Principles and doctrines are good, but Himself is better; Christ is the goal short of which our souls can never be satisfied, Christ as He is at God's right hand.

2. The Solemn Warning As to Apostasy (vv. 4-6)

The soul that is content to stand still is in danger of a tremendous spiritual fall. Safety and victory are dependent upon "pressing on." Spiritual defeat follows spiritual laziness. When Sir Ian Hamilton sent in his report of the Gallipoli Expedition, referring to the man in charge on that particular occasion, he said, "And then there was that fatal inertia." This is exactly what the apostle is warning against. Their danger was in leaving Christianity for Judaism. Let us think of three circles: one was the old circle of Judaism, elsewhere called "the camp." There were the temple services, the sacrifices and the earthly priesthood, etc. Then there was the new circle of Christian profession, and this embraced the Church. The advantages were many and the privileges great in this circle.

(1) The light of God was shining there, manifesting the substance as displacing the shadows of Judaism. (2) The heavenly gift was tasted there—better than an earthly deliverance and religion. (3) The Holy Spirit was manifestly present there—better than a lifeless formalism. (4) The good word of grace was preached there—better than law. (5) Wonders and miracles were wrought there, anticipating the powers and blessings of the millennial age.

But we may think of another circle, an inner circle, that of the full revelation and glory of Christ known in the heavenly sanctuary. The Spirit desired that they should "be borne on" into the realization of their heavenly

calling and perfection as connected with Christ in that heavenly sanctuary.

From the circle of profession and privilege it was possible either to go on or to fall away, and for those who turned their backs on Christianity there was no recovery.

Examples are not lacking of the rejection of the rejecters. Balaam was enlightened; but he died in the ranks of Israel's foes fighting against God. Lot's wife "went along with" those who escaped; yet she perished in Sodom's doom. Simon Magus "tasted the good word of God"; yet he was in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity. Judas partook of the powers of the age to come; he sat within the very gate of heaven, and went out into the dark night of sin, judgment and death.

When the Jewish nation crucified their Messiah they did it in ignorance. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," said the Lord Jesus. The apostates from Christianity virtually repeated that act, and did it deliberately (v. 6).

3. Illustration and Exhortation (vv. 7-12)

Verses 7 and 8 give us a picture of what we have been considering. Here is the earth upon which the Lord pours out His blessing. Where the heavenly ministry is received, acceptable fruit is brought forth. But there is that part which only bears thorns and briars whose end is to be burned; though under the blessing poured forth as the rain from heaven, there is no fruit—this characterizes those who "fall away," those who do not continue in the faith. A word of assurance follows. Having shown the fearful character and end of apostasy,

the apostle hastens to encourage the believers by mentioning the things which persuaded him of their reality—that indeed with them were found the works which accompany salvation. Thus they answered to the illustration in verse 7, but only let them be careful to use diligence, and not be slothful. What gave confidence was their continued ministry of love to the saints. This was done as towards God, for His name, since they belonged to Him. (Compare 1 Thessalonians 4:9; Colossians 1:4; 1 Peter 1:22.) The exhortation is to diligently maintain their fruitfulness through faith and patience.

4. The Ground of Assurance (vv. 13-20)

Faith's anchorage is in the Word of God; what God has promised He will perform. Abraham is given as an example. God gave to Abraham the promise of unfailing blessing (v. 14), and after a time of waiting, he obtained the promise (v. 15). Abraham's faith rested on "two immutable things," the Word of God, and the oath of God (v. 18). God had said it, and He pledged Himself to the fulfillment of it.

This confirming oath was given after the offering up of Isaac and his being received back as in a figure from the dead—type of Christ in resurrection with whom all blessing is linked and confirmed. God raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory that our faith and hope might be in God (1 Peter 1:21). Abraham endured not only as waiting to have the son given, but in the giving up of that son at God's command. Thus he showed faith in God's word, manifesting that he counted upon God to fulfill it—even though Isaac be offered. To this obedience of faith God responds by an oath. Here we who have fled for refuge have what affords us "strong consolation" to

lay hold of the hope presented in God's Word. This hope of glory, of God's rest, of eternal inheritance, of God's city, is an anchor, secure and firm, entering within the veil—God's immediate Presence, the heavenly sanctuary—where Jesus is entered as Forerunner for us. This is the ground of our confidence: that He is there for us. This is to us, what the oath of God was to Abraham.

We have what Abraham had, and more. Our faith has found a sure foundation and a resting-place. In addition to the Word of God, we have the Person of Christ within the veil. Our chapter closes with three simple but precious illustrations that confirm our faith.

1.The City of Refuge (v. 18). Think of the fleeing sinner pursued by the avenger of blood; once within the walls of the city of refuge he was safe. Jesus is our Refuge. Having fled to Him we have a strong consolation. The gates of our city will never open to admit the avenger nor to deliver us up to his hand.

2.The Anchor (v. 19). The ship on the stormy sea is held fast by the anchor that grips the rock. Christ is the soul's Anchor. Who ever heard of a sailor casting anchor in the hold of the ship? Yet so many look within for peace instead of looking away to Christ.

3.The Forerunner (v. 20). A forerunner announced the coming of the king in olden days. John the Baptist was the forerunner of Jesus; he prepared the way for His coming. The Man in the Glory is our Forerunner; because He is there, we are sure of being there.

Gathered Gleanings

“Let us go on”—there's danger of stopping too soon.

“Let us press on”—there’s danger of sinking into discouragement.

“Let us be borne on”—there is danger of supposing we are left alone.

Leave the A.B.C.’s—go on to Christ. He is the Word.

Vv. 1-8. The letter to the Hebrews came to the people in Jerusalem. There were those Hebrews who clung to the temple with its six doctrines (vv. 1, 2). There were those who left the temple ritual—Judaism—for the circle of Christian privileges. They enjoyed blessings from God but were unregenerate, so bore “thorns and briars” and were rejected. Then forsaking the assembly and going back to the temple ritual after having seen the light they did deliberately what the nation did ignorantly. They crucified to themselves the Son of God afresh.

Orthodoxy, fundamentalism, is good; but only feeding on Christ means spiritual growth and full development.

From Christ there can be no falling away, but from Christian privilege there may be.

Balaam, enlightened, died in the ranks of Israel’s foes.

Lot’s wife, escaping, perished in Sodom’s doom.

Judas in the upper room stepped out into the night of eternal darkness.

Impossibility of renewal is not the only impossibility within the compass of the gospel. Over against the descent to perdition, hope grasps salvation with the one hand and the climbing pilgrim with the other, thus making it impossible to fail to reach the summit. Both impossibilities have their source in God’s justice.

The condition is now transferred from the faith of Abraham to the faithfulness of God. God pledges His own existence on the fulfillment of His promise.

Lesson Eight—Hebrews 7 The Surety… Superior to the Old Covenant

In the hall of some renowned college, we see upon its walls portraits of men, who, generation after generation, succeeded each other in office. One after the other passed away, and those who take their places will do likewise. Thus it was with the Aaronic priesthood. Priest followed priest in the exercise of his office, one after the other appeared on the scene only to be succeeded by still another.

In contrast to this, we have in the entrance hall to our chapter, the portrait of one whose priesthood was continuous. It was neither derived from another nor transferred. In character it was unique, and in duration, eternal. Melchisedek is the priest in whom we have pictured the various features of Christ's priesthood that could never be set forth in the Aaronic succession.

We are invited by the apostle to "consider how great this man was." Shall we take a look at him? As we do, we discover a galaxy of bewildering glories, and we do not wonder that the warnings and exhortations of chapters 5 and 6 were needed, before the theme of Christ's royal priesthood could be fully developed. We shall not enter upon a deep study of this theme, but rather touch upon some of the simple things which are seen here, that we may find delight in having "such an High Priest."

1. Melchisedek Pictures Christ in the Uniqueness of His Person (vv. 1-3)

We are first introduced to him as a priest upon his throne, occupying that throne in righteousness, for by interpretation, his name means “King of Righteousness.” Then, also, he was King of Peace; for Salem, where he reigned, means “peace.” Surely we can see Christ in this, for He holds both sceptre and censer, wearing both mitre and crown of glory. He brought in righteousness at the cross, and He is our Peace, eternal and unchangeable. Throughout the Old Testament picture gallery, each person presented is seen with a background of ancestry. But not so Melchisedek. He is seen in solitary dignity. Suddenly he appears to the victorious pilgrim Abraham, and as suddenly, disappears. We know nothing of his parentage, we learn nothing of his posterity. We have record of neither his birth nor death. Indeed, the introduction of these would have marred the picture, for he was made a likeness of the Son of God whose Priesthood is not inherited nor transferred. He came from the tribe of Judah, not Levi, and He remains a Priest forever. But being a Priest of another order necessitates the setting aside of the old order and the economy under which it operated.

Abraham was considered by every Israelite as the greatest of all the fathers, but Melchisedek was greater than he, for Abraham gave tithes to him. In this act, the entire Aaronic priesthood acknowledged the superiority of another priest outside their own order. Christ is greater than Melchisedek; He is greater than all. He displaces all and fills the gap with Himself. The entire Aaronic order is displaced by Him.

2. Melchisedek Is a Picture of Christ in the Exercise of His Priesthood

If we turn back to chapter 5:9, we notice the first of four panels in this picture of priestly majesty. In each, one word characterizes the exercise of this priesthood.

1. Salvation. As High Priest after the order of Melchisedek, Christ is become the Author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him. We acknowledge His gracious authority over His own as our glorious Leader; and present salvation is found in obeying Christ. Here in this scene is the pathway in which He once walked, and we are called to follow Him in it. From above He holds out to us the golden sceptre. And we need grace from The place where He's now on the throne, And His strength shall be ours on the road.

How much we need this preservation from the defiling influences of the world through which we pass! Coming back to our chapter we notice a second characteristic—

2. Blessing. We read that Melchisedek “blessed him that had the promises” (v. 6). What a lovely picture we have here! Abraham, the pilgrim, had just returned from his victory over the world powers of that day. The man who was aloof from the world could overcome the world and deliver his brother Lot who was taken captive by it. The royal priest met him, and bestowed upon him heaven's strength and joy. Another and different conflict awaited Abraham: he was to meet the king of Sodom. In the strength of the heavenly benediction he was able to refuse his offers; and being satisfied with the heavenly portion, the world's offers did not tempt him. He could stand up against the wiles of the enemy as well as against his power.

Thus Christ will come forth in a future day from the sanctuary of heaven to dispense blessing to Israel, triumphant over all her foes. He will sit as Priest upon His throne, according to the prophet Zechariah. No doubt there will then be the full exercise of the Melchisedek priesthood, but now, as High Priest of good things to come, He gives us a blessed foretaste of it all. Every good thing with which God will bless His people is at His disposal, and it is His great delight to bestow it upon us.

If we were enjoying the priestly ministrations of Christ to our souls we would be able to stand up to the world as Abraham did. Do we not enjoy His Presence in a very real way when we are gathered in His precious Name? Christ prepares for us a feast; He meets us with all the rich blessings of which He is the Center, and satisfies our hearts with heaven's bounties, so that the world loses all attraction for us. Then too, we have the privilege of bringing some token of our homage, as did Abraham to Melchisedek. The bread and the wine suggest what He is to us, and we unite in giving to Him our highest tribute of praise, for He is worthy.

The third characteristic we find in verses 11-19.

3.Perfection. The law made nothing perfect (v. 19), for it was not the final thing. Both the law and the priesthood associated with its administration pass off the scene, superseded by Christ, who, in contrast to its long succession of dying men, exercises the priesthood "after the power of an endless life" (v. 16). The law brought neither satisfaction to the heart of God nor relief to needy man; nor could it bring the two together, and so

there is the setting aside of “the commandment given before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof.”

Christ makes everything perfect; He, the Eternal One, imparts eternity to all He touches. Then the last word we will notice is

4. Approach. By a better hope we draw nigh to God (v. 19). Of old, a great throng stood outside the doors of the sanctuary. They had no access within its Holy Place, and the son of Aaron could not bring them in. True, he himself entered once a year, but it was only for a brief moment, and then with fear and trembling. Grace has done what the law could never do; it has brought us to God. Our hope is Christ at the right hand of God. He has gone in, and so may we. Because He is there, the presence of God is to us the most attractive spot in the universe, and we draw near to God with delight.

As we close the chapter, we have a blessed presentation of our Lord Jesus in contrast with the earthly priests. We gaze with wonder and joy. Saluted by the Eternal God as Partner of His throne, He is Priest forever, confirmed in His office by the divine oath (v. 21).

He is Surety of a better covenant and thus guarantees its fulfillment (v. 22).

He ever lives to save those that come unto God by Him, with a complete salvation from the outermost edge of the pit to the very heart of God.

An Israelite, seeking the sympathy of a priest, might find the gracious man he formerly knew succeeded by a different type. Christ is ever the same, and He meets exactly the need of every heart. He is the very kind of High Priest that we need, and His fitness is seen in the

following verses as His character is portrayed in a sevenfold glory (vv. 26-28).

He is holy—devoted to God in love, with a heart throbbing in unison with the heart of God.

He is harmless—laying a gentle hand upon us with a tender touch.

He is undefiled—unsullied in character, with glistening white garments that shall never know one speck or stain.

He is separate from sinners—the heavenly Nazarite, who is drawing our hearts to the scene where He is.

He is higher than the heavens—now in the presence of God, making that place the home of our hearts.

He has finished the work—His one offering has satisfied the altar.

He is perfected for evermore—God’s Son, our glorious High Priest.

Gathered Gleanings

Vv. 1-10. A great system of blessing centering in Christ in glory.

Vv. 11-22. A great system of perfection centering in Christ in glory.

He comes out to me in blessing, I draw near to God with pleasure. The presence of God is the most attractive spot in the universe to our hearts. If we apprehend the better hope (Christ Himself), we draw near. We are perfectly at home in His presence. Contrast Luke 1:10 with Luke 24:53.

I have in heaven a High Priest who is “holy,” etc. I am not separate from sinners, but He is. My ship may move about a little, but it cannot part from its anchor that is safe within the veil.

V. 19. “Perfect,” in this whole Epistle, is simply that He has gotten to the top of the thing. The law couldn’t do that. The whole congregation of Israel could go up with the high priest to a certain point, and then—they have lost him. But we see Jesus. If I look up to the highest point, I have Him there; and if I look down to the lowest point—to my weakest point—I have Him there.

The apostle interprets for us both the speech and the silence of Scripture, both the names and the order thereof. Everything is taken into account:

1. The fact that righteousness comes first before peace—a principle in divine ways (Isa. 32:17)—is seen at the cross.
2. The fact that father and mother are not mentioned.
3. The unending priesthood.

First righteousness, then peace.

1. Christ’s reconciling work—Peace by the blood of His cross.
2. His dealings with the soul—Justified we have peace with God.
3. His operation in the world—No peace because no righteousness.
4. The world to come—Peace established upon righteousness.

Lesson Nine—Hebrews 8 The Sanctuary… Superior to the Tabernacle

In our journey through this Epistle to the Hebrews, we reach the high point in the opening verses of chapter 8. All that has been unfolded in the previous chapters is summed up in the first verse.

“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.”

Having had our eyes directed heavenward in the course of this letter, they are now fixed there. All that might have demanded our attention has been displaced by Christ. The glory of the Man in heaven eclipses all other. Christ in glory sums up all our faith. In Him we reach the blessed goal of all our heart’s desires, the summit of hope’s aspirations, the acme of all blessedness.

Four precious things are suggested in this verse:

1. Possession. “We have.” Though distant in the heavens, Christ is not lost to us; unseen by human eyes, still He is ours. On earth loving hearts mourned His absence, they thought they had lost Him when He descended into the gloomy grave. He appeared again to their joy. Then the cloud hid Him from their view as He ascended into glory, but faith sees Jesus there, and “we have Him” now as we never could have had Him while He was here on earth.

Israel had everything here on earth. Priest, and sanctuary, and inheritance were all down here. We have

nothing here; Christ's cross has severed ties that bound us here, "Himself our treasure in a brighter sphere."

2. Attraction. "We have such an High Priest."

In the one word—"such"—are summed up all the glories, beauties and moral qualities seen in our blessed Jesus. He is the Incomparable One. There is none beside Him. He is Altogether Lovely. Aaron may have been attractive, clothed in his garments of beauty and glory, but we sing:

There is none, Lord Jesus, there is none like Thee—

For the heavy laden, for the brokenhearted,

For the soul that thirsteth, there is none like Thee.

3. Satisfaction. "Who is set."

The high priest in Israel found no seat in the sanctuary, he could never rest there. The altar demanded his constant attention, his work was never finished. But our Christ sits in glory. He has been to the altar once, never to return to it again. The sanctuary is occupied because the altar is satisfied. In virtue of His finished work, Christ is enthroned on high, and where He rests, we rest—satisfied with Jesus.

4. Exaltation. "The throne of the Majesty in the heavens." In what a glorious setting we see Jesus. Never were the heavens so garnished as when He entered them. They did ever tell forth God's glory; now there is added glory. A Man sits enthroned where only Deity can sit; and that Man hung in deepest shame on Calvary's cross for us.

Lord, we rejoice that Thou art gone

To sit upon Thy Father's throne;

Thy path of shame and suffering o'er,
Thy heart shall grieve and mourn no more.

Having thus been occupied with our glorious High Priest, we are introduced to the heavenly sanctuary in which He serves. Indeed, this chapter is a sort of vestibule to the rest of the letter. It bids us look back over the ground already covered, and indicates to us what is yet to be unfolded. Let us consider the two great themes presented here.

1. The Heavenly Sanctuary and Its Ministry (vv. 2-6)

High in the heavens is the sanctuary from which God made the “blueprints” for Moses to copy. The earthly tabernacle was patterned after the heavenly. Israel had the model, we have the original; they had the picture, we have the Person; they had the shadow, we have the substance. The Israelite had very little or nothing to do with the heavenly; for him the earthly building was the center of all his activities. The existence of the heavenly sanctuary was no secret; but the presence of a High Priest serving there was indeed strange news to a “Hebrew.” There was no place in the earthly picture for our High Priest; “seeing there were priests that offer gifts according to the law.” He is of a different order and His is “a more excellent ministry.” He had somewhat to offer for He gave Himself; and now He “stands by His burnt offering” and represents His people in the very presence of God. Christ is our Aaron, He is also our Moses, He is the Mediator of a better covenant. This brings us to the second great theme of our chapter.

2. The New Covenant and Its Better Promises (vv. 7-13)

The old covenant was faulty (vv. 7-9); the new covenant is final (vv. 10-13). The old covenant had promises, but its blessings were dependent upon absolute obedience on the part of the second party. Not one with whom the contract was made could possibly meet the requirements, for they were all sinners; and so there was an end to the whole thing. But a new covenant will be made. Jeremiah was the first to announce it. His words are quoted in this chapter (vv. 8-13). He was aboard the wreck of Judaism as it sailed into Babylonish waters. He declared the charter under which Israel sailed as obsolete. The contract being conditional and having been broken, was not binding. But God would bind Himself by another. This one would be unconditional. What characterizes it are the "I wills" of a covenant-keeping God. This promise Jeremiah held out to captive Israel.

For many centuries no more was heard about it. Then one night in an upper room in Jerusalem, where a small group was assembled to eat the Passover, after supper, the Lord Jesus took a cup in His hands, and said, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you." It was His death that met the old obligation, and laid the foundation for the new covenant.

Again, after a number of years, Paul points out the Man of Calvary as the Mediator of that new covenant, and lays down its terms.

The days of which Jeremiah spoke are still future. Neither Israel nor Judah are enjoying the administration of the new covenant. Meanwhile we, associated with

Christ the Mediator and Administrator of the New Covenant, enjoy its blessings within the veil (see 2 Cor. 3:6).

The summing up of its promises is sevenfold. Let us endeavor to extract sweetness for ourselves out of these fair flowers that shall yet bloom in Israel's garden. We have here a rich cluster of blessings, each one the fruit of the toil of Christ's soul, and the gift of God's grace.

1. Obedience heads the list. "I will put my laws into their minds." Here we have not the cold tables of a relentless law, but the warmth of a regenerated heart beating in unison with God's, because it is partaker of His own nature. "I delight to do Thy will," was the word of our Lord Jesus, and "we have the mind of Christ."

2. Devotion follows. "I will... write them in their hearts." "Cut a little deeper, doctor, and you will find the emperor," said the dying veteran of Napoleon's army, as they probed for the bullet which had sunk deep down into his breast. God has written Christ on our hearts. The writing may not always be legible, and the dust of this world may at times hide it from view, but it is there.

3. Satisfaction lies in these words: "I will be their God." No one but God Himself can satisfy the infinite longing of our souls. St. Augustine said, "Thou hast made us for Thyself and only Thou canst satisfy." Our God is El Shaddai, the God Who Is Enough.

4. Sanctification is implied in "They shall be to Me a people." Once our name was "Lo-ammi," that is "not My people." Now we are "Ammi," that is "My people." We are a people whom God has formed for Himself and set apart for Himself, "a people for a possession, that we should show forth the excellencies of Him who has

called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.”

Happy in this relationship, we should seek to render to Him all we have and are.

5. Unity also marks the new covenant. They “all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest.” What can exceed this? Knowing about God is good; but to know Him is far better. To enjoy Him we must know Him. Abraham knew God, and to him, not to Lot, God revealed His mind. Moses knew God, and he beheld His glory and knew His ways. Paul knew Him and committed all to Him.

6. Mercy is what God delights in, and this is promised in the sixth article of the new covenant. “I will be merciful to their unrighteousness.” The blood of Jesus has removed every cloud from the sky. The favor of God rests upon us, For me, Lord Jesus, Thou hast died, And I have died in Thee;

Thou ‘rt risen: my bands are all untied;

And now Thou liv’st in me.

The Father’s face of radiant grace

Shines now in light on me.

7. Forgiveness. The last of these blessings is really the foundation of all of them. There can be no entering into blessing apart from the sin question being settled. Christ died for our sins. God remembers them no more, for they have been put out of His sight. His eyes rest with infinite delight upon the One who removed them. If there is no cloud without, neither is there a stain within. The blood of the old covenant was a continual reminder of sins that were not put away. The blood of the new covenant was shed for the remission of our sins. We

remember the One whose finished work has placed us spotless in the very holiest of all.

Gathered Gleanings

Christ our High Priest in heaven is the crowning point, the Headstone of the corner, the Keystone of the arch. This sums up all our faith. Our righteousness and standing before God. Our armory of warfare. Our citizenship and hope of glory.

The right hand is the place of affection, honor, dignity and power.

He rests—a finished work on earth—yet a constant priestly activity.

The first covenant was made with Israel, the second necessarily also. A covenant is a principle of relationship with God on the earth—conditions established by God under which man is to live with Him. The old was made at Sinai; the new will be made with the whole house of Jacob. The gospel is no covenant but the revelation of salvation of God.

In chapter one, our APOSTLE is seated. In chapter eight, it is our High Priest, the same Person but in two different characters. It is Christ for our sins and Christ for our cares.

SUCH AN HIGH PRIEST. A summing up:

- Merciful and faithful (2:17, 18). Those whom He supports know His gentleness and care, while His faithfulness to God is:
- Glorious and pre-eminent (3:1, 2, 6). We gaze upon the One who has reached the end of the road. We are subject to Him as set over God's house.

- Exalted yet available (4:14-16). Although so high, He is touched by our infirmities. He has succor for the tempted, grace for the infirm and needy.
- Sovereign and Sympathizer (5:5-10). He is Priest on the Throne. We are saved by Him: we obey Him.
- Great and Good (6:20-7:28). We are invited to consider “How great this Man was”; whereupon the Spirit proceeds to set forth fresh aspects and a galaxy of almost bewildering glories of this wonderful Person. Greater than the patriarch Abraham and the priest Aaron. Eternal in the exercise of His priesthood.

Lesson Ten—Hebrews 9 The Services; Superior to Levitical Service

We continue to notice the contrast between the old and the new covenants in this chapter. We travel from the blood-stained altar, enter through the many-hued door of beauty, and find ourselves within the Holy Place. Its golden glow reminds us that here we have the prophecy and picture of better things to come. Its service typified the ministry of our High Priest in a better sanctuary, the heavenly one. Let us look at the better things in this portion.

1. The Better Sanctuary (vv. 1-10)

The Tabernacle of old was separated by the beautiful veil into two compartments. The first was called “the Sanctuary,” and the second “the Holiest of All.” In the contents of these chambers we behold rays of divine glory, for in His Tabernacle every whit of it declares His glory.

The Candlestick, mentioned first, prefigured Christ as the Light that dispelled our darkness.

The Table was the symbol of that fellowship which is enjoyed in the light of His presence.

The Shewbread spoke of Christ as the food of His people, satisfying our soul’s hunger forevermore.

These all were in the first room, the place of communion.

Entering the second compartment, seven things are mentioned. They speak of our worship within the veil of heaven (vv. 4, 5).

The Golden Censer, containing the sweet, fragrant incense from off the golden altar, speaks of the worthiness of Christ. We draw near to God in all the sweet savor of His blessed Person and work.

The Ark of the Covenant, overlaid round about with gold, tells of the glory of His Person in whom we have found our Center.

The Golden Pot That Had Manna, suggests the remembrance of that life of grace here below that satisfied God's heart and ours.

Aaron's Rod That Budded reminds us of the glorious resurrection of Him who lay in death for us. Death could not hold Him.

The Tables of the Covenant declare that all of God's holy requirements have been met in Him, and by Him.

The Cherubims of Glory over which the Presence-Cloud rested speak of "righteousness and judgment, the foundation of His throne" (Ps. 97:2, R.V.). Their satisfaction is found in the glory of accomplished redemption set forth in The Mercy-Seat, blood-stained, glory-crowned, telling us that God rests in Christ, and there too we have found our rest.

God is satisfied with Jesus,

We are satisfied as well.

In these earthly pictures, what a lovely foreshadowing we have of heavenly realities! But we also notice one great contrast. Although the priests in Israel had access

always to the first chamber where they served continually, they were excluded from the second by the veil that hung between. Once every year the high priest passed the barrier with blood, only to hasten out of that Holy Place when his services were completed. The way to the Holiest was not yet made manifest. The blood of those sacrifices offered then, could never put away sin. But all this is different now. A rent veil and an open sanctuary characterize Christianity. It is the blessed privilege of every believer to draw near unto God, through the removing of every barrier by the blood of Jesus.

Within the Holiest of all,
Cleansed by His precious blood,
Before the throne we prostrate fall,
And worship Thee, O God.

2. The Better Sacrifice (vv. 11-14)

Christ is the fulfillment of all the Old Testament shadows. They all have their end in Him. They were figures for the time then present. Now we have reached the time of reformation, that is, the time of setting things right. Christ has entered the "greater and more perfect tabernacle," the heavenly, as the High Priest of "good things to come." For the unsaved there are no good things to come; there remains only the wrath of God and all its terrors. Christ having entered into the good things, faith possesses them in Him. By Him we have access into the very presence of God, where all these good things are enjoyed. We share them with Him because He entered heaven through His own precious blood (v. 12, R.V.). The glory He has acquired through

obtaining “eternal redemption,” He shares with those who are “sons” under His captaincy. Unto all them that obey Him, He is the Author, or Cause, of eternal salvation (5:9, R.V.). His blood opens the way for us to the glories of heaven.

Our title to glory we read in His blood.

Not only has the blood of Christ opened the sanctuary to us, it has also fitted us for that place (vv. 13, 14). Two illustrations from the Old Testament are used. The one picture is of the Great Day of Atonement, when the high priest entered the holiest with the blood of the offering and sprinkled the Mercy-Seat. The other is that of the red heifer, whose ashes were used for the daily cleansing of the defiled Israelite (Num. 19). Since our High Priest has entered in once into the Holy Place, and His blood assures for us that cleansing that enables us to enter as happy worshipers into the presence of God, we can sing:

Conscience now no more condemns us,
For His own most precious blood,
Once for all has washed and cleansed us,
Cleansed us in the sight of God.

3. The Better Inheritance (vv. 15-17)

Under the old covenant a people journeyed through a desert to their inheritance in Canaan, struggling beneath the burden of their sins. The blood of twice ten thousand sacrifices could never remove one of them. It is not so with us. The blood of Christ has removed every incumbrance, the old accounts are all settled, the past is

all “under the blood,” and the glory shines before us. His death has relieved us and enriched us.

In the parenthetical portion here (vv. 16, 17) we have an illustration from legal affairs. Here lies a document entitled, “A last will and testament.” That paper is powerful, for in it lies the disposal of a vast inheritance. But as long as the testator lives it is invalid, nothing more than a mere “scrap of paper.” Only upon the death of the testator can it be put into effect; then the heirs receive their due portions. Christ died to put into effect the will of God concerning us. By His death we inherit that wealth which God has made ours in His gracious purpose.

4. The Better Blood (vv. 18-20)

In these verses notice three things with regard to the blood.

1. The blood is the foundation of the covenant (v. 18). In olden times a covenant was ratified with the blood of a victim. When God made a covenant with Abraham, there were the cloven carcasses of the slain beasts forming a ghastly blood-stained avenue. It was down this lane of death that God went to meet Abraham. At Sinai the necessity of the blood was not forgotten. There Moses sprinkled both the book and the people, thus binding them to the terms of that covenant. At Calvary we behold the blood of the new covenant, the blood of Jesus. His precious blood is of infinite value in the sight of God, and to its efficacy we owe every blessing and privilege we possess.

2. The blood cleanses from defilement (v. 21). Not only were the people sprinkled with blood, but the tabernacle

as well, and the vessels of its service. God must have His house clean as well as those who serve in it. Apart from this cleansing, sinful man could never feel at home in the dazzling light in which God dwells, nor could God welcome us there.

3. The blood removes guilt (v. 22). “Without shedding of blood there is no remission,” or “forgiveness.” The bringing in of a people into the presence and service of God involved the removal of sins. No arrangement between a holy God and a sinful people was possible except on the ground of the shed blood. The blood tells the tale that judgment is past, sins are gone, and the Worshipped and the worshippers are together in divine harmony.

5. The Better Appearances (vv. 24-28)

1. His present appearing as our High Priest (vv. 24, 25). The holiest was the goal of the high priestly work in Israel. There for a brief moment Aaron appeared as the representative of the people. Our eyes follow Jesus as He appears in the presence of God for us, every ray of that glory showing the value of His finished work. Our great High Priest bears our names on His bosom, upholding us by His power; nor is the least forgotten by Him.

2. His past appearing as our Surety (vv. 26-28). Christ never could have entered the glory to appear there for us if He had not first entered the judgment-cloud and borne the wrath of God that was our due. He met our appointment when in the “consummation of the ages He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.”

3. His future appearing as our Saviour (v. 28). At His first appearing Christ settled the sin question. When He comes again it will be “without sin,” that is, He will not open that question again. He comes to take us into the full enjoyment of all that He won for us by dying on the tree.

We who love Him “look for Him.” We lovingly lift our eyes to heaven and in response to His parting words, “Surely I come quickly,” respond, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

Gathered Gleanings

The “first tabernacle” was characteristic of the law. Even to Moses, the mediator, it said, “Thou canst not see My face: for there shall no man see Me and live.” There was an unrent veil between God and the people and the priests as well.

We are in the presence of God, and we are always there. This is Christian ground.

In the Epistle to the Hebrews we are viewed as being on earth, but with free and full access to God in the Holiest.

V. 11. Lit.: “Having come forward,” emerging out of shadows, He steps on the scene never to retreat.

V. 12. The way by which He enters secured a place for us there. His blood is the key that unlocks heaven’s glories to us.

V. 26. The world’s history, and man’s closed at the cross. Grace is active now in gathering to, and uniting to, that Man in heaven.

“That is my Saviour; tell me more about Him.” Every ray of the glory shows the value of His work. The glory into

which He has entered and with which He is surrounded, only enhances the preciousness, the love and the majesty of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Most Precious Thing in heaven has died for the vilest thing on earth—you—me.

The question of our sin can never be opened again. The efficacy of Christ's work brings us into the presence of God without a veil between, and ourselves entirely clear from all sin. We are before Him, whiter than the snow, in a light which only can show it.

Lesson Eleven—Hebrews 10 The Sacrifice Superior to All Offerings

The ninth chapter of Hebrews closes with our High Priest appearing within the veil of heaven where we behold Him. We are “looking steadfastly toward heaven,” for we expect to see Him soon, coming out from the glories of that heavenly sanctuary. When He comes it will be for our eternal salvation. He will bring us back with Him into all the blessings of that heavenly place.

In chapter ten we learn that we are now set down amidst those glories, entering through the veil into the Holy Place. Our approach to the subject is by way of the crimson highway of the Old Testament types and shadows. We follow them until we reach the goal toward which they all point, the one perfect Sacrifice by which alone we can enter the presence of God.

1. The Avenue of the Shadows (vv. 1-4)

For many centuries, year after year, sacrifices were offered in Israel. These offerings were like fingerposts pointing to Calvary. They all were “shadows,” Christ is the substance. They were “continuous,” repeated year after year; Christ’s Sacrifice was once for all. They were for a “remembrance”—they could never remove the sins thus brought to remembrance. Now we remember a Sacrifice that has put all our sins away.

Not all the blood of beasts, on Jewish altars slain,

Could give the guilty conscience peace, or wash away its stain. But Christ, the heavenly Lamb, took all our guilt away, A Sacrifice of nobler name, and richer blood than they.

2. The One Perfect Sacrifice (vv. 5-18)

Over against the background of the many Jewish offerings we see Calvary. There we trace a pathway that leads from the brightness of heavenly glory to the foot of the cross. We are reminded of the time when Christ came out from heaven. Coming into this world we hear Him say, "Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not" ... setting aside all the shadows by the one perfect offering of Christ Himself, for He came to die.

Three things we needed: We needed someone to think of us, and this is what God did. We needed someone to act for us, and Christ did that. And then we needed someone to tell of the accomplishment of that work, and the Holy Spirit does that. This is simply set forth in this portion.

1. The source of our salvation is the will of God (vv. 7-10). The first man, Adam, did his own will, and man was separated from God, lost in sin. The will of God was our salvation, and this involved the coming and death of the Second Man, our Lord Jesus Christ. By that will we are brought back to God.

2. The means of our salvation is the work of Christ (vv. 10-14). The body He received at Incarnation (v. 5) He offered up as a Sacrifice for sin on the cross (vv. 10-12), and by His one Offering we are perfected forever. Think of the thief on the cross going to Paradise the very day Jesus died! He was only fit for hell. What made him fit for heaven? Only the work of Christ dying at his side.

3. The assurance of our salvation is by the Holy Spirit's witness (vv. 15-18). The Spirit of God points to the past work of Christ forever finished, assuring us of that fact. Our sins can be remembered no more because they are removed out of God's sight.

3. Entrance into the Holiest (vv. 19-25)

When we stand beside the altar, we see the end of all our sins, and discover a way open whereby we can draw near to the very innermost shrine of glory. The way is Christ Himself. It is by Him that we draw near to God—Christ in death—for the approach is through the rent veil. Thus having access through Jesus' blood, and being in association with the priestly house over which Christ is High Priest (v. 21), we are admonished to appropriate these blessings. Three times we have the words, "Let us."

"Let us draw near" in the full exercise of faith, like John on Jesus' bosom, perfectly at rest in His Presence (v. 22).

"Let us hold fast" our confession in the assurance of hope (margin), like Stephen in the face of his foes (v. 23).

"Let us consider one another" in the warmth of love, like Epaphras with entire absence of thought of self (v. 24). Thus will the atmosphere of the sanctuary prevail in the company of the saints down here.

How sad to turn from such a lovely scene to the dark picture that follows! The dark clouds of judgment are seen gradually rising on the horizon of the world. The company of the saints is in the midst of the doomed scene, but in touch with heaven, and bearing testimony to an absent and glorified Christ. He sits in highest

heaven (v. 12), “expecting” until the day of His power and glory (v. 13). In spirit the assembly is to be seated and expecting as He is. But now and again someone slips away from that circle, forsaking the assembly, as Judas did the gathering in the upper room. The apostle warns us not to follow in their footsteps. “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” (v. 25).

4. The Doom of the Despiser (vv. 26-39)

Another “red lantern” warning is found in the closing verses of this chapter. As we look outside the holy, happy place where God brings His own near Himself, we see only a “wilderness of woe.” How terrible the very thought that one should willfully forsake the group of glory-bound pilgrims, returning to the dark shadows of Judaism with wrath impending. Its sacrifices could not shelter from the wrath to come. Before him looms the vengeance of the living God, certain and terrible. More dreadful than the fate of the lawbreaker is that of the despiser of grace. The Son of God, the precious blood, and God’s gracious Spirit all interposed, but this despiser disregards them all, pursuing the path of rebellious self-will.

Our chapter closes with a backward and an onward look. The dark picture of apostasy is relieved by a lovely scene out of the past history of the Hebrew Christians. Amidst the dark shadows of fiery persecution their faith had shone brightly. They had been robbed of all their earthly store, but what mattered since they had in heaven “a better and an abiding substance”? They had their eye on heavenly glory, and earth faded out of the

picture. The record of their past sufferings and their love and sympathy towards the afflicted apostle was a challenge to them and an encouragement to go on. A reward awaited them at the end of the road. The day of “illumination” marked the beginning of the way, the day of glorification would mark the end. The will of God was the road that lay between, and in that they were to walk with patience. This they would need, for the way was weary and long, but hope brightened the path (v. 37). “Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry.”

Blessed hope! Glorious prospect! The outlook is dark for this poor world, but the uplook is bright for those who know the Man who has gone within the Holy Place to return again for the joy of His people. Thus, while we hear the warning sounds—and we shudder to think of coming wrath—the Morning Star appears in the eastern sky; we point to it and say, “The day is dawning.”

All who rely by faith upon the One whose promise cheers us, are sure of reaching the goal. “We are not of them that draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.”

Gathered Gleanings

Vv. 1-10. The Lord Jesus undertook of His own free will, the accomplishment of all the will of God in absolute and complete submission. He was pleased to take the body prepared for Him in order to accomplish it.

The love, the devotedness to the glory of God, and the way in which He undertook to obey, are fully set forth in these verses.

And this—the fruit of God’s eternal counsels—displaces by its very nature every provisional sign. Signs point the way; signs cease when the goal is reached. The cross is the terminal of the crimson highway of the Old Testament.

V. 10. Sanctification in the Epistle to the Hebrews is not the practical sanctification wrought by the Holy Ghost. It is a complete setting apart to God, as belonging to Him—bought by the offering of Jesus and consecrated to Him because of that offering.

Once for all. The duration and the constant force of the efficacy of that work. Forever. Uninterruption, continuity. He is ever seated. We are ever perfected by virtue of His work, and according to that perfect righteousness, in which, and conformable to which, He sits at the right hand of God. His acceptance on God’s part is proved by His sitting at His right hand. And He is there for us.

V. 15. The certainty that God will never remember our sins and iniquities is founded upon (1) the steadfast will of God, (2) the perfect offering of Christ, (3) the sure testimony of the Holy Ghost.

V. 19. “Holy places,” both now made one.

V. 20. The one entrance is through the rent veil by the blood of Jesus. “New”: recent, newly. Sincere souls today seek pardon from Christ as High Priest. Faith sees a perfect redemption accomplished. Sins have been imputed to Christ. He is now in heaven—a proof of sins gone forever.

Sins interrupt communion but make no change in our position before God, nor in the testimony rendered by

the Presence of Christ at the right hand of God. As Priest He obtains grace to help in time of need, that we may not sin.

V. 22. The only thing that honors the efficacy of Christ's work and the love which has thus brought us to enjoy God's favor is to bask in it.

Vv. 26, 27. Verses that have troubled many a pilgrim on the heavenly pathway. And well might we take heed, but never give way to despair, for the warning is against leaving the "way of the cross" for the path of self-will and the doom of despair.

There is no remedy for apostasy. If one abandoned Christ and Christians, there was no other sacrifice to which he could have recourse, nor would that sacrifice be repeated. Nothing but judgment awaited such an one.

V. 19. Inside the veil (v. 32), outside the camp. Satan's lie made Adam a stranger to God and at home in this polluted world. Christianity restores us to citizenship in the Presence of God and stranger-ship in the world—inside the camp and outside the camp.

V. 36. A life of patience intervenes between the day of illumination and the day of glorification. Not a path of ease, pleasure, prosperity, or wealth, but of companionship with an unworldly Christ. No greater glory is or can be yours than to be the companion of your rejected Master.

Lesson Twelve—Hebrews 11:1-22 The Saints… Superior to All Men

Just as title deeds are the evidence of possessing property we may never have seen, so faith is the assurance or substantiating of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. If God has said it, that settles it. Faith rests upon the sure foundation of the Word of the living God.

Walking in the course of this world there is no need for the exercise of faith. The whole world walks by sight or feeling. The just live and walk by faith. But our faith needs to be strengthened, and one great encouragement is to look back upon the course of those who have traveled the path before us. This is what we do in chapter 11 of Hebrews.

In the close of chapter 10 we were saddened to see some who were dropping out of the line, leaving the company of the saints, stepping out of the path to perdition. We are not of that class—we are of those who believe “to the saving of the soul.” In chapter 11 we are called upon to look at some of the nobles in the Grand Army of the Redeemed. They are seen as they are on their way to glory, a band of pilgrims, leaving the world and all that is in it for something they have never seen. The motive power for such strange action is faith. Faith makes the unseen world very near and very real.

In this magnificent array of Old Testament worthies, we will notice seven men in the book of Genesis. In each of these men we have a different aspect of faith.

1. In Abel We See Faith That Saves (v. 4)

We must begin at the beginning if we are to walk by faith. That is where Abel began. The blood marks the beginning. Notice four things in regard to Abel's faith.

Abel's faith took in the fact of sin. He did not ignore it as did Cain. He came as a guilty sinner bringing a sacrifice. Cain came "as a gentleman to exchange compliments with God."

Abel's faith recognized the only acceptable sacrifice for sin. His lamb was a foreshadowing of the Lord Jesus, the Lamb of God.

Abel's faith was a justifying faith. He was accepted in the offering that he brought. By his sacrifice he obtained witness that he was righteous. Thus it is with every sinner who trusts in Christ's atoning blood. Faith rests where God rests, in the accepted work of His beloved Son.

Abel's faith was a living faith. By it, though dead, he is still pointing out to men the only true way of approach to God.

2. In Enoch We See Faith That Sustains (vv. 5, 6)

Enoch walked with God. Having come to God through His Son, accepted in all the value of the sacrifice He made, we go on with Him. The will of God was the rule of Enoch's life. He lived to please God, and God was pleased to reward him. He gave him a "testimony" and a "translation." Faith enabled Enoch to walk above the world, and he was taken out of it. At home with God here, God's house became his dwelling-place. Death had no hold on him. It is possible some of us may be

translated as was Enoch. May we also have the testimony he had.

3. In Noah We See Faith That Separates (v. 7)

If we go on with God, we cannot go on with the world. When God gave Noah a sight of coming judgment, he said, “I cannot settle down here.” So he built his ship on the dry ground and became the laughingstock of the community. They could not see what he saw, and they thought him a fool. Faith made Noah a stranger to all around him, and gave to him the hope of coming glory.

4. In Abraham We See Faith That Satisfies (vv. 8-19)

Abraham took the promise of God and was satisfied with it. He gave up everything when God called him, though he got nothing. He had that which is better than everything here, the prospect of the glory of that city that is the goal of all God’s pilgrims. The sight of that glory made Abraham content to be a pilgrim, and nothing could induce him to leave his tent. Lot may forsake him, choosing rather the cities of the plains; Abraham seeks a better land, a city whose Architect and Builder is God. The difference between the two men was in the direction in which they looked. Abraham looked up. Faith fills the eye and the heart with the future. Faith’s vision is keen, it pierces the false glow of this world’s glory as well as its dark mists. Faith concentrates on God. This we see in Abraham. Sarah’s faith is seen in the getting of Isaac. She believed in a God of resurrection. Abraham was called to give him up. With utmost confidence in God, implicit trust in His love, he surrendered his all. He did not lose by trusting God—

no one ever does. Abraham received his son to his bosom as from the dead, with a joy that surpassed and recompensed all the sorrow he had experienced. What a picture of God's love in giving His beloved Son!

5. In Isaac We See Faith That Suffers (v. 20)

In Isaac we have the setting aside of the will of the flesh. The path of faith ever crosses that of nature. Isaac's faith is seen in his blessing Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. His natural sight was gone, but the eyes of his heart were opened. He could penetrate the veil that hid the future, and speak of future things. The blessing he desired for his eldest son, Esau, he gave to Jacob. But when Esau would have him reverse it, he answered, "I have blessed him; yea, and he shall be blessed." That act shines out under the eye of God. It was above and beyond the power of nature.

6. In Jacob We See Faith That Strengthens (v. 21)

Jacob's life was a stormy one, but he had a glorious sunset. What a failing saint he had been in the past, but when nearing eternity, there was the blessed experience of faith. His hands were lifted up in blessing upon the heads of Joseph's sons. A pilgrim all his life, he was still a pilgrim amid Egypt's glories. He leaned upon his staff, the symbol of his pilgrimage. Thus he was strengthened in his soul and he worshiped.

7. In Joseph We See Faith That Surpasses (v. 22)

Joseph's life was most lovely in every detail; yet at its close there was a special outshining of faith. His life of

faith furnished the background for this special act of faith. With his hand on all that a natural man could value, the very throne of Egypt his, he could not rest outside of the land God had promised to His people. He turned from all that his eye could see to what was real to faith alone, and gave commandment concerning his bones. The bones of Joseph accompanied the children of Israel in all their wilderness journey, as a constant reminder of his death, and of their promised inheritance. It was to them a pledge that God would bring them in.

The second list of the heroes of faith is taken from the time of the Exodus up to the time of Joshua and the fall of Jericho, from the gloomy days of slavery in Egypt to the glorious days of triumph in Canaan. Seven instances of faith are given. In each of them is seen the trial and triumph of faith amid adverse circumstances, and the attempt of the enemy to thwart the purpose of God. Moses takes the leading place in this second cluster of stars in the firmament of faith. First of all, we are brought back to the time of his birth.

Lesson Thirteen—Hebrews 11:23-40

The Sufferers’ Superior to the Great

The Church on its way to glory treasures the memory of the death of a greater than Joseph, and looks for a brighter inheritance. We sing:

Till Thou shalt come in glory and call us hence away,
To rest in all the brightness of that unclouded day,
We show Thy death, Lord Jesus, and here would seek to
be More to Thy death conformed whilst we remember
Thee.

1. Faith for the Salvation of the Child (v. 23)

Pharaoh’s commandment was like a dark cloud overshadowing Israel in Egypt. It was intended to darken the hope in Israel of God’s intervention on their behalf, and it spread gloom in the hearts of all the people. But Moses’ parents saw the rainbow in the cloud, their eyes were on the purposes of God that can never fail. Their faith discerned in the baby boy Moses that which was “beautiful for God.” Therefore they were determined to keep him for God, nor would they give him over to the hand of the foe. Oh, that in every home of the children of God there were like-faith and like-determination!

2. Faith’s Choice in Giving Up the World (v. 24)

Providence brought Moses to the threshold of Egypt’s glories, faith led him to refuse them all. Moses turned from the glory of Egypt’s throne, the pleasures of its

civilized system and the wealth of its treasures. What was it that led him to turn his eye from it all? Faith, the eye on God. In the reproach of Christ he saw greater riches than Egypt's; in the fellowship of God's afflicted people, better pleasure; and in the recompense of the reward, brighter glory. Faith's prospects were far better than anything Egypt could promise.

3. Faith's Action in Leaving the World (v. 27)

After the world's allurements, Moses had to face its wrath. Faith delivered him from its pleasures; faith enabled him to brave its wrath. The combined power of its mighty hosts led by the great Pharaoh, were matched against a simple shepherd with nothing but a rod. But Moses saw what Pharaoh did not see—the invisible God—and so he endured.

4. Faith's Shelter from the World's Judgment (v. 28)

From the wrath of God there is no refuge but in the shed blood of the Lamb. Every blood-stained lintel in Egypt, that fateful night, spoke eloquently of faith's security and faith's rest. The blood on the outside was for salvation, the roast lamb on the table inside was for satisfaction, and the word of Jehovah was faith's resting place; it gave assurance.

5. Faith's Obedience to the Will and Word of God (v. 29)

The children of Israel were in dire straits at the Red Sea. They encountered difficulties immediately when they started on their journey out of Egypt. Pharaoh, repenting of having let them go, hurled all his hosts on

their track. Before them rolled the waters of death. But God said, "Go forward." Faith, acting upon the word of God, found an open way through death to life, light and liberty.

6. Faith's Triumph, Victory Over the World (v. 30)

The world's stronghold crumbles into dust before the marching hosts of the people of God. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" No one! Faith knows that this world is doomed; its bulwarks will crash soon.

Meanwhile we seek to blow faithfully on our ram's horn trumpet, displaying the Ark—Christ—to the doomed and perishing multitudes.

7. Faith's Reception into Another Relationship than that of the World (v. 31)

Faith raised Rahab from the place of degradation that was hers, among a doomed race, and gave her a place among the people of God. The scarlet line not only marked her safety, it bound her to the people who were to possess the land. She possessed with them, marrying one of the princes in Israel.

Thus, in all these instances, faith is seen to shine the brightest when the times are darkest; gain its greatest victories when the foe is strongest; obtain its best blessings when all fails but God.

The next list presents a "Milky Way" of worthies that shine out in times of declension. We can only mention them briefly. Again we notice a sevenfold summing up (verse 32).

1. Gideon, whose faith found God's strength sufficient in weakness.
2. Barak, whose faith, though faltering, found help in the fellowship of another.
3. Samson, whose faith was seen in Nazariteship; in separation he realized God's power.
4. Jephthah, whose faith trusted God to keep His word, and he kept his.
5. David, whose faith waited God's time with patience.
6. Samuel, whose faith was seen in dependence on God. Above all else he was a man of prayer.
7. The Prophets, whose faith could pierce the present darkness and hail the coming day of God's deliverance and glory.

Two distinct companies complete the lists. One a group of those whose faith triumphed (vv. 33-35), "and others" whose faith suffered and bore. Of these last it would be said, "Of whom the world was not worthy," for the faith that endures is greater than the faith that conquers. "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him."

Gathered Gleanings

V. 1. This is not a definition of faith, but a description of its effects. Perfect certainty of realization is the effect of faith. The definition of faith is that it "sets to its seal that God is true."

The thing that produces faith is the Spirit of God bringing home the word with power.

V. 3. Faith here is spoken of in connection with creation. Creation is absolutely unknown by reason. Darwin in his

Origin of Species never gets to the origin, and owns he cannot prove that any species ever did originate after the fashion he decrees.

Vv. 3, 4. Adam was a worshipper in the garden by faith. Now some say that they can still worship God in nature; but when we left innocency we left creation as a temple, and we cannot go back there. Nature was a temple to Adam but if I go back there I go back to Cain. Worship is on the basis of redemption. We come to Abel and to revelation. We are sinners and revelation which unfolds redemption must build us a temple.

V. 24. Providence is no guide for faith. Moses saw in his brethren (though a feeble people) the people of God and he identified them as such with the glory of God.

The same faith that saw glory at the end of the path, saw God for him all the way. Called to glory, faith forsakes Egypt. God had not placed the glory there.

Faith brings the unseen world very near and makes it very real.

Lesson Fourteen—Hebrews 12 The Zion Above; Superior to All Cities

“Soldiers, forty centuries look down on you!” Thus Napoleon addressed his army in Egypt while pointing to the mighty pyramids under whose shadow they stood. In a truer sense it is thus with the army of the redeemed, the pilgrim host. The ages past, and the vast company that has trodden the path of faith before us, bear witness to us. Down through the centuries their voices reach us, encouraging us to go on. Meanwhile, in the glory light of heaven we behold them; faith led them to give up the earth. They looked for a better country; now it is theirs. But beyond the cloud we see Jesus, our glorious Leader, the “Originator” and the “Perfector” of faith. We look off unto Him. Looking up to the throne, all the worthies of faith’s pathway are but the background for the display of His glory. We turn away from all beside to “consider Him.”

This consideration will make us fleet of foot to run the race to glory. His presence there makes heaven an attractive place to us, and we say,

The glory shines before us, we cannot linger here.

Thus our hearts are drawn out of this world. On the other hand we are driven out by the pressure of trials down here. Earth is a scene of sin, and sorrow, and suffering, and as we feel the sting of the rod, and the chastening hand of our Father, we press on. The

discipline of the way is the subject of this chapter, and we notice seven things in it.

1. The Stripping Requisite for Running the Race (vv. 1, 2)

No one can run encumbered by heavy weights, nor with feet entangled in a net. Christians who never run, do not notice the weights. How Paul stripped himself for the race is shown in Philippians 3. In his eagerness to reach Christ in glory, all must go. Jacob discovered that both “earrings” and “strange gods” had to be laid aside before he could journey on to Bethel. Israel’s feet were entangled in the “net,” and they wandered in the wilderness forty years. In the energy of faith, let us lay aside every hindrance to our spiritual progress.

2. The Strength Requisite for Running the Race (vv. 3, 4)

Christ is not only our Goal; He is also our Example and our Energy. We sing, “His strength shall be ours on the road.” When the wearied horse turns his face homeward, he needs not the urging of the whip. So, when the eyes are fixed on Jesus, we have strength to go on. We remember the path which He trod. We think of the sufferings He endured. He shed His life’s blood in striving against sin. We have not been called to that as yet, but if we should be, we know that The worst that can come, But shortens the journey And hastens us Home.

3. The Schooling Needed While Running the Race (vv. 5-11)

It is a Father's voice that speaks to us, for it is a Holy Father, ...whose constant care Keeps watch with an unwearying eye, To see what fruits His children bear, Fruits that may suit their calling high.

The school is the school of sons, and every son receives training. The textbook is "the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children," a lovely summing up of the book of Proverbs, where One speaks who was brought up as the darling of His Father's heart. The Teacher is our Father, and the lesson is as to our behavior as sons who will one day grace His home. The method is "chastening," or rather "child-training," the discipline that is at once proof of His love and our sonship. The purpose is that we may be partakers of his holiness. We are neither to despise the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when we are rebuked of Him. Rather, we are to be exercised thereby and endure. A brother in Christ used to say, "However rainy the day, you will hear the robin singing its cheery note. Though he feels the wet and does not like it, he will sing—he does not faint. A sparrow sits huddled up, his feathers bedraggled, fainting under adversity; and a duck despises it, going on as if nothing is happening." We need discipline. As the fresh showers upon the thirsty fields yield a beautiful and bountiful harvest, so afflictions for the child of God secure untold blessing and beautify our lives.

4. The Straight Paths in Which We are to Run the Race (vv. 12-14)

In Ezekiel 1:7, 12 we read of straight paths for straight feet. The heavenly beings had straight feet, and they went every one straight forward; they turned not when they went. Abraham turned out of the way to go down to Egypt. Lot left it for Sodom's plains. Let us continue in the path of faith, like the kine that took the straight path to Bethshemesh (1 Sam. 6:12). Often in a crisis some miss the way, because they do not see the Lord. We are to be guided by His eye; and by our perseverance in the path others will be encouraged to go on. Trembling hands are to be lifted up in prayer, and thus strengthened for toil; feeble knees are to be made strong for the weary march. Only in the way of peace and holiness can the sunlight of the presence of the Lord be enjoyed.

5. The Searching That Must Be Maintained in the Race (vv. 15-17)

"Be on the watch to mark whether any one be losing ground in the grace of God." We are ever to be on the lookout lest any bring disturbance into the ranks of the heaven-bound pilgrims.

The mention of Esau is like a warning beacon against the danger of bartering future blessedness for present momentary ease and enjoyment. For a mere mess of pottage he sold his birthright, and then too late discovered that he was an outcast from the blessing of God; nor could his bitter tears open the door he himself had closed in his folly.

6. The Sanctuary Available While We Run the Race (vv. 18-24)

In the desert world, on the way to Sion, stands Mount Sinai, bleak and barren, its brow all aflame, its slopes shrouded in darkness. God's pilgrims are not to pitch tents there. Its tempestuous clouds, its terrifying trumpet blasts, its terrible words of condemnation, do not speak a welcome to us. We are not come unto that Mount.

We lift up our eyes from thence and view the hill eternal, the holy hill from whence cometh our help, the city glorious with heavenly hosts in high festival, the home of the brethren whose names are enrolled on its register. Center and Sun of this wondrous scene is the One who is Judge of all. His will is supreme there. He is surrounded with the "spirits of just men made perfect." Amid such scenes of glory our eyes are fixed upon the One we know and love and adore—the Man of Calvary, Jesus. And we fear not, as we draw near and gaze upon so wondrous a sight, for His sprinkled blood cries, not (as did Abel's) for vengeance, it bids us approach, it welcomes us to the recesses and to the heights of the Mountain of God's grace.

The holy hill eclipses the glory of this poor world, and to all these glories we have already come. We are quite at home there.

7. The Signal That Warns Us While in the Race (vv. 25-29)

This is the last of the five great "red lantern flashes" we meet with in this Epistle. It warns us of the possibility of leaving the grand and glorious sight of the city, the goal

of God's pilgrims—turning the back upon all its splendors, as did Israel from Canaan, to wander in the bare desert.

The voice that one day will rock creation, speaks to us from heaven. Then He will speak in wrath; now He speaks in grace. As one has said, "From the beginning to the end (in this Epistle), the Spirit is nailing your ear to the door of the house of the Master of Grace."

"Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire." As the sun, in whose warmth and light we rejoice, scorches the barren desert, so our God, in whose love we rest, will consume in His jealousy all who refuse His grace. "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, let us persuade men," and walk humbly before our God in the power of our high calling.

Gathered Gleanings

The apostle had named all the worthies of faith in chapter 11. But then he says, "Looking unto Jesus." Christ had run the whole course, the others only a little bit of it. He despised the shame and sat down. He reached the end, having gone through the whole course of trouble and difficulty.

A babe does foolish things which, perhaps, we may be amused at. But it has not been taught. A Christian, like a babe, needs to be trained and instructed. God's patience in taking such pains with us should cheer us. It is strange to talk of affliction cheering us, but if our wills are broken, that is a good thing.

It is of the greatest importance that there should be the consciousness of God's dealing with us in love. We are of that family, belonging to Him—God's family—and not of the world; therefore He deals with us as sons.

Grace puts us in the Presence of God and makes us partakers of His holiness. Then He says, "Looking diligently, lest any man fail of the grace"; that is, should lose this entire confidence in God's love. This is the present practical enjoyment of what God is for you. If you lose that, you fail. There is nothing that links up the heart with God but grace.

We are come "to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant." We are not come to the new covenant but to Jesus the Mediator of it. I am associated with Him who is the Mediator: that is a higher thing than if I merely come to the covenant. He will make this new covenant with Israel on earth. It is sweet to know that earth will have it, but ours is the better part.

Lesson Fifteen—Hebrews 13 The Shepherd… Superior to All Folds

Come, children, on to glory!

With every face set fast

Toward the golden towers,

Where we shall rest at last.

We have seen Christ in glory in the first seven chapters of this Epistle; we are seen as having entered within the veil with Him in the next three; we are seen journeying through this wilderness world “on to glory” in the last three chapters. In chapter 11 God’s pilgrims are following one another in the pathway of faith; in chapter 12 there is the hope that is set before us; in chapter 13 it is the love that should characterize brethren in Christ. We have no portion in this world, but we have Christ in glory, and one another down here.

There will be a shaking up of the whole world system soon (chap. 12:27); the bands that bind society together are already snapping; the anchor for faith is the unchanging Christ, and the bands of love “that unite all the children of peace,” find their anchorage there.

The exhortations of the chapter are simple, needing little explanation, but much exercise of heart, lest we let them slip.

1. Fellow Pilgrims in the Path of Faith (vv. 1-6)

“See how these Christians love one another,” was the comment of the world upon the conduct of the early

believers. They had never seen anything like it before; it was an entirely new thing in the world, the fruit of Christ's resurrection. There had always been natural love, springing from natural relationships. But this was different. Believers in Christ loved each other because they were "brothers," children of one heavenly Father, members one of another.

"Let brotherly love continue." What a barren waste our way would be without it. "We be brethren," said Abraham to Lot, and refused to engage in strife with him. Continuing in "brotherly love," he was able later to deliver "his brother" when he had been taken captive by the kings of the nations (Gen. 14:14).

The fruit of love is twofold in its practical results. Our brethren may be strangers to us; love opens the home to them, and heaven's benediction is ours in return (v. 2). Our brethren may be in distress; we open our hearts to them, "tugging away at the same load," bearing the same burden, and having the same care (v. 3).

The enemy of love is lust; and it is against the activities of this evil we are warned in verses 4 and 5. As fragrant as love is, so destructive is lust, making of our heart's garden a wilderness, robbing marriage of its sanctity, the home of its sacredness, and love of its loyalty. The twofold cravings of lust: impurity (v. 4), and worldliness (v. 5), are offset by another couplet: "contentment" and "confidence."

"Content with such things as ye have," not seeking to be richer tomorrow than today, satisfied with God's abundant supply, we can echo His word of promise (v. 5) with the reply of faith (v. 6).

2. Former Leaders in the Path of Faith (vv. 7, 8)

The ranks of God's pilgrims were thinning. There were those who had guided the flock and were no longer with them; but the fragrance of Christ that had characterized their ministry and their footprints, remained where they had marked the way. Their faith could be imitated. The purpose and goal of their life and service could be summed up in one word—Christ. He was the Alpha and the Omega of their conversation and conduct. What a happy remembrance they could have of those brethren! Imposing monuments have been erected in memory of the great men of this world. In the religious world sects have been formed round the names of honored men of God. But nothing could be greater than to have contributed to the glory of Christ—the names of the servants lost in the greater Name of the Master—the glory of their lives seen only in the golden rays of His unutterable and unalterable glory. J. G. Bellett tells of one who when nearing home, said, "I have preached Jesus, I have lived Jesus, and I long to be with Jesus."

3. The Unchanging Leader in the Path of Faith (v. 8)

To a company of saints, among whom one of the most devoted of Christ's servants had labored, it was said after his homegoing, "Now what will you do since you have lost your father in Israel?—his sweet voice silent, his glory-lit face gone, the precious ties of love broken." Their only answer was, "Christ is the same." In this Epistle, we have seen how He displaces everything. He also fills every vacancy.

For a moment we pause again in the progress of this Epistle to gaze upon Him. His undimmed glory fills the past, present, and future. The yesterday of the cross, the forever of the throne, contribute to the glories that now circle His brow in the sanctuary of heaven. The cold hand of death can never snap the ties that bind us to Him, distance can ne'er remove His face from us, nor time erase the memory of His love from the pages of our lives. Over His glory there never comes "a shadow caused by turning"; He is the Unchanging One.

Men and things are changing fast;

Only Jesus will remain when all is past,

Our Lord Jesus.

4. The Variety of Ways that Divert from This Path of Faith (v. 9)

In contrast to the rest of faith, the unchanging Christ, we have the "teachings variegated and alien" that appeal to the flesh. When the heart is not satisfied with Christ there is a restless searching after other things. But these novelties and antiques are foreign to grace, and can never establish the heart. Only Christ can satisfy, and He is all we need. Grace has reached us from the heart of God, and the cold ritual of a Judaistic Christianity is a poor substitute for the living power of an ever-living, ever-present Christ. Jacob's "little balm, and a little honey, spices and myrrh, nuts and almonds," "the best fruits in the land," could not satisfy, but when he heard of Joseph, Israel said, "It is enough." "It is impossible to enjoy Christ, and not feel that He is everything." He satisfies and nothing else can.

5. The Privilege We Have in the Path of Faith (vv. 10-14)

In the camp of Judaism, amid its shadows, stood an altar, and by its attendants it was considered the altar. In their eyes, Christianity had no altar. But the altar of God belongs to the heavenly brethren, and only Christians have a right to it. Christ, outside the camp, is our Altar, our Sacrifice, our Priest, our Sanctuary. The glory that shines within the veil was shut out from the earthly temple.

When priests long ago carried the carcass of the sin offering to a clean place outside the camp of Israel, little did they think they were picturing the act of Israel in taking their great Sin-Bearer outside the gate of Jerusalem to suffer and die. A crowd followed our Lord to Golgotha and watched Him there. They smote their breasts at the sight; but turned their backs on Him. We behold them going down the dusty road back to the doomed city.

It is our blessed privilege to follow Him outside and remain with Him, outcast, despised, reproached for His Name's sake.

Apart from all, in the joy we dwell

Which the eye hath never seen—

'Tis a dry and a thirsty land below,

But there the fields are green.

Where He is no more the outcast Man,

But the Lamb whom all adore,

There is now the place of our joy and song,

And shall be evermore.

6. The Practices of Those in the Path of Faith (vv. 15-17)

A double stream of sacrificial service flows from the hearts and lives of the heaven-bound pilgrims as they travel on to God. There is the upward stream of praise and thanksgiving, the overflow of the heart in worship to God, for we are holy priests (v. 15). Then there is the outward stream of blessing and benevolence to those who are round about us, for we are a royal priesthood (v. 16).

Christ has been at the altar of expiation, and now we can stand at the golden altar, rendering continual service of thanksgiving. And this self-sacrificial service will be accompanied by subjection (v. 17), for there is order and government in the house of God. The insubjection and independency of the flesh too often mark us. The real test of devotedness to Christ will be seen in that love which bows to the guidance of those who watch over our souls for good, and who seek to maintain godly principles and practices among God's dear people. Thus there is a threefold giving here—our songs, our substance, and ourselves.

7. Responsibilities in the Path of Faith (vv. 18-25)

This letter to the Hebrews closes with a threefold desire of the apostle. First, he requests their prayers for himself; next, he desires their entire conformity to the will of God; and finally, he urges them to give heed to the word of exhortation.

It is lovely to see the greatest of the apostles call upon the feeblest of saints to pray for him. And he expects their prayer to be effectual, for “prayer changes things.” “That I may be restored to you the sooner,” he writes (v. 19).

Invoking blessing upon them, Paul casts them upon God Himself, the God who has removed every obstacle to peace by raising Christ from the dead. He would work in them His will, so that His pleasure might be seen in His people and His glory secured forever. And the guarantee for all this is a Risen Saviour, the One who has been the Object of our consideration throughout this letter.

Gathered Gleanings

The name of Paul does not appear at the close any more than at the commencement. This was for obvious reasons in a letter to the saints of the circumcision. But who else would have so spoken of Timothy? The writer was in Italy, and sends the salutation of such as were there. The apostolic under-current is apparent to a spiritual mind.