

Lessons In Hebrews

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Lessons In Hebrews

A HOME BIBLE CLASS

It has in time past been my privilege to publish such series of lessons for home study in various religious papers; and from the expressions of appreciation received from many sides, it appeared that those lessons filled a want. Many desiring to study the Bible are in need of some guidance and assistance and definite plans of work, and will be glad to take advantage of such hints and questions as will lead them to a closer scrutiny of the text, and, by this means, into a deeper knowledge of God's word.

There is a crying need of Bible study, and faithful study will bring its own sweet reward. There is such a joy of discovery ([Ps. 119:162](#)), such a quickening of zeal, enlargement of the spiritual horizon, strengthening of faith and courage, and renewing of the mind, as could never come by mere listening to sermons or reading of religious books and articles. These latter were, indeed, not meant for substitutes, but rather as aids and encouragement to Bible study. When they become substitutes, they are [5] a bane, not a blessing. With the hope that many will take hold of these lessons and study them faithfully, and be by this means brought into closer touch with the words of life, and with the prayer that God's blessing be upon it, this series is begun.

Plan of the Lessons.

There will be no subtle analyses or elaborate outlines. It seems sometimes that such a dissecting of God's word destroys the beauty, if not the life, of it, as the life and beauty of a flower are destroyed by the hand of the botanist who dissects it into its constituent parts. However indispensable such a method may be for some purposes, it does not come within the range of these lessons, nor is it the need of the greater number of the readers. We can easily get a general view and outline of the Epistle when we shall have finished it.

For each lesson we take a short portion of the text. We have plenty of time. We can weigh every sentence and phrase and word and meditate on it. The questions will not usually cover every point in the lesson, but will rather be calculated to provoke deeper research and thought and direct attention to such truths as might otherwise be overlooked.

No commentary will be needed. A good [6] commentary used aright is a help, but it often becomes the occasion of cheating its possessor out of the most beneficial and healthful of spiritual exercises--the using of his own mind, his own power of perception and reflection. Do not be deprived of the great advantage of learning for

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yourself at first hand. Do not let even the few comments that will appear in these lessons take the place of your own searching.

How To Study.

The most important suggestion I have to make is this: Study for spiritual benefit. You can gather into your mind a collection of facts, figures, and statements, and get no more good from it than if you had memorized the catalogue of a museum or the inventory of a storage room. You can study in a spirit of controversy and gain little or nothing by your hunting down of "points." Lawyers, politicians, and even infidels, often show considerable acquaintance with the Bible text, but no evidence of the spiritual benefit they might have obtained from it. Something depends on the attitude of the student.

Let it, then, not be sufficient to learn a list of biblical facts and truths. Let us look for principles. Let us study the meaning and import of each fact and its direct or indirect bearing [7] on our own life. Above all, let us study to get nearer to God, to please him better, to know his will that we may do it, and that, being filled with his thought and his mind, we may be more like him. Never leave out of view the fact that you are studying the word of God, that it pertains to the healing and welfare of your soul, and that God's eye is upon you. Study in sincerity and love and open your inmost heart to the truth.

Look up whatever references are given. There will never be so many that they will be burdensome or confusing. If some question of special importance arises and you cannot settle it for yourself, the author will be glad to help you.



For the first lesson: Read the Epistle over rapidly. Study [verses 1 and 2 of the first chapter](#). Memorize them (to the word "Son" in verse 2). Who is he that spoke? Try to take that in. Meditate on the greatness and majesty of the One that spoke and what the fact means to us. Why did he speak? To whom did he speak? What part applies to us?

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LESSON I.--HEB. 1:1, 2.

1 God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, 2 hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in *his* Son.

This short lesson is extremely important. It is not only the foundation stone of this Epistle, but gives us a comprehensive view of the whole Bible. It is one of the landmarks of God's book, and so pithy that it contains almost everything in a nutshell, and forms a center from which almost every subject in God's book may be approached and studied. It gives us a clear-cut division of God's word, and this by itself will settle many a question. The consequences and corollaries that can be drawn from it, together with the remoter suggestions it contains, cover the whole field of God's dealing with man. Let us not be without this passage. Let us memorize it, retain it, repeat it, assimilate it, teach and preach it.

God Has Spoken.

That is the first wonderful statement that meets our eye. Now, why has God spoken? Why was it necessary for him to speak? Could we not have searched and found out him and [9] His will by reason and philosophy? And what was the need of his speaking at all? Is not everything that is needful for human welfare within the range of our senses and our reason? Why do we need to know God and his will?

We see that this opens a great field of inquiry. The Bible deals with these problems and has an answer for each of these questions. The conclusion, not only from the Bible, but from history and observation, is that man needs God--needs him for the highest development of his moral nature, for an eternal stronghold to cling to (for no human heart is independent), for a standard and ideal, for a guide and a Father. All the lower animals live in their animal sphere and fulfill the design of their nature without the need of dealing with a higher being; why should it be different with man? Man is an animal, but not that alone. He stands on the border land between the visible and invisible world; he is the link between the material and spiritual. Moreover, his home is with God. God made man for himself and in his image; therefore no man can fulfill the design of his creation or obtain peace and happiness except in communion with God. So it is the chief object of man's existence to seek God and find him ([Acts 17:26, 27](#)). But why is God hidden from us, and why are we separated from him? Was it always so? When did the separation occur?

Now, if we have rightly answered these questions, we can understand better why God has spoken. Let us illustrate. Suppose that a father and son have had enmity

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between them and have for a long time been separated. If the father should break the silence and send a letter to his son, showing him the way of adjustment of difficulties and an offer of return, would it not show that the father is solicitous for his son and desirous of reconciliation and reunion? So has God sent us a message, in which we see his tender concern for us, his desire for reconciliation and reunion. He imparts to us his thoughts, shows us his love, points us to a hope and opportunity of return; and all this to bring us back to himself, that we "also may have fellowship . . . with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." ([1 John 1:3](#).) His word is the only guide of approach.

Where Has God Spoken?

There are quite a number of books in the world for which it is claimed that they have come from God. The writer of Hebrews recognizes only the word of the prophets that spoke to the Jewish fathers and the word that came through Jesus Christ. That includes [11] simply the Bible. If you know anything of the Koran, the Vedas, and other sacred books of the nations, and have had opportunity to compare them, can you tell which of the sacred books of the world is most worthy of bearing God's name as to authorship? Which one presents the highest and greatest God? Which one speaks of a God infinite in goodness and purity, in justice and love--a holy God who lives for his creatures? Which one reveals the deepest insight into human nature? Which one is remarkable by its vast superiority over its times and surroundings in which it was written? Which one has had the widest and most beneficial influence over nations and individuals? You may confidently give the same answer to each of these questions. The Bible bears the stamp of the true God.

The Division.

With one deep stroke the Bible is cut into two great parts. Using, for the sake of brevity here, the wording of the King James Version, we diagram it thus:

GOD SPOKE.	
In times past.	In these last days.
Unto the fathers.	Unto us.
By the prophets.	By his Son.

The one part was spoken in times past; the [12] other, in these last days. The one, by the prophets, addressed to the fathers; the other, by the Son, addressed to us. And

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these two pieces are bound together by the fact common to both, "God spoke." The same God spoke them both. Witness the harmony of its parts, the unity of its design; the New Testament fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies, types and promises with which the Epistle has much to do. And since the same God spoke them both, both parts are equally true and are of supreme value, each in its place. Neither should we conclude that because the old message was addressed to the fathers it is of no use or meaning to us. ([Rom. 15:4](#); [2 Tim. 3:16](#).) Only it concerns us indirectly, while the other applies to us directly and immediately. The message of Christ is our authority, the guide of the more perfect worship and service of the new covenant.



We thank thee, Holy Father, that it has been thy will and good providence that we, more than many others, should have free access to thy word and opportunity to know thy will. Make us more appreciative of this great privilege. May the fact that thee, God, hast spoken fill us with reverence and awe when we come [13] to study the word, lest we drift into a contemptful familiarity with it and handle it as a profane thing, as we are too prone to do. And inasmuch as thy speaking calls for our hearing, may our ears be open, our hearts receptive and willing. Let thy word be unto us a light indeed and become in us the power for the enlightening of others and for the final obtaining of the promise through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



Note.

For the next lesson study [Heb. 1:1-3](#). Look up references. Study on Christ--who he is, what was his station before he came to earth, how and why he came, where is he now, and what he is doing. Why did God send his *Son* this time? Why would prophets and angels not have served as well? Why could they manage the old covenant and not the new? This is worth thinking about. There will be some explanation of those things in the next lesson. After the next, the lessons will be longer. But these three verses form the groundwork of the Epistle and deserve more particular study. [14]

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LESSON II.--HEB. 1:1-3.

1 God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, 2 hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in *his* Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the worlds; 3 who being the effulgence of his glory, and the very image of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

The Son of God.

The word which came to us in these last days is distinguished above all former messages in that it came through God's own Son. The new covenant--more wonderful, more perfect than the old--could not be intrusted into the hands of servants. God is a close economist. He wastes nothing. As long as men or angels are sufficient to accomplish a certain task, God gives it to them. The fact that the new message, and the work of redemption connected with it, was given into the hands of the Son, argues that there was no other being in the universe wise enough and mighty enough and great enough to bear it. Incidentally it shows how utterly ruined mankind must have been if the reclaiming and saving of the race required such an Agent. "God so loved the world, that [15] he gave his only begotten Son." Any gift less than that could not have sufficed, but without the Son the human race would have been left in sin and misery without hope.

Who the Son Is.

The inspired writer gives us some details concerning the Son, lest we pass on without duly understanding who he is that came to speak to us. He is the "heir of all things." Everything will revert to him. The worlds, visible and invisible, are his inheritance and his possession in the day when the Father shall sum up all things in Christ. ([Eph. 1:10.](#)) He is the last. He is also the first; for through him God made the worlds. (See [John 1:3.](#))

It may be well here to spend a few moments in contemplation of Christ's existence before he came to the earth in our behalf. We find one passage in [1 Cor. 8](#) that speaks of his estate in eternity; two, very impressive, in [John 17](#); and one in [Phil. 2](#). What share did he have in the creation? ([John 1:3.](#)) Did he create the world on his own plan or under the direction of the Father? Note the distinction between the two little words "of" and "through," which the American Revised Version brings out in such passages as [John 1:3](#); [1 Cor. 8:6](#); [Heb. 1:2](#). "Of" denotes authorship here; and [16] "through,"

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the agency, medium, channel. God, the Father, created the world, but he did it through Christ.

The Son was and is always the medium of expression through which the Father manifests himself. As such, he is the brightness, the outshining, of the Father's glory, and the very image of his substance. To know Christ is to know God. ([John 12:44, 45:14:9](#).) But to know God is the great need of man. That alone will bring him back into the divine fellowship and communion. Therefore did God speak to men, at first in the messages of the prophets, but now in the person of his Son--his very Image. Christ himself is now the message. In all he is, does, and says, he is the revealer of God. ([John 1:18](#).) He brought the invisible God within the range of our knowledge, that we may know him that is true. ([1 John 5:20, 21](#).) That means nothing less than eternal life. ([John 17:3](#).)

As we have seen that the Son was the first, the beginning of all things, and that he is the last, the heir of all things, we learn now the additional fact that he is in the middle also, for he continually sustains all things by the word of his power. Note how these three points are set forth in [Col. 1:16, 17](#)--first, that all things, in heaven or on earth, visible or invisible, thrones, [17] dominions, principalities, powers, have been created through him; secondly, they have been created "for him," "unto him;" and, thirdly, "in him all things consist," or, as the margin tell us, "in him all things hold together."

Now this great and exalted Being, moved by his Father's good will and his own love toward us, took upon him the work of purging us from our sins. It was a dirty task; his putting his hand on filthy lepers or washing the disciples' feet would hardly offer the faintest comparison to it. It was such a piece of work as only love could do gracefully. He could not do it at a distance. It required himself--his personal presence. Christ took our sins and uncleannesses and all the horrors of our moral leprosy and death upon himself, and was made a curse for us. And having finished this work of love, he sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high--not, however, to leave us to ourselves. There, at the throne of God, he makes perpetual intercession; and thence his intercession brings to us the redemption of the new covenant in its incipiency, so now no less a person than Jesus would be able to sustain and uphold us day by day in our Christian warfare. [18]



Before the greatness of thy power and glory, O God, and yet more before thy love, which passes all knowledge, we bow ourselves into the dust and praise and bless thy holy name. We thank thee for that greatest of all gifts--thy Son, Jesus Christ, our

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Lord. We thank thee that he was so faithful in his work of redemption that he did not shrink back even from the cross, but drank all the cup for our sakes. And now we would draw nigh to thee through him, and, by virtue of his sacrifice, kindle anew our hope of eternal life, seeing he is able to save to the uttermost them that draw nigh unto God by him, for he ever lives to make intercession for us. In every temptation, perplexity, and time of need may his intercession supply to us the needed grace, and may his power and love transform us, that we also may become images of God to reveal him to others. In Jesus' name. Amen.



Questions and Suggestions for the Next Lesson.

The next lesson will be [Heb. 1:4 to 2:4](#). Why does he emphasize the superiority of the Son over the angels? What did angels have to do with the former dispensation? Note, item by item, the excellencies of the Son as they are brought out here. Study over the meaning and [19] import of the [last verse of chapter 1](#). See what is told us of ministering angels in [Ps. 34:7; 91:11](#); what bearing [2 Kings 6:14-19](#) has on this point; what angels did for Daniel; in the New Testament, for Zacharias, for Joseph, for the women and disciples of the Lord, for Peter, for Paul, for Jesus himself.

Let the [first four verses of Heb. 2](#) sink into your heart. What great danger does he mention? What preventive? What unanswerable question? What words are to be emphasized in [verses 2 and 3](#)? Who first began to speak that great salvation? Who confirmed it to us? When? Is this passage important in "dividing the word of God?" To whom is this warning chiefly addressed--to Christians or outsiders? [20]

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LESSON 3--HEB. 1:4 to 2:4.

4 Having become by so much better than the angels, as he hath inherited a more excellent name than they. 5 For unto which of the angels said he at any time,

Thou art my Son,
This day have I begotten thee?

and again,

I will be to him a Father,
And he shall be to me a Son?

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

7 And of the angels he saith,

Who maketh his angels winds,
And his ministers a flame a fire:

8 but of the Son *he saith*,

Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever;
And the sceptre of uprightness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.

9 Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity;

Therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee
With the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

10 And,

Thou, Lord, in the beginning didst lay the foundation of the earth,
And the heavens are the works of thy hands:

11 They shall perish; but thou continuest:

And they all shall wax old as doth a garment;

12 And as a mantle shalt thou roll them up,

As a garment, and they shall be changed:

But thou art the same,

And thy years shall not fail. [21]

13 But of which of the angels hath he said at any time,

Sit thou on my right hand,

Till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet?

14 Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation?

A Minister Greater Than Angels.

The Epistle to the Hebrews is full of contrasts and comparisons between the former messages and the last great message. This last message is surely the climax unless a greater messenger than the Son could be found, and the new covenant's superior authority is shown by the superior greatness of Him who brought and established it. We may entrust a minor errand to a child or servant, but the most vital transactions, if for any reason we cannot or choose not to attend to them ourselves, we entrust only to the nearest, dearest, and most trustworthy person. So God was content for the old covenant to be brought through the ministrations of angels; but "at the end of these days" he sent his own Son, the Heir and Creator and Upholder of all things. His greatness proves the vast importance of the message and stamps it with the highest authority of heaven.

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What did angels have to do with the former dispensation? (See [Acts 7:30, 38, 53; Gal. 3:19](#).) And now that men might honor and value [22] the new message the more, the writer shows how much greater the Son is. His name is greater by inheritance. None of the angels ever bore that title. They are called "sons of God" in a figurative way; but this is *the* Son, God's "only begotten." He created all things, angels included ([Col. 1:16](#)), and his they are. The first of his proof texts is from [Ps. 2](#); the next is a somewhat peculiar application of [2 Sam. 7:14](#)--perplexing at first view, but, as a little thought will make clear, proper and beautiful. Turn to [2 Sam. 7:12-16](#). As a whole, the passage cannot apply to Christ. Why not? But in it is contained the promise of David's seed and the everlasting kingdom. The promise applied first to Solomon; next, to any son in the lineage of succession in the house of David; but pre-eminently to the great Son of David, elsewhere mentioned, for whom even the unbelieving Jews longed as their Messiah. ([Matt. 22:42](#).) Hence it was not hard for the Jewish Christians to see that this passage was, in its widest bearing, Messianic; and as the Messiah should be the extraordinary Son of David, so would He be the Son of God in an extraordinary sense.

The fact that God commanded the angels to worship the Son (a quotation from the Septuagint, the Greek version of the Old Testament, [23] which was then current) again marks the Son's superiority, if not divinity. Would you conclude from the wording of [verse 6](#) (R. V.) that it refers to the second coming of Christ?

Taking the quotation in [verses 8, 9](#) as it stands in the text of both the King James and Revised Versions, Christ is here honored with the title "God;" and yet he is subordinated to God, for his God anointed him. Besides the Son, there is no being in the universe to whom this language could be applied. Who are the "fellows," the comrades, above whom He was anointed--the old messengers of God (the prophets), or the human beings on earth among whom he lived, or his own redeemed, or the angels? And why and when was the Son anointed? Evidently after having stood his test and proved his love of righteousness and hatred of iniquity. (What does the word "Christ" mean?) One anointing was at the outset of his public career ([Matt. 3:16; Acts 10:38](#)); but this passage seems rather to refer to his exaltation at the right hand of God ([Acts 2:33](#)).

The next verses are as plain as they are sublime and beautiful. Christ is the Maker of all things, the Alpha and Omega, the unchangeable One--"the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever." Note how the present tense is [24] used of him in [Col. 1:17](#): "He is before all things." Why does it not say: "He was before all things?" And in [John 8:58](#): "Before Abraham was, I am." Why not, "I was?" What does that present tense signify?

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As for the angels, they are servant spirits. Do you recall any instances in the Old Testament where angels rendered service and aid to God's people? In the New Testament, when did they minister to Christ, to his apostles and disciples? ([Matt. 4:11](#); [26:53](#); [Luke 22:43](#); [Acts 1:10](#); [8:26](#); [10:3](#); [12:7](#).) Is that promise for us also? Then let us have faith in it and claim it.

An Exhortation. (Heb. 2:1-4.)

1 Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard, lest haply we drift away *from them*. 2 For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; 3 how shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation? which having at the first been spoken through the Lord, was confirmed unto us by them that heard; 4 God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders, and by manifold powers, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will.

"Therefore"--wherefore? Why should we give the more earnest heed to the gospel? We shall find exhortations and warnings interspersed throughout the whole Epistle, and it is in those parts that we catch a glimpse of the [25] spiritual condition of the Hebrew Christians that called for such a letter. They were hard pressed on many sides. In many cases their friends, relatives, and teachers persecuted them and urged strong arguments in favour of their abandoning the faith in Christ and returning to the old, well-accredited religion of their fathers. Besides, there was the warfare within, the wear and tear of life's turmoils, which of itself, under the best conditions, will kill a man's spirituality, and which must be met by constant renewal, just as the physical wear and tear of our bodies calls for a constant renewal by means of food and drink. The precious gift of the gospel must be maintained and sustained in our hearts; otherwise it will slip away from us, or, rather, we shall "drift" (note the word; it signifies the slow, imperceptible, passive sliding from the right road) away from it. The superior authority and excellence of the new message make a departure from it the more serious in its consequences.

How shall we escape if we neglect it? This was spoken to well-meaning people. He does not so much as mention the possibility of their openly rejecting and renouncing the gospel. The danger was not there. Multitudes of Christians who would be horrified at the very suggestion of positively recanting their confession [26] of Christ lose their hope by neglect. Ours is a religion that requires constant attention, like a growing garden. There are these alternatives: Either give earnest heed to the message of God, or else meet the unanswered, unanswerable question, "How shall I escape?" In reading [verses 2, 3](#), emphasize the words "angels," "we," and "Lord."

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So Great Salvation.

The [first two verses of the first chapter](#) gave us a grand division of the whole Bible, drawing the line of distinction between that which was spoken to the fathers and that which was spoken to us--the former, by the prophets; the latter, by the Son. The two messages were, of course, not the same. The first contained hints, shadows, prophecies, types, promises of the great salvation which was to come through the Son; yet that salvation was a mystery until the gospel came--saints, prophets, and angels wondering and inquiring concerning it. ([Rom. 16:25; Eph. 3:9; 1 Pet. 1:10-12.](#)) The veil was first lifted by Jesus. It "at the first began to be spoken by the Lord." It was a salvation revealed to us in speech, and that first by the mouth of the Lord. So we need not look for it back of Christ's day, except in types and prophecies. [27]

Yet the Lord did not himself proclaim it to the world; but, having won the right to establish the new order of things, he simply announced it to his apostles ([Matt. 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15, 16; Luke 24:47](#)), and made them his ambassadors and executors ([John 20:21-23; 2 Cor. 5:20](#)). Thus the salvation began at first to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him (the apostles), God bearing them witness. ([Mark 16:20; 2 Cor. 12:12](#))

Did Paul Write This Letter?

For a long time it was generally accepted that Paul was the author of Hebrews; now it is believed that some one else, writing, perhaps, under Paul's supervision--at any rate, some one strongly imbued with Paul's manner of teaching--penned it. The style is somewhat different from Paul's; the language, calmer, statelier, and more ornate, although abounding in expressions peculiar to Paul's writing. But the chief argument lies in [Heb. 2:3](#). Note [Gal. 1:1, 11, 12](#), and see how emphatically Paul declares that he got his gospel directly from the Lord. Paul always had to meet opposition on this point, and at various times defended his apostleship in strong terms. Now (it is argued) surely Paul would not represent himself to the [28] Hebrews as one who received the gospel at second hand, and say: "It was confirmed unto us [that is, to me and to you] by them that heard." This, however, is a matter of small moment. The instrument is nothing; the God who used it, everything. As for the stamp of divine authority, this Epistle bears, like the other books of the New Testament, its own testimony; and from the first the Christians accepted, acknowledged, and honored it as a message from God.



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Our Father in heaven, we have to-day obtained a wider view of the glory of thy Son. We rejoice in this, our Savior, who is mighty to save. We thank thee that through him we have received the adoption as sons and have become heirs of salvation, and, as such, are being attended by the angels of God that encamp round about them that fear him. But grant us, O Father, wisdom and strength, that, recognizing the graver responsibilities connected with higher privileges, we may not neglect that great salvation. Awaken us when we grow indifferent; draw us back when we are drifting. Keep us mindful of thyself and thy love, that we may have a continual motive to serve you. Let thy word become daily more precious to us, lift us [29] into closer communion in prayer, and grant us a final escape from all evil, for Jesus' sake. Amen.



Questions and Suggestions for the Next Lesson.

The next lesson takes in [Heb. 2:5-18](#). Whence was the quotation in [verses 6-8](#) taken? What made David ask the question? Study the context in [Ps. 8](#). Was it the littleness or greatness of man that impressed David? What was God's original purpose and what his ultimate purpose regarding man? Is that now realized? Will it ever be? What assurance have we of it? How did Christ's exaltation make his death available to every man? Why was it so hard for the Jews to believe that the Messiah should have to suffer and die? How is the fitness of it explained in this lesson? In [verse 11](#) both the sanctified and sanctifier are all of one--"one" what? In [verse 13](#), how does the quotation, "I will put my trust in him," prove that Christ took part in the human nature and infirmities of his brethren? [30]

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LESSON IV.--HEB. 2:5-18.

5 For not unto angels did he subject the world to come, whereof we speak. 6 But one hath somewhere testified, saying,

What is man, that thou art mindful of him?

Or the son of man, that thou visitest him?

7 Thou madest him a little lower than the angels;

Thou crownedst him with glory and honor,

And didst set him over the works of thy hands:

8 Thou didst put all things in subjection under his feet.

For in that he subjected all things unto him, he left nothing that is not subject to him. But now we see not yet all things subjected to him. 9 But we behold him who hath been made a little lower than the angels, *even* Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God he should taste of death for every *man*. 10 For it became him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the author of their salvation perfect through sufferings. 11 For both he that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, 12 saying,

I will declare thy name unto my brethren,

In the midst of the congregation will I sing thy praise.

13 And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold, I and the children whom God hath given me. 14 Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, he also himself in like manner partook of the same; that through death he might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; 15 and might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime [31] subject to bondage. 16 For verily not to angels doth he give help, but he giveth help to the seed of Abraham. 17 Wherefore it behooved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren, that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. 18 For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted.

Rulers of the Universe.

"For not unto angels did he subject the world to come." This "world to come" has been thought to refer to the present (the gospel) dispensation, called "the world to come" from the Old Testament point of view, in contradistinction to the former dispensation, which was under the rule of angels. ([Verse 2.](#)) This world (dispensation) is under the rule of Jesus, the glorified God-man. But the word "world" in this place means--not "age," as it often does, but "inhabited earth." We would hardly take it to mean "dispensation," then; but it would naturally refer to the "new heavens" and the "new earth," wherein dwelleth righteousness, in which Christ will reign, and his people forever and ever. ([Rev. 22:5](#)). It was God's design at the first that man, not (as in former ages and even now) angels, should have dominion over the earth; and here we see that design again, but enlarged so as to include man's rule of the whole universe. [32]

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Man's Littleness and Greatness.

The portion of the universe we can behold with our eyes or reach with our greatest telescopes is probably only a small corner of God's immense handiwork, but the magnitude of even that portion is inconceivable. Our earth is the merest speck in it, insignificant, unnoticeable; and man is but a very small and very temporary speck on the earth. It must have been when David was gazing into the starry heavens and was lost in wonder and awe of God's glory as revealed in the enormous galaxy above him that the Holy Spirit made him understand at one stroke how small and how great man is. "O Jehovah, our Lord," he exclaimed, "how excellent is thy name in all the earth, who hast set thy glory upon the heavens! . . . When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained; what is man that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" It is a confession of littleness, but not that only; it is also an exclamation of wonder, astonishment, at what greatness man must hide in his lowly guise, that God, even God, would deign to notice him and visit him. What must man be if you, great Maker of the universe, do commune with him and deal with him? The Spirit supplies him the answer. God had [33] great designs in making man. For the time he is lower than the angels; but what is he in God's ultimate purpose? See the answer in [verses 7, 8](#). But has that design been fulfilled? "Not yet," which is a word of hope, for it implies that some time it shall be. What assurance have we of it? We see Jesus. We have known his career, his humiliation, his suffering, his obedience unto death, his exaltation. Now he is at the right hand of God, all authority in heaven and on earth committed to him, "angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him." ([1 Pet. 3:22](#).) In his career we see the prophecy and prediction of ours. As he, so we. He is our forerunner. He is the Head; we are the body. If we suffer with him, we shall be glorified with him. As the career of the first Adam is the prophecy of the sin, failure, and death of his race, so the victory and exaltation of the second Adam is typical and prophetic of that of his new race; and the meanwhile Jesus Christ's exalted position makes the benefits of his sacrifice available to every man. (Compare [Acts 5:31](#).)

The Stumbling-Block of the Jews.

"We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block." Two things were very hard for the Jews to accept--one, that a human [34] being could be the Son of God, or, rather, that the Son of God could have been man; the other, that their great Messiah should die--a criminal's death, at that. The first of these Jesus tried to make clear to them ([Matt. 22:41-46](#)); the second was the standing objection the Jews had to Jesus' claim to the Messiahship. "We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth forever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of

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man?" ([John 12:34](#).) The rest of this chapter ([Heb. 2](#)) declares and explains the fitness of the Son's becoming man and suffering with and for man.

"Both he that sanctifieth [Jesus] and they that are sanctified [the Christians] are all of one"--of one Father. So Jesus calls them "brethren." (See [Matt. 12:50; 28:10](#).) But, still, Jesus preserved a distinction. If he is Brother, he is our Elder Brother, forever higher in rank and nearer the Father. If we are sons of God, yet he is the Son of God, the only begotten; and no one stands in equal rank with him. This distinction Jesus carefully observed in all his utterances on this subject. He never says "our Father," in common with the disciples, but "my Father" and "your Father;" never "our God," but "my God" and "your God." ([John 20:17](#).) But through his work of redemption we become "partakers of the divine [35] nature," children of God; and so Jesus is not ashamed to call us "brethren." In the days of his flesh and his humiliation he was made like unto them; he, like they, was separated from his Father by the veil of flesh; like they, he must walk by faith, not by sight, and put his trust in God while passing through the darkness. ([Heb. 2:13](#).) The "children" mentioned in [verse 13](#) are children of God presented to Christ. ([John 6:34; 17:2](#).) Moreover, he tasted the whole lot of man, even unto temptation, suffering, and death; and in dying he brought to naught the devil--first, because in his death he became an atonement and sin-offering for the sins of men; and secondly, because the devil could not keep him in the bond of death, seeing that death is the wages of sin, and in him was no sin. So it was a triumph in every way. To Christ, Satan is once for all a vanquished enemy. To all that are in Christ he is nothing more. Death cannot hold them ([Rev. 1:18](#)); and instead of death's being their terror and curse, it is through Christ become a blessing ([Rev. 14:13](#)).

It so pleased God, then, and was a proper thing in his eyes, that Jesus, having come to bring help to men, should be united with them in the bond of a sympathy born of common experience; that he should traverse the whole scale [36] of their weaknesses and sufferings, bear their burdens, fight their battles, win their victories, and blaze the path for them into a better life.



Our Father, we thank thee for the wonderful provision thou hast made, that through the life and death and resurrection and high priesthood of Jesus Christ we may be admitted into nearness to thee and obtain again the promise of the dominion of the universe, which our sin and disloyalty had forfeited. We spread our wants and weaknesses and sins before our High Priest, confident of his sympathy and mercy. Grant us through his intercession the victory over evil, the triumph over death, and the exaltation that we may behold thy face and serve thee forever and ever. Amen.

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Suggestions and Questions for the Next Lesson.

The next lesson covers [Heb. 3:1-6](#). In what sense were these brethren holy? Why does he yet tell them to follow holiness? ([Heb. 12:14](#).) Note the similarity and dissimilarity between Jesus and Moses as set forth here. How was Moses' work a testimony of the things that were afterwards to be spoken? What condition insures us a continuance in God's house? [37]

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LESSON V.--HEB. 3:1-6.

1 Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, *even* Jesus; 2 who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also was Moses in all his house. 3 For he hath been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, by so much as he that built the house hath more honor than the house. 4 For every house is builded by some one; but he that built all things is God. 5 And Moses indeed was faithful in all his house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were afterward to be spoken; 6 but Christ as a son, over his house; whose house are we, if we hold fast our boldness and the glorying of our hope firm unto the end.

To the Holy Brethren.

Is it customary among us Christians to regard one another as holy? What kind of brethren are these he calls "holy?" Are they patterns and paragons, or were they weak, faltering, stumbling brethren? Note to whom the word "sanctified" (which is the same as "holy") is applied in the first Epistle to the Corinthians. ([1 Cor. 1:2; 6:11.](#)) So these also were made holy, as far as their standing before God is concerned, through their first acceptance of Jesus Christ. But their characters were not yet holy. That is why these Christians, though already sanctified, are urged to [38] follow after--that is, pursue--the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord. ([Heb. 12:14; compare 1 Pet. 1:15, 16.](#)) In the same way Christians, who have "put on Christ" in baptism ([Gal. 3:27](#)), are yet exhorted to put on the Lord Jesus Christ ([Rom. 13:14](#)). It is to make real in our own life and character that which has been imputed to us through the merits of Jesus Christ; it is to work out in our career the salvation which at the outset was freely bestowed upon us. But let us take note of the fact that a Christian, even a weak, faulty Christian, is a holy person, set apart unto God, sprinkled with the sanctifying blood.

They were also partakers of a heavenly calling--a call from heaven, a call to heaven. What does the word "apostle" mean? Why is Jesus called "the apostle of our confession?" (Compare [John 20:21.](#)) Look up the word "consider" in the dictionary. Consider Jesus. ([2 Cor. 3:18.](#))

Jesus and Moses.

Here again we have one of the comparisons and contrasts with which this Epistle abounds. In what point was Jesus like Moses? Note that the expression "his house," in [verses 2 and 6](#), refers in both to God's house, not Moses' house [39] or Jesus' house. What was the chief distinction between Jesus and Moses in relation to God's house? ([Verses 3, 4.](#)) What was another great contrast between them? ([Verses 5, 6.](#))

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Elsewhere in the Bible the likeness of Moses to the Messiah is touched upon. ([Acts 3:22](#).) It will be instructive to seek out the resemblances and differences in the two persons and careers.

The latter part of [verse 5](#) is important. It states that Moses' work was only "for a testimony" of the greater message that was to follow. As the shadow testifies to the substance, as the type bears witness of the antitype, so the Mosaic dispensation bore its testimony to the gospel. ([Romans 3:21](#); [John 5:46](#).)

Value of Hope.

The conditions of final success are very markedly presented in this letter. In [verse 6](#) we have the condition on which we shall finally be accepted as the "house of God." It is: "If we hold fast our boldness [the courage of our faith that sustains us, and without which we faint and surrender in the face of opposition] and the glorying of our hope firm unto the end." We hold our hope too cheap and uncertain. Instead of glorying in it, we are diffident about it; and just as cheap as we hold it, so [40] cheaply do we let it go. We need hope. We must be assured of the ultimate success of our warfare. We must maintain this attitude in the teeth of all scoffings, ridicule, and opposition, else we shall lose in the conflict.



Our Father, thou hast magnified our privileges infinitely above those of thy people of old. Instead of being under a servant, the Son's gentle, omnipotent watch care is over us; instead of living and worshipping in types and shadows, the eternal realities of the new covenant have come upon us. We pray thee to open our eyes and hearts to a greater realization and appreciation of the blessings thy love has bestowed on us in Christ. May we be bold in his name, and may our hope be our boast, our glory, our inspiration continually, that when the end comes we may be found in him and accepted as living stones in God's spiritual temple forever. Amen.

Questions and Suggestions for the Next Lesson.

The next lesson ([Heb. 3:7-19](#)) is a deep and earnest admonition. Let us study it with unusual care. Most of us need just that more than anything else. Why does he emphasize the [41] "to-day" so heavily? How do we harden our hearts against God's word? Why does he plead with us not to harden our hearts? With what kind of mind ought we to approach the Bible? How long was the "day" of Israel's trial mentioned in [verse 8](#)? What is the significance of the expression "take heed?" What does "haply"

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mean? Is it faith or works that is made the condition of final acceptance here? Why was Israel deprived of the promise of Canaan? There is much more in this lesson than appears on the surface. It will richly reward humble and earnest study. [42]

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LESSON VI.--HEB. 3:7-19.

- 7 Wherefore, even as the Holy Spirit saith,
To-day if ye shall hear his voice,
8 Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation,
Like as in the day of the trial in the wilderness,
9 Where your fathers tried *me* by proving *me*,
And saw my works forty years.
10 Wherefore I was displeased with this generation,
And said, They do always err in their heart:
But they did not know my ways;
11 As I sware in my wrath,
They shall not enter into my rest.
12 Take heed, brethren, lest haply there shall be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief, in falling away from the living God: 13 but exhort one another day by day, so long as it is called To-day; lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin: 14 for we are become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end: 15 while it is said,
To-day if ye shall hear his voice,
Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.
16 For who, when they heard, did provoke? nay, did not all they that came out of Egypt by Moses? 17 And with whom was he displeased forty years? was it not with them that sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? 18 And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that were disobedient? 19 And we see that they were not able to enter in because of unbelief.

To-Day.

God's warning points us to the "now" as the good time. "To-day" is God's counsel; [43] "to-morrow" is the devil's suggestion. Satan does not care how many good resolutions you make, just so they are for to-morrow. To-morrow never comes; to-day is all the time at our disposal. "Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation." Whether for the sinner to come to Christ or for the erring Christian to return to him, to-day is the time, now is the opportunity. It has been pointed out that this call to come to-day is in itself a promise as well as a command and a solemn warning--a promise, because now, even now, God stands ready to receive you, heal and help you, and bestow upon you the blessings your soul yearns for, all the great promises of the gospel, be the obstacles what they may. If you were obliged to wait till you are better or your temptations fewer, your difficulties smaller, your strength greater, or till your feelings agreed with your will--if any of these changes must first occur, God would never have said "to-day." In saying "to-day," God proposed to take you just as you are, forgive your sins, help your weaknesses, give you grace according to all your needs in your present circumstances.

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Harden Not Your Heart.

With what an attitude of childlike openness of mind, readiness to hear, believe, obey; with [44] what a sense of privilege and reverence and submission we should approach the word of God! If God speaks, how should man hear? Everything depends on our attitude of mind. The word is good and perfect, but it does not bring forth the same good results in every man. In some it bears a hundredfold; in some, sixty; in some, thirty; in some, none at all. To some it is light and life; in others it occasions deeper darkness and death. How often we have read it carelessly and heedlessly, or, like the rich young ruler, have turned sorrowfully away from it! It is easy for us to harden our hearts against God's word. We have the power and privilege of doing so. We do it when we procrastinate, disregard ([Zech. 7:11-13](#)) or try to drown out the pangs of the awakened conscience by pleasure and diversion. But the Spirit pleads with us for our life's sake not to harden our hearts. And if you have hitherto met God's word with less respect than it demands; if you have disregarded it and have listened carelessly and have procrastinated, the Holy Spirit says to you: "Change now." "To-day if ye shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts." Think of that when you pick up your Bible, "while it is called To-day." [45]

What Kind of Day.

The word "day" has a peculiar significance in this context. It is not a twenty-four-hour day. It may not be that long; it may be many twenty-four-hour days. It is simply the present time of opportunity, the day of grace toward us; it is our day of trial, like unto that of Israel when God led them out of the land of bondage. How long was that day? Not the forty years. The forty years of wandering was the punishment and curse consequent upon their failure to stand their test in the day of trial. Their day of trial lasted just about one year, during which they tempted God and disobeyed and disbelieved until he swore in his wrath: "They shall not enter into my rest." For which cause they wandered in the wilderness forty years, till all that generation had died. ([Num. 14:20-35.](#))

"Take Heed."

This is the equivalent of the commoner expressions: "Watch!" "Take care!" "Look out!" It points to a danger of the unexpected kind, or a danger that slips in unawares and will work its mischief before it is recognized. So likewise the word "haply." It means in this connection "accidentally," [46] "unexpectedly," something likely to

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"happen." See how that word is used in [Heb. 2:1 and in Luke 21:34](#) (A. R. V.) "Haply" comes of itself, by simple neglect. A man will not "haply" walk to the top of a hill; but he must watch, lest "haply" he slide down. No man "haply" raises a crop of corn; but if he is not diligent, his field may "haply" become a patch of weeds. Downward is the constant tendency. You cannot close your eyes a minute, lest "haply" you slip and fall; you cannot rest in secure idleness or give yourself up to the current of the world one day, lest "haply" you are sucked into the whirlpool of destruction. The constant downward tendency must be met by constant application of upward forces. ([Prov. 1:32; 19:16.](#))

Now the thing they must "take heed" about, lest "haply" it befall them, is the "evil heart of unbelief." Unbelief is the natural downward tendency. Close your eyes and fold your hands, and unbelief creeps into your heart. Faith must be sustained just like a fire must be fed. And with what fuel? [Rom. 10:17](#)--that and our exhorting of one another. Is sin deceitful? How? How are we hardened by the deceitfulness of sin? Now the opposite of slipping and sliding and drifting is "holding fast." So that condition must be fulfilled [47] before we can be partakers with Christ. When is the "end" spoken of in [verse 14](#)?

Israel's Unbelief.

Jesus and Moses are compared at the [outset of this chapter](#). While the writer proceeds to show the consequence of Israel's hardening their hearts against the message of Moses, the implication is throughout that as much more serious in proportion as our Leader is superior to Moses will be the results that shall follow for us if we turn a deaf ear to the message of the Son.

Have you noticed how faith, not works, is here made the condition of acceptance? Not to the exclusion of works. But works are secondary. They follow faith and are inseparable from it. Make the tree good, and its fruit will be good. It is interesting and helpful to study the cause of Israel's rejection from the promised land. It was not because they were weak, nor because they were in numbers unable to cope with the Canaanites. Weak they were, few they were, and strong were their enemies; but they would have been conquerors for all that if they had only believed God and risked themselves over on his word and promise. But they looked at the things that were seen instead of the things that are not seen. [48] Their eyes, not God's word, was their standard of measurement, and God swore in his wrath: "They shall not enter into my rest." So do we lose the chance of conquest because we have not the faith and courage to rely upon God when the odds seem against us. That is the evil heart of unbelief out of which comes only one fruit--disobedience.

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O God, our Father, forgive us for the careless, indifferent, and irreverent way in which we have looked upon thy word often in times past. Now we come to accept thy gracious warning and invitation. Now, while it is called "to-day," we open our hearts to the searching, smiting, and healing power of thy word. Now we would claim thy promises and thy help against our many difficulties and spiritual enemies. Preserve us from the curse of an evil heart of unbelief, and save us from the deceitfulness of sin. Give us an entrance into thy rest through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



Questions and Suggestions for the Next Lesson.

[Heb. 4:1-13](#) is the next lesson. What is the connection with the foregoing lesson? What [49] kind of rest was promised to them? What kind to us? Why did they fail to enter? Was it because they never started, or was it because they did not persevere? What does their experience mean to us? What shall we fear? In what shall we be bold? Should we, like Israel, be discouraged at our weakness or the strength of our enemies? By whose power shall we win the victory--our own or Christ's? How much power has Christ? How much can I do with him? ([Phil. 4:13.](#)) How much without him? ([John 15:5.](#)) [50]

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LESSON VII.--HEB. 4:1-13.

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

This lesson is the sequence and application of the one preceding. "They were not able to enter in because of unbelief" were the last words of the third chapter. Enter into what? The land of Canaan, to be sure. But what would that mean to them? An end of their migrations, a settled home, the realization of the promise made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as far as its earthly application went. It was this rest from their homeless wandering that they had missed when God swore in his wrath: "They shall not enter into my rest." But why did God bring the people forth from Egypt? Was it not that he might bring them into Canaan? Without the entrance into Canaan, the deliverance from Egypt meant very little, after all. And since by unbelief they failed to enter the promised land, it makes little difference that they had the initial faith to leave Egypt. ([Heb. 11:29.](#)) [51]

What It Means to Us.

It means to us just what it meant to the wavering Hebrew Christians to whom the letter was addressed; and to them it meant that if they did not hold fast the beginning of their confidence firm unto the end ([3:14](#)), they should not enter into their rest nor be partakers with Christ. And, then, what would it matter even if they did at one time have the faith to make the start and by first obedience to the gospel leave Egypt? Faith is not the spurt of a moment in which we cry out: "I believe." It is a steady principle, an habitual attitude, and must not cease, but grow stronger as we proceed and experience the faithfulness of God. But they are not few that had faith to leave Egypt and not faith enough to enter Canaan. To all such, and to those who have this tendency to stop short and revolt from, or at least cease to press on after, their Leader, the Epistle to the Hebrews is addressed. Let us not harden our hearts when we hear God's reasoning in this letter, as Israel hardened their hearts in the day of trial. Here is the good Spirit pleading with us not to grow faint, not to backslide, or (which sums up all in a word) not to let go of our faith. [52]

Let Us Fear.

Now it is essential for us to know what to fear and where to be bold. Commonly we fear the very thing we should face boldly in the name of God, and are vainly confident and indifferent where we might well tremble. There is a fear that comes of

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unbelief; there is another fear of which unbelief is the object. (Read [Isa. 41:8-14; 43:1, 2; Jer. 1:8, 17.](#)) That first kind of fear God wants us to dismiss. In regard to the terror and apprehensions the wicked have in times of trouble, God says: "Fear not their fear, neither be troubled." Neither are the difficulties, temptations, and dangers that beset us proper objects of fear. Read the account of Peter's walking on the water. ([Matt. 14:22, 23.](#)) Peter's fear ([verse 30](#)) was afterwards called "doubt" by the Savior ([verse 31](#)). You will notice, too, that Peter was afraid of the wrong thing. His peril was not in the wind and waves, but in taking his eyes and his mind off the Lord, who alone was able to make him stand. To distrust him was the thing to fear and shun. Likewise read the experience of Israel at the border of Canaan. ([Num. 13:31.](#)) What was their mistake and sin? Fearing the wrong thing. They trembled at the multitude and size of their enemies, at the fortified cities, at their own smallness [53] and weakness; but they were bold to distrust and disobey God. They did not understand where the danger lay.

Now, what do we fear? Likely the wrong thing. Though, as in the case of Peter on the water, the Lord stands as our power and surety of a successful journey. He is able, he says, to keep you from stumbling ([Jude 24](#)), able to make you stand ([Rom. 14:4](#)); and all your power of standing, as in Peter's case again, lies in Christ. We are kept by the power of God, through faith. ([1 Pet. 1:5.](#)) What, then, have we to dread? Just one thing: lest we gradually or otherwise take our minds and hearts off the Lord--lest we lose faith. Connect the [last verse of Hebrews 3 with the first of Hebrews 4](#), and you will see that unbelief is the danger to fear. Look at the context of [Rom. 11:20](#), and see the same point there.

I have dwelt on this at length, because it is so exceedingly important. We are all prone to forget the fact that Christ, Christ, Christ alone, is our power to uphold us; that only he will and can; that he is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, and that in him only is our boast. We look at the evils of the world, and fear; we look at obstacles and difficulties, and measure our strength, and feel either encouraged or despairing. We [54] depend on our characters; we rely on our abilities, wisdom, ingenuity in fighting the great battle against sin. All these attitudes are wrong, and end in certain defeat. But see what these wavering Hebrews needed. "Consider Jesus!" ([Heb. 3:1.](#)) Look on him, gaze on him intently as the astronomer gazes on a constellation, as the mariner on his guiding star. Jesus is held up from the beginning to the end of this Epistle. Jesus in heaven, as our High Priest, exercising continual and divine influence upon his people on earth; Jesus, all-powerful; Jesus, compassionate and gentle toward the ignorant and erring; Jesus, the perfect Sacrifice--in one word, Jesus, our Savior. "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith." This is the keynote of the letter, as far as its practical application is concerned.

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This is lesson enough for one time. It is worth meditating on. It can transform your life of timidity and vain self-reliance into a life of trust and victory through Jesus Christ our Lord.



Our Father in heaven, we have had faith enough to accept Jesus as our Lord, repent of our sins, confess him with our lips, and be [55] buried with him in baptism. So we have, by thy grace and through faith, been delivered from the world and become thy children. Now we need thy gentle, solemn words of warning, lest, having had faith to leave Egypt, we have not faith enough to follow unto Canaan. Show us where the real danger lies, and where the true source of success and victory. May thy faith-inspiring word become more precious in our eyes. May our minds be continually stayed on Jesus as our continued help. Forgive us our past carelessness and unbelief, for now we would hearken to thy word with hearts no longer hardened. Father, give us strength and victory, in Jesus' name. Amen.



For the next lesson: We continue on [Heb. 4:1-13](#). See what more you can see in it. What kind of rest was promised them? What kind to us? What have unbelief and disobedience to do with each other? Study [verses 12, 13](#), particularly. [56]

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LESSON VIII.--HEB. 4:1-13, RESUMED.

1 Let us fear therefore, lest haply, a promise being left of entering into his rest, any one of you should seem to have come short of it. 2 For indeed we have had good tidings preached unto us, even as also they: but the word of hearing did not profit them, because it was not united by faith with them that heard. 3 For we who have believed do enter into that rest; even as he hath said,

As I sware in my wrath,

They shall not enter into my rest:

although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. 4 For he hath said somewhere of the seventh *day* on this wise, And God rested on the seventh day from all his works; 5 and in this *place* again,

They shall not enter into my rest.

6 Seeing therefore it remaineth that some should enter thereinto, and they to whom the good tidings were before preached failed to enter in because of disobedience, 7 he again defineth a certain day, To-day, saying in David so long a time afterward (even as hath been said before),

To-day if ye shall hear his voice,

Harden not your hearts.

8 For if Joshua had given them rest, he would not have spoken afterward of another day. 9 There remaineth therefore a sabbath rest for the people of God. 10 For he that is entered into his rest hath himself also rested from his works, as God did from his. 11 Let us therefore give diligence to enter into that rest, that no man fall after the same example of disobedience. 12 For the word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and [57] intents of the heart. 13 And there is no creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

Let us fear, then, this one thing--the leaking away of our faith and drifting away from the grace of God. The word translated "come short of" is used also in [Heb. 12:15](#), with an illustration of what it means immediately following. We are, as antitypes, in the same position with Israel, who having passed through the Red Sea, were to follow their leader into the promised land. Paul calls attention to that fact in [1 Cor. 10](#). Their gospel (glad tidings) was of the land of promise and rest from their wandering; ours is of the New Jerusalem and rest with God after our pilgrimage. Just as their gospel fails to do some them good, so our greater gospel fails to benefit some of us, and for the same reason--lack of faith. Hard hearts, wayside hearts, stony-ground hearts, thorny-ground hearts--hearts in which only a thin film of receptive soil is found for the word, or in which "the lust of other things" crowds out the word--these are the evil hearts of unbelief that manifest themselves in falling away from the living God. ([Heb. 3:12](#).) To-day when you hear God's voice, harden not your heart. [58]

We Are Entering.

"Rest" is a sweet word. We like to think of the future rest promised to those who "die in the Lord from henceforth." ([Rev. 14:13](#).) But our rest is not altogether in the future. Jesus called us for rest. "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and

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lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." "Rest in the Lord," said the psalmist, "and wait patiently for him."

"We need not wait for the longed-for peace
Till our journey is over and our labors cease.
We can rest in the midst of our busiest day
If the Master meets us on the way."

The rest of faith begins here. The verb is in the present. "We who have believed do enter that rest." It is not a ceasing from activity, neither here nor in the life to come. There "his servants shall serve him." It was not ceasing from activity even in God's rest on his Sabbath day. Jesus said: "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." ([John 5:17](#).) The rest, to us, is the rest of victory--a heart stayed on God, the calm poise of the soul, the peace unruffled and unshaken by whatever comes or [59] goes. It is sharing in God's tranquillity and calm power, the satisfaction in his works and plans which were finished from the foundation of the world. Into this rest we enter by faith. "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not be in haste." ([Isa. 28:16](#).) Even now as we trust in God and live in his will, his wisdom, his goodness and providence, and rely upon his power for sustenance and victory, we shall see the less of frustration, nervous anxiety, apprehensions of evil, dread of to-morrow, storms and tempests of the heart. The rest begins here, to be perfected forever "over there."

The entrance of Israel into the land of promise is typical of our rest. It was not the real rest of God, but a shadow of it. It meant for them a transition from a wilderness to a land flowing with milk and honey, from wanderings to a homeland. A like rest is vouchsafed to the believing soul. If that had been the ultimate rest God had in store for his people, would it not have been fulfilled when Joshua (in the Authorized Version "Jesus," the Greek form of the name "Joshua," is used) led them across the Jordan? And how could David, then, so long a time afterwards, still have spoken of another [60] day of opportunity to enter into the promised rest? ([Heb. 4:6-8](#); see also [Ps. 95:7](#).)

Note how "unbelief" and "disobedience" are used interchangeably in [Heb. 3:19; 4:6](#). See how the same usage occurs in [John 3:36](#) (American Revised Version). What relation between "unbelief" and "disobedience?" Look at the expression "obedience of faith" in [Rom. 1:5; 16:26](#). What do you conclude to be the difference between the obedience of faith and the obedience of the law? ([Rom. 10:5](#).)

The Word of God.

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In one verse here the writer makes five statements concerning the word. The word of God is living. It is a seed. If permitted to grow, its life will manifest itself in the soul. It is powerful ([Jer. 23:28, 29.](#)) It has power to create, power to destroy, power to kill and to raise from the dead, power to heal and to afflict, power to remit and to retain sin, power to awaken and save, power to harden and condemn. Whether its power will work good or ill to us depends altogether on our attitude toward the word. To those who are humble and reverent toward it ([Isa. 66:2](#)), willing to hear and learn and obey, it will bring the highest blessing; but those who harden their hearts and fight against it--it will rise up against them and [61] slay them. How many instances do you know where the word is spoken of as a sword? What is the significance of the figure? Why, as he explains here, is it "sharper than any two-edged sword?" In what respect and how is it sharper? How does the word discern the thoughts and intents of the heart? It is a mirror in which we behold the glory of the Lord ([2 Cor. 3:18](#)) and can see ourselves as God sees us and as we look in comparison to the perfect One. This is humiliating and disagreeable. But the word of God, like a surgeon's knife, wounds only to heal. Instead of leaving us miserable and downcast, it leads us to forgiveness and purity and hope. We easily deceive ourselves; and a self-deceived man falls into a pit, for he is a blind man. Is it a great blessing to be undeceived? See how David prayed for it. ([Ps. 139:23, 24.](#)) In [Ps. 19:11, 12](#) the connection shows that it is God's word that reveals the heart to itself. The word is a judge also, as well as a mirror. ([John 12:48.](#))

Then he passes on from the word to the God who spoke it. We cannot deceive him. We may harden our hearts against his word; we may hide ourselves from his light; we may, like the ostrich, hide our heads in the sand and fancy that because we see and know nothing, therefore we are not responsible. But God lives [62] and knows and sees. He takes note of how we deal with his word. Here is a warning. ([Heb. 3:7 to 4:11.](#)) It is God's word. Does it fit your case? Did you weigh it and let its heart-searching light enter? Or did you pass it by slightly and indifferently? Be sure God knows; and as you deal with the word, you deal with God, and so will he deal with you.



Almighty God, who in love and mercy hast spoken to us, warned us, and proffered thy help in thy word, help us to open our souls to thy truth, though it should cut and wound. We would not shrink from that most wise and loving touch of our great Physician. We would not turn aside from the serious thoughts that rise in our hearts when thou dost reveal ourselves to ourselves. We would not drown out the God-awakened conscience with frivolities. Yet at our best we esteem thy word of warning too little. Give us a higher appreciation of thy counsel and more reverence. Show us

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more light, and give us grace and strength to walk in it. Lead us into thy rest through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. [63]



Questions and Suggestions on the Next Lesson.

Lesson IX. extends from [Heb. 4:14 to 5:10](#). What exhortation in [verse 14](#)? Do you find it often in this Epistle? On what grounds does he exhort us to "hold fast?" Why should that be an encouragement to us? What is "boldness?" When shall we look for grace to help? Note seven points in the description of the earthly high priest. Then see how step for step they are applicable to Christ. To what special occasion in Christ's life could [verses 7 and 8](#) refer? [64]

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LESSON IX.--HEB. 4:14 TO 5:10.

14 Having then a great high priest, who hath passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. 15 For we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been in all points tempted like as *we are, yet* without sin. 16 Let us therefore draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help *us* in time of need.

1 For every high priest, being taken from among men, is appointed for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: 2 who can bear gently with the ignorant and erring, for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity; 3 and by reason thereof is bound, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins. 4 And no man taketh the honor unto himself, but when he is called of God, even as was Aaron. 5 So Christ also glorified not himself to be made a high priest, but he that spake unto him,

Thou art my Son,

This day have I begotten thee:

6 as he saith also in another *place*,

Thou art a priest for ever

After the order of Melchizedek.

7 Who in the days of his flesh, having offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and having been heard for his godly fear, 8 though he was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered; 9 and having been made perfect, he became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation; 10 named of God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

Hold Fast.

When, after the long exhortation ([3:7 to 4:13](#)), the argument is resumed, it is to enforce the admonition, "Hold fast," on new grounds. This is a letter to backsliders and to those who are inclined to be neglectful. "Hold fast!" is its chief burden, the appeal that rings through every page. That we should hold fast; why we should; how we may; how we can; what will result if we do, and what if we do not--this is of prime importance to us all, for no danger is greater and more universal and more insidious, because none comes so unobserved and destroys the very desire of living unto God as does the tendency to carelessness and backsliding. Hear, then, another reason why you should "hold fast." ([Rev. 3:11](#).)

Our Great High Priest.

We have a great High Priest. He is for us; he is ours. All his power, grace, faithfulness, is at our disposal. There is, therefore, no need or use of giving up. "Having then a great high priest, . . . let us hold fast." What hinders you from availing yourself of his help and intercession? Is it that you are so weak and have failed so often, and have no confidence that you will be able to do better in the future than you have done in the past, and so you are [66] ashamed before Jesus and perhaps afraid of him? Then [verse 15](#) answers your trouble exactly. (Compare [Heb. 2:17, 18](#).)

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What is boldness? The highest form of confidence--fearless, undoubting, unwavering. So must we come to the throne of grace. What truth did he give here to produce in us such boldness? What is meant by "the throne of grace?" What is grace? How does grace help us? (See [2 Cor. 12:9](#); [Phil. 4:13](#).) Our time of need is always, but sometimes we realize our need more acutely. It is for every time of need and for every kind of need that Jesus has a help, if only we come with the boldness of faith--faith in his power and tender sympathy--to claim it. Again, it is plain that thus we can "hold fast," and that no sort of need or distress can compel us to let go.

The High Priest Described.

Every priest is (1) taken from among men; (2) is appointed for men; (3) is appointed in things pertaining to God--viz., (4) to offer up gifts and sacrifices for sin. (5) He must be able to bear gently with the ignorant and erring, being himself also compassed about with infirmity, and (6) is, therefore, bound to make offering for sins for himself as well as for the people. Lastly, (7) he must be called of God to [67]perform this function of honor. Now see how Christ fulfils these items. On (1) see [Heb. 2:14, 16, 17](#); (2) is the whole secret of his work; (3) [John 14:6](#)--he has entire charge of all the things pertaining to God--the way of approach, reconciliation, salvation, etc.; (4) is also obvious (5) is emphasized in [Heb. 2:17, 18 and 4:15](#). It is a very important qualification. He speaks of it repeatedly, so as to impress us. If we should leave that out of view; we would dread him instead of trust him. But he is able to sympathize; and not only that--he is also able to succor ([2:18](#)) and to save to the uttermost them that draw nigh unto God through him ([7:25](#)). But in item (6), can that apply to Jesus? He never sinned, so he could have offered no sacrifice for his own sins. However, he made an offering for himself (not a sin offering), being compelled by the weakness of his human nature to depend on that offering for his success and victory. It is the offering mentioned in [verse 7 of this chapter](#). What offering, on the other hand, did he bring for the sins of the world? Item (7) is explained in [verses 5 and 6](#). Noteworthy is the fact that God considers the office of the high priest an honor; and he "glorified" Christ in appointing him to intercede and meditate for sinful, suffering men. It is in such work of mercy and love that Christ [68] finds his glory, for the Son of man came to seek and save that which was lost.

A Reminiscence of Gethsemane.

If [verses 7 and 8](#) have any special reference to a special time in Christ's suffering, prayer, and obedience, they point to the scene in Gethsemane. It was there that the

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divine nature fought its crowning battle against the lower nature, and the will of God triumphed in Jesus over the will of the flesh. There even Jesus, Son of God as he was, learned what obedience means. It was to be the consummation of his earthly struggle, and the Power of Darkness gathered itself together for one more final and terrible assault. In that last test his own human will was completely mortified, and obedience was perfected in surrender of all.

Some Questions.

In what sense was Jesus made perfect? (See on that [Heb. 2:10 and Phil. 2:8, 9.](#)) When did he become the Author of eternal salvation--before or after his perfecting? ([Heb. 5:9.](#)) To whom did he become the Author of eternal salvation? Who proclaimed to the world the commandments of the exalted Savior? (Compare [Heb. 2:3, 4 with Mark 16:15, 16, 19, 20.](#))



Father in heaven, who gave thy Son to be for us an example, a Savior, and a High Priest, we pray that by his struggles and victory, by his sacrifice and intercession, thou mayest deliver us from the power of evil. When Jesus entered into the garden, he had in his mind a wish which was opposed to the will of his Father, and he asked to be allowed to refuse that cup which the Father's providence had prepared for him that he should drink it. We thank thee that this is true. We know now that Jesus experienced all the weakness of the flesh and can sympathize with us. We thank thee yet more that Jesus, in intense agony of supplication, submitted his will to thine and came forth in victory, without even the shadow of disobedience or rebellion resting on his pure soul. And the greatest praise and loving gratitude we render unto thee, for that his victory was for us, and we can have a share in it. Yea, we can now do all things through Christ that strengtheneth us. Father, we have set out to obey him, that to us also he may become the Author of eternal salvation. Grant us, through his all-efficient high-priesthood, the grace for every time of need. In Jesus' name. Amen.



Questions and Suggestions for the Next Lesson.

The next lesson includes [Heb. 5:11 to 6:20](#). What was the condition of the Hebrew Christians as indicated here ([verses 11-14](#))? Is there any danger of stopping at first principles now? How high should a Christian aim? What kind of items does he

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enumerate here under the head of "first principles?" Is it possible for a Christian to fall away? Why these solemn warnings ([6:4-8](#))? Why the gentle encouragement ([9, 10](#))? How can we inherit the promises? On what sort of foundation does our hope rest? What has the promise to Abraham to do with us? Why is hope called the "anchor of the soul?" [71]

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LESSON X.--HEB. 5:11 TO 6:20.

11 Of whom we have many things to say, and hard of interpretation, seeing ye are become dull of hearing. 12 For when by reason of the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need again that some one teach you the rudiments of the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of solid food. 13 For every one that partaketh of milk is without experience of the word of righteousness; for he is a babe. 14 But solid food is for full-grown men, *even* those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern good and evil.

1 Wherefore leaving the doctrine of the first principles of Christ, let us press on unto perfection; not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, 2 of the teaching of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. 3 And this will we do, if God permit. 4 For as touching those who were once enlightened and tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, 5 and tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the age to come, 6 and *then* fell away, it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. 7 For the land which hath drunk the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them for whose sake it is also tilled, receiveth blessing from God: 8 but if it beareth thorns and thistles, it is rejected and nigh unto a curse; whose end is to be burned.

9 But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak: 10 for God is not unrighteous to forget your work and the love which ye showed toward his name, in that ye [72]ministered unto the saints, and still do minister. 11 And we desire that each one of you may show the same diligence unto the fulness of hope even to the end: 12 that ye be not sluggish, but imitators of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

13 For when God made promise to Abraham, since he could swear by none greater, he swore by himself, 14 saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. 15 And thus, having patiently endured, he obtained the promise. 16 For men swear by the greater: and in every dispute of theirs the oath is final for confirmation. 17 Wherein God, being minded to show more abundantly unto the heirs of the promise the immutability of his counsel, interposed with an oath; 18 that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may have a strong encouragement, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us: 19 which we have as an anchor of the soul, *a hope* both sure and steadfast and entering into that which is within the veil; 20 whither as a forerunner Jesus entered for us, having become a high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

Growth Reversed.

There is a revelation of the Hebrew Christians' spiritual condition in the [next few verses](#), all the more noteworthy because it is strictly just and true, coming, as it does, not from the biased judgment of man, but from the all-knowing God. What would God say of *us*?

These Christians had ceased to grow--a fatal fact in itself. They had retrograded, which is unavoidably consequent upon cessation of growth. Once their ears were wide open, [73] sensitive to the word of God; now they had "become" dull of hearing. It is expected of every Christian that, after a certain time has elapsed, he should be able to teach the religion of Christ--if not publicly, at least privately; if not in words to any great extent, at least in life and work. These Christians had come to the place where they themselves needed being taught again, and that in regard to the simplest elements of Christ and in the simplest fashion. (Compare [1 Cor. 3:1-3](#).) He must feed them delicately on milk, as one would babes or those who have weak stomachs. Their

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minds are such that they cannot bear deeper truths, greater spiritual light--a state that was lamentable and culpable in them specially because they had "become" such.

There are degrees in spiritual understanding and vision. It is not a matter of superior intelligence, but of faithful spiritual life. Two persons may look at the same passage of scripture--the one with about as much comprehension and appreciation as that with which a cow views a landscape; while the other sees it as an artist sees the scene, in enthusiastic admiration. As we progress in the Christian life, the word of God grows more beautiful and wonderfully sweet. It widens out on every side, and the depth of its riches becomes unfathomable. The [74] privilege of seeing thus is to the humble, the poor in spirit, to them that walk in the fear of the Lord ([Ps. 25:14](#)), which is synonymous with the expression used in [verse 14](#): "Those who by reason of use had their senses exercised to discern good and evil."

An Exhortation to Go Forward.

If this falls into the hands of a Christian who is satisfied with a nominal Christianity and aspires only to escape hell (the name of those who rest themselves on a merely "tolerable" Christian life, willing to sin along as far as consistent with a "fair standing" and anxious to do no more than enough to avoid hell, is "legion"), I would urge upon him a careful reading of [Heb. 6:1-8](#). Again, to those who live and move and have their being in "first principles," who are forever laying the foundation of "the steps that induct an alien sinner into the kingdom" and never build thereon, whose religion consists mainly in a few original or secondhand arguments wherewith to oppose and confound the "sects," these words of warning are specially to be commended. How easy it is to stop at the door, instead of following on where faith, hope, and love make more and more demands on our time, strength, and possessions! But our Leader says: "Press on to perfection." We [75] must not leave him in the way and slink back. Remember Lot's wife. "On to perfection" is our password. And for whom are the awful warnings (in [verses 4-8](#)) but for those who, having received the blessings of Christ's kingdom, abandoned their Leader and failed to bring forth the fruit which was the chief object in the Husbandman's mind?

Leaving the First Principles.

How "leave" them? Drop them altogether? He cannot mean that. But leave them as the builder leaves the foundation--rising from it, yet ever resting on it; as a student leaves his alphabet and his spelling book and his multiplication table--leaving it

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behind, yet carrying it with him and using it continually in higher studies. See how often the apostles wove a consideration of the first principles into the highest Christian instruction. ([Rom. 6](#) et al.) But if we stay forever on simply "first principles," we are failures. The root is very good and essential; but if stalk and blade and ear do not shoot up from it, what matters it whether there is any root?

What kind of items are these he mentions under the head of "first principles?" They were the points of Jewish-Christian importance--points of difference or special [76] discussion which (like, for instance, baptism among us) by controversy were brought into special prominence. The "baptisms" mentioned are Jewish washings--not exactly the same Greek word that is used in reference to John's or Christ's baptism. The "laying on of hands" may be that spoken of in [Acts 8:18](#). It is not good to harp too much on any one thing, lest we make a hobby of it and get a distorted view of God's word. It is sometimes necessary to emphasize a disputed truth more especially or bring an overlooked truth to people's attention. But it is easy to overdo this thing. We are all, or mostly, born extremists, anyway. And there is the danger that in dwelling too exclusively on one point we lose sight of the weight of other things, and even distort our specialty to such an extent that, like these Hebrews, while dotting on and saying so much on "first principles," we come into need of being ourselves instructed again in "the rudiments of the first principles of the oracles of God." Then the pride of intellect, the vaunting of wit and logic, the pharisaical self-righteousness and censoriousness, and the often bitter, boastful, unkind, overbearing way of presenting one's teaching; ungodly disputes and wars of words, tilts in which the great point is to unhorse the opponent and gain the applause of people and court; [77] self-complacency and living on a few dry husks of argument, when we should feed on the living gospel; prejudice, jealousy, anger, clamor, wrath, revilings, even lying and various dishonesties--all these evils are liable to come in the train of the stunted "first-principle" religion of which we are here warned.

Gentle Encouragement.

He has just presented a terrible possibility. ([Verses 4-8](#).) The gloomy dispositions may be ready to give up all hope. But it is not discouragement that the Lord wants. "All discouragement is from the devil," some one said. "It's of no use" is Satan's stock phrase, which he whispers at some time into the ear of every struggling soul. God, throughout this letter and all the Book, assures us there *is* use. So, to counteract unnecessary dejection, the writer gently revives their hope. ([Verses 9, 10; compare 1 Cor. 15:58; 2 Tim. 1:16-18](#).) The old keynote, "Do not give up," rings out again in [verses 11, 12](#). Ponder the words "faith and patience" and "diligence unto the fullness of hope." Tribulation, steadfastness, approvedness, hope--this is the scale in

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another place. ([Rom. 5.](#)) Our acceptance is from the first freely granted to us of God, but it is by patient going forward to perfection that our hope is assured [78] and confirmed to us. Thus we climb upon the mountains of Beulah and see afar off, with increasing clearness, the City and the Father's house.

The Foundation of Our Hope.

The Christian's hope distinguishes itself above any other in that it is unfailingly certain--"a hope that maketh not ashamed." Every other enterprise rests upon a guess. Success is a gamble. After you have worked for it and spent your best on it; it may yet elude your grasp; for the race is not always to the swift nor the battle to the strong, for time and chance happen to them all. Let moralists and lecturers say what they will, there is an unmistakable element of "luck" in every earthly project. Not so with the Christian's hope. It rests upon two immutable foundation stones--God's promise and God's oath, in which it is impossible for God to lie. As long as you go forward with Jesus, you are surely approaching it; you need count on no failure. You lose it only when you choose to quit seeking after it and when you cease to follow your Leader. As long as you keep on climbing, you will continue to go up. Faith and patience attain to that hope.

Note how he applies the promise to [79] Abraham as though it were our promise. The "we" in [verse 18](#) (compare [Gal. 3:7, 9, 29](#)) shows that in its spiritual meaning the promise applies to Christians.

What is an anchor? What is it for? What does it hold to? Can the sailor see that on which the anchor lays hold? Why is our hope called an "anchor of the soul?" Where does it lay hold? Can we see the realities on which it fastens itself? Why not? It "enters into that which is within the veil."



Our Father, we know thy promises are sure and steadfast and our hope is secure. But our zeal flags, our energy fails, our faith grows weak and our assurance faint. We need thee every hour. We believe that thou art able to keep that which we have committed unto thee; yet protect thou us from our own selves, lest we abandon the attitude of faith and patience and drift back when we should go forward. Work thou in us both to will and to do of thy good pleasure. May thy solemn warnings and tender admonitions and encouragements, thy exceeding great and precious promises and the knowledge of thy perfect faithfulness, inspire us to patient perseverance in the way

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and the aim to [80] attain to Christian perfection, that every one of us who has this hope set on him may by thy grace purify himself, even as Christ is pure. Amen.



Questions and Suggestions for the Next Lesson.

Remember, these are the things "hard of interpretation" mentioned in [chapter 5:11](#). Make a list of all the statements concerning Melchizedek; then compare and see if the description fits any being known to you. [81]

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LESSON XI.--HEB. 7.

1 For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of God Most High, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, 2 to whom also Abraham divided a tenth part of all (being first, by interpretation, King of righteousness, and then also King of Salem, which is King of peace; 3 without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like unto the Son of God), abideth a priest continually.

4 Now consider how great this man was, unto whom Abraham, the patriarch, gave a tenth out of the chief spoils. 5 And they indeed of the sons of Levi that receive the priest's office have commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though these have come out of the loins of Abraham: 6 but he whose genealogy is not counted from them hath taken tithes of Abraham, and hath blessed him that hath the promises. 7 But without any dispute the less is blessed of the better. 8 And here men that die receive tithes; but there one, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth. 9 And, so to say, through Abraham even Levi, who receiveth tithes, hath paid tithes; 10 for he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchizedek met him.

11 Now if there was perfection through the Levitical priesthood (for under it hath the people received the law), what further need *was there* that another priest should arise after the order of Melchizedek, and not be reckoned after the order of Aaron? 12 For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. 13 For he of whom these things are said belongeth to another tribe, from which no man hath given attendance [82] at the altar. 14 For it is evident that our Lord hath sprung out of Judah; as to which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priests. 15 And *what we say* is yet more abundantly evident, if after the likeness of Melchizedek there ariseth another priest, 16 who hath been made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life: 17 for it is witnessed *of him*,

Thou art a priest for ever

After the order of Melchizedek.

18 For there is a disannulling of a foregoing commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness 19 (for the law made nothing perfect), and a bringing in thereupon of a better hope, through which we draw nigh unto God. 20 And inasmuch as *it is* not without the taking of an oath 21 (for they indeed have been made priests without an oath; but he with an oath by him that saith of him,

The Lord sware and will not repent himself,

Thou art a priest for ever);

22 by so much also hath Jesus become the surety of a better covenant. 23 And they indeed have been made priests many in number, because that by death they are hindered from continuing: 24 but he, because he abideth for ever, hath his priesthood unchangeable. 25 Wherefore also he is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

26 For such a high priest became us, holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; 27 who needeth not daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins, and then for the *sins* of the people: for this he did once for all, when he offered up himself. 28 For the law appointeth men high priests, having infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was after the law, *appointeth* a Son, perfected for evermore.

Melchizedek.

With the mention of this name begins the discussion of a deep and wonderful subject: "Christ's High-Priesthood--Its Nature and Power." He leads up to it in the fifth chapter. In [5:10](#) the Lord's penman is ready to open the great theme; and then, it seems, he staggers at the thought of presenting such a deep, spiritual truth to such unspiritually-minded hearers. They are too dull, spiritually, to understand. They are sure to misunderstand unless he prepares their minds as best possible. So he leaves the subject at [5:10](#), and rebukes and warns and exhorts. If you should drop out the whole

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text from [5:11 to 6:20](#), it would not affect the argument in the least. He begins at [7:1](#) just where he had left off at [5:10](#).

Let us also prepare our minds. Let us remember that this is meat, not milk. We are entering on yet holier ground. Let us draw near in faith and in reverence. Let us look for God's mind in this teaching, and leave idle, curious speculation to those babes who know not with what they are dealing.

Statements Concerning Melchizedek.

All we know about Melchizedek is recorded in three passages. The first, in [Gen. 14:18-20](#), where he mysteriously steps upon the scene, is [84] introduced as priest of God Most High, blesses Abram, and receives from him a tithe--a tenth of all Abram possessed, which latter was an acknowledgment on Abram's part of all Melchizedek's claims. Just as suddenly and mysteriously as he appears, he vanishes. Not a trace, not another mention in the course of that history. A thousand years roll by. Then for one moment that name appears again in a great Messianic psalm, where David in the Holy Spirit recorded God's oath to the Messiah: "Jehovah hath sworn, and will not repent: thou art a priest for ever After the order of Melchizedek." ([Ps. 110:4](#).) Another thousand years of silence. Then the Holy Spirit speaks once more of Melchizedek--this time in reference to the Messiah already come, who even now is "the author of eternal salvation, named of God a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." Here he gives us the fullest account of that mysterious person. Let us note the items one by one: (1) Melchizedek--King of righteousness; (2) King of Salem--King of peace; (3) without father; (4) without mother; (5) without genealogy; (6) having no beginning of days; (7) having no end of life; (8) made like unto the Son of God; (9) abideth a priest continually. Now, who is that? There are many useless theories and speculations [85] in regard to that. God never ministered to the idle curiosity of man. There is one point in all this which we need to know, and that point is that Melchizedek's order of priesthood was greater than the Aaronic, not being limited by time nor by other circumstances; a priesthood not based upon the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. Such is Christ's priesthood--never-changing, never-ending. "Wherefore also he is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

Look over the nine items above which describe Melchizedek. Take any of the theories extant and apply them to this pattern; they will not fit. The fact is, nobody knows who Melchizedek was or is. One man says: "The silence of Scripture as to his genealogy and birth and death is interpreted as proof of how different his priesthood is

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from that of Aaron and the priests in Israel, where descent was everything." But, plausible as that sounds, the Scriptures say he had no beginning of days nor end of life; and not only is his death not mentioned, but it says he did not die. Note the ninth item. It is in the present tense. Note also [verse 8](#): "He liveth." To say he had no father or mother or genealogy in the [86] priesthood explains some things, but not everything. The nine items describe, to all appearance, a being supernatural, greater than man. Is it an angel? That would fall short. Is it Christ? The description fits him more than any one else. But even there are obstacles. We simply do not know, and cannot know, and need not know. Let us content ourselves with the revelation of Christ's great and exalted priesthood, presented under the figure of Melchizedek.

Christ's Priesthood.

"Now consider how great this one was." (The word "man" used in the American Revised Version is not in the Greek, only as implied in the masculine form of the demonstrative pronoun.) Greater than Abraham, for Abraham received a blessing from him; greater than Levi and the Levites (therefore greater than Aaronic priests), because they, although exalted to stand nearer to God than all the other tribes of Israel, and though they received the tithes, the religious offerings of God's people, themselves paid tithes to Melchizedek. How? In the person of Abraham, from whom they sprang. ([Verses 4-10.](#))

As Melchizedek, therefore, was higher than Aaron, so was his order of priesthood--the [87] order of Christ's priesthood--greater than that of Aaron.

The Change of Law.

Now the old law depended for its worship, sacrifices, service of God, and ministrations in general, upon the Levitical priesthood. It also provided for the selection, succession, ordination, consecration, of these Levitical priests, and only Levitical priests. It is evident, therefore, that another order of priesthood must be based upon another law, and must bring with it another law and another order of things--in fact, another covenant--a covenant by so much better as the new priesthood is greater than the old. See the comparisons of the two priesthoods in [verses 11, 15, 16, 20, 21, 23, 24](#). So this new priest is one, immortal, unchangeable, higher than the heavens--a Son perfected for evermore. ([Heb. 5:5, 6, 9, 10.](#))

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All priests were given to meditate between man and God and bring man to God. Jesus, our High Priest, is on the throne, in the sanctuary of the highest heaven, for this very purpose. He is not a vain figure--one who, having completed a "system," or "scheme," or "plan" of redemption, sits back and lets men follow it as best they can--but a living Helper, Savior, Mediator, Intercessor, from whom flows continual sustenance to each human soul that draws near [88] unto God through him; for he is the Head, we are the members of his body; he is the Vine, we are the branches. Apart from him we can do nothing.



Our Father in heaven, we thank thee for the better hope by which we may draw near unto thee, and the perfect High Priest who brings us unto God and whose continual intercession sustains and cleanses us and keeps us clean. We look unto thee, O Father; we come unto thee through thy holy and merciful Son, our Lord and our Mediator. Grant us deliverance from all our adversaries. Make us strong to conquer. Keep us by thy power according to thy exceeding great and precious promises, that nothing may separate us from thy love. And when by Jesus' sacrifice and intercession we shall have received the final redemption, we will glorify and praise thy love and wisdom evermore, through Jesus our Lord and Savior. Amen.



Questions and Suggestions for the Next Lesson.

The next lesson is [chapter 8](#). What is the main point of the teaching of [chapter 7](#)? What does he say in [chapter 8](#) concerning the service [89] of the old law and its tabernacle? Why was a second covenant needed? Did God ever make a faulty or imperfect covenant? Memorize [verses 10-12](#). What excellencies of the new covenant are here enumerated? What covenant is that mentioned in [verse 9](#)? Who broke it? Did the old order cease suddenly or gradually? ([Verse 13](#).) [90]

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LESSON XII.--HEB. 8.

1 Now in the things which we are saying the chief point *is this*: We have such a high priest, who sat down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, 2 a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man. 3 For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is necessary that this *high priest* also have somewhat to offer. 4 Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, seeing there are those who offer the gifts according to the law; 5 who serve *that which is* a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, even as Moses is warned *of God* when he is about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern that was showed thee in the mount. 6 But now hath he obtained a ministry the more excellent, by so much as he is also the mediator of a better covenant, which hath been enacted upon better promises. 7 For if that first *covenant* had been faultless, then would no place have been sought for a second. 8 For finding fault with them, he saith,

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord,

That I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah;

9 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers

In the day that I took them by the hand to lead them forth out of the land of Egypt;

For they continued not in my covenant,

And I regarded them not, saith the Lord.

10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel

After those days, saith the Lord; [91]

I will put my laws into their mind,

And on their heart also will I write them:

And I will be to them a God, And they shall be to me a people:

11 And they shall not teach every man his fellow-citizen,

And every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord:

For all shall know me,

From the least to the greatest of them.

12 For I will be merciful to their iniquities,

And their sins will I remember no more.

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

Our High Priest and His Ministry.

We have repeatedly observed that the chief intent of the letter to the Hebrews is to turn the eyes of the persons addressed to Jesus. "Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession." ([Heb. 3:1.](#)) "Looking unto Jesus." ([Heb. 12:2.](#)) "Consider him." ([Heb. 12:3.](#)) Jesus is held up to them from the first to the last. It was by this means that these weak, fainting, wavering ones should be made strong and faithful and hopeful. It is notable, too, that Jesus is not held up so much in the capacity of a teacher or an example here. That is done elsewhere with more emphasis. But what these Hebrews, and all of us who are in like condition, now especially need is to look on Jesus in his glory, his power, his heavenly [92] ministry--Jesus the High Priest, Jesus the King. And why? It is the assurance of our hope. As Jesus is mighty, so shall we be more than conquerors through him. As he is faithful and efficient as our High Priest, so may we trust in the power of his intercession, the success of his work in bringing us to God, the help and sustenance that comes through him every moment.

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This is the faith that enables us to stand. Let us look unto Jesus. We have considered ourselves long enough. We have seen our inability and the power of our adversaries; have dwelt upon it; have sought in ourselves for the strength to overcome; and have tried to lift ourselves up, and have met only failure and gained only discouragement. Now look to your Priest all-merciful, your King all-powerful.

Who in the strength of Jesus trusts
Is more than conqueror.

Here and there in the Old Testament is a prophecy of the Priest that shall be King, the King that shall be Priest--predictions that were not fulfilled under the old order of things. We see here the great Priest's sanctuary, which is also his throne ([Jer. 17:12; compare Heb. 8:1, 2](#)). We read there of Israel's deliverance through a Prince, a Ruler that should proceed from the midst of them, and whom God would [93] cause to draw near and approach to him--which latter was the priest's special function and prerogative. ([Jer. 30:21](#).) Read it all in plain clear words in [Zech. 6:12, 13](#)--how the man whose name is the Branch shall sit and rule upon his throne and shall be a priest upon his throne; yea, and a mediator between God and the people, for "the counsel of peace shall be between them both."

The True Tabernacle.

That earthly tabernacle in which Aaron and his successors ministered was not the true "tent of meeting" nor the real sanctuary of God. It was but a copy and a shadow of the real tabernacle, the heavenly thing which was shown to Moses, and after which the earthly tabernacle was copied and patterned. So was all the old covenant service only shadow and type of heavenly reality. But Jesus ministers, not on earth, but in heaven, in the holy of holies, where God himself is. As God met with the people (through their representative, the high priest), typically, in the earthly tabernacle to bless them ([Ex. 20:24](#)), so God meets with his people now, in real fact, through their Representative and Mediator, Jesus Christ the High Priest, and they receive continually the blessing of this unceasing ministry. It is a [94] better sanctuary, a better ministry, a greater Priest, a greater blessing, and we are under a better covenant, enacted upon better promises.

The Two Covenants.

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So the first covenant was inferior and faulty. Here let us gather some contrasts. The old covenant is called "the letter" which "killeth;" the new, "the spirit" which "giveth life." The old is "the ministration of death, written and engraven on stones;" the new, "the ministration of the spirit." The old, again, "the ministration of condemnation;" the new, "the ministration of righteousness." ([2 Cor. 3.](#)) What great fundamental difference lies between the two? The old came from God; so did the new. The old was God's word, just as the new. The old required obedience; no less does the new. The old had its punishment for disobedience; so has the new. The old had its promises for the obedient; the new likewise. The old, as well as the new, required a faith in God. And yet they are as widely separated as the east is from the west. A correct understanding of this will be of incalculable benefit to most of us, for it is a general mistake among us to overlook the distinction and to attempt to live the new covenant on the plane and principle of the old. [95]

The fault of the old covenant lay, in the first place, with men. "The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and righteous, and good ([Rom. 7:12](#)); but it was weak--not in itself, but through the flesh ([Rom. 8:4](#)). "The law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin." ([Rom. 7:14](#).) There is the weak place, and that is the ground God announces for removing that old covenant: "For they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord." They simply proved their inability to keep that law.

But did not God know that at the time he gave the law? God had an ulterior purpose. The law became the revealer of man's sinfulness and weakness, thus preparing him for the free gift (through faith in Jesus Christ) of that righteousness which was unattainable to them through their own works and strength. It was the schoolmaster to bring men to Christ. ([Gal. 3:19, 22-24](#).)

Now it is the chief point of the new covenant to obviate the fault of the old, so that there should nevermore be any need to say of men that, on account of their weakness, "they continued not in my covenant." The poorest and weakest of men shall now stand: "Yea, he shall ne holden up; for God is able to make him stand." But do you say that such is not the [96] case? Many have failed, no doubt; but the reason of that is that men fail to learn and walk in the principle of the new covenant. "The law," writes Paul, "is not of faith; but, He that doeth them shall live in them." ([Gal. 3:12](#).) That is the principle of the old law, and, as the apostle points out, it is not of faith. But how often is it attempted to bind the commandments of the new covenant on men on that very principle! How often have I attempted to walk in the precepts of the Lord after the Old Testament fashion! But to make it clearer, the law says, "Do this, and thou shalt live;" the gospel says, "Live, and thou shalt do this." The law, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God;" the gospel says, "We love because he first loved us." Under the old law they served as slaves; under the new they are first made sons, that they might

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serve from the heart as children. The old law says, "If you follow these precepts, there is a hope for you;" the gospel, "Every one who hath this hope set on him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." The old law would say, "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling," and stop there; the new adds, "For it is God who worketh in you to will and to do of his good pleasure." The gospel says: "Faith first, hope first, love first, then the works that flow from them; adoption first, then the [97] willing service; life first, divine life, then the manifestation of it in our conduct." Moreover, the man under the sway of the old covenant served because of, and according to, a law written on stone--an outside law; but to him who has caught the meaning of the gospel, God's will is written in the heart. Not that he needs no more instruction, but like the mother takes care of her child--not because the law statutes of our government demand it, but because she delights in it and is happy in doing her duty, and much more, toward her beloved child. So has God designed we should serve him according to a law written neither on stone nor paper, but on our hearts. "I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart."

In addition to this, we have the assurance that God "will not suffer you to be tempted beyond that ye are able, but will with every temptation make a way of escape;" that the power and might of God is available to us in our battles against evil ([Eph. 6:10](#)), and that the grace of God shall manifest itself in us the more in proportion to our weakness ([2 Cor. 12:9](#)); that we shall be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man ([Eph. 3:16](#)); and, finally, that we shall be able to do all things through Christ who strengtheneth us ([Phil. 4:13](#)). These things are given us that [98] we may not sin; and yet if any one does even then fall into sin, repentance is offered him ([Rev. 3:19, 20](#)), and cleansing from sin ([1 John 1:9](#)), and the assurance that we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. But the glory of Christ's high-priestly intercession is not, as some suppose, in the readiness with which we obtain forgiveness of our sins, but rather in the power by which he keeps us from sin, that we may be children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom we shine as lights in the world.

Three Characteristics.

It was here, of all places, that God saw fit to draw the contrast between the covenants of grace and of works, and this has already occupied much space. Now for a brief notice of the three characteristics of the new covenant here enumerated. [Verse 10](#) presents one; [verse 11](#), one; [verse 12](#), one. The last ([verse 12](#)) is the first, the basis of the other two--a complete, full, free forgiveness of sins. Such a thing was not under the old covenant, but there remembrance was made of sins every year.

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In regard to [verse 11](#), some have taught that it referred to state of affairs yet future. That it may have a more complete fulfillment at some [99] future time, no one would deny. But here it is applied to the present dispensation. And how is it true now? First, under the old covenant, having been born into it, many grew up in ignorance of their God and were in covenant relationship with him before they knew him at all. This is impossible under the new covenant, where the first steps leading into it are "hear," "learn," "believe," "obey." Second, it was not every man that had direct dealings with God then, but the priests only, who drew near on behalf of the people. So, of necessity, the acquaintance of the people with God was at second hand. Now they are all priests, and all draw near through Jesus Christ. ([Hebrews 7:25](#).) [Verse 10](#) is already illustrated above.

The old covenant virtually closed at the death of Jesus ([Col. 2:14](#)); but the old worship and service was continued, even by Jewish Christians, neither God nor inspired men opposing ([Acts 21:20-26](#)). But, as our lesson shows, it was dying away, at least in respect to the Jewish Christians; while the Jews' temple service came to a sudden end at the destruction of Jerusalem.



We could have no greater hope or confidence, Heavenly Father, than in the blessed revelation [100] that Jesus, in the perfect sanctuary, ministers for us as our perfect High Priest to bring us unto God. As believers in him, and followers of him, and bearers of his name, we claim thy blessing and thy help. Our eyes are unto thee, O God. In our weakness we look unto thee for uplifting and strength and hope. May thy Son be ever before our eyes, that we may consider him, our King, our Priest. Write thy law in our hearts, and work in us both to will and to do of thy good pleasure, and make us perfect in him according to the glorious promise of the new covenant; and then, having no ground in ourselves to boast, we will glory in thee and give praises to thy name through all eternity, in Jesus' name. Amen.



Questions and Suggestions for the Next Lesson.

The next lesson is [Hebrews 9:1-14](#). This is the chapter of the blood of Christ. Recall all you know about the blood of Christ. Has it been mentioned hitherto in this Epistle? Subject of [verses 1-10](#)? Note [verse 8](#)--what did the Holy Spirit have to do with the earthly tabernacle? Read ahead and see on what [verses 11-22](#) treat. [101]

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LESSON XIII.--HEB. 9:1-14.

1 Now even a first *covenant* had ordinances of divine service, and its sanctuary, *a sanctuary* of this world. 2 For there was a tabernacle prepared, the first, wherein *were* the candlestick, and the table, and the showbread; which is called the Holy place. 3 And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holy of holies; 4 having a golden altar of incense, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein *was* a golden pot holding the manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; 5 and above it cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy-seat; of which things we cannot now speak severally. 6 Now these things having been thus prepared, the priests go in continually into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the services; 7 but into the second the high priest alone, once in the year, not without blood, which he offereth for himself, and for the errors of the people: 8 the Holy Spirit this signifying, that the way into the holy place hath not yet been made manifest, while the first tabernacle is yet standing; 9 which *is* a figure for the time present; according to which are offered both gifts and sacrifices that cannot, as touching the conscience, make the worshipper perfect, 10 *being* only (with meats and drinks and divers washings) carnal ordinances, imposed until a time of reformation.

11 But Christ having come a high priest of the good things to come, through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation, 12 nor yet through the blood of goats and calves, but through his own blood, entered in once for all into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption. 13 For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling [102] them that have been defiled, sanctify unto the cleanness of the flesh: 14 how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish unto God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

The tabernacle was not only a place of worship, but it was a sermon, a revelation, and a prophecy. Like every other divinely inspired sermon, it came through the Holy Spirit, for the Spirit is the revealer of God's mysteries and plans. ([1 Cor. 2:11.](#)) That it was an object sermon instead of a verbal sermon does not affect the matter at all. Only the "types," as those object sermons are called, were hard to read, and required the additional light of the antitype, the fulfillment, and further revelation to make them clear. So in the New Testament the Holy Spirit sheds more light on the tent sermon he had preached long before through Moses, and tells us what he meant by it and its furnishings and its service. [Verses 1-10](#) give a brief account of the mysterious tent; see [Ex. 35 to 40](#) for a more detailed description. It is not the writer's object here to show step for step the significance of every feature of the type; he is chiefly after one point--viz., that the veil separated between the first portion of the tent, the holy place, where the priest ministered, and the second portion, the most holy, [103] where God's presence was; and that, while that tabernacle pitched by man was yet standing, there was no way of entrance into God's presence manifested. Christ came to tear that veil asunder, and, with a better sacrifice and service, not only to enter in himself once for all into God's presence, but also to make his followers perfect and fit to enter and to bring them into the presence of God.

How the Type Was Fulfilled.

With [verse 11](#) the spiritual significance of tabernacle and service begins. Here we have several contrasts and notable expressions. "The good things to come," are the

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realities of the new covenant, in contrast to the shadows and prophecies of the old. ([Heb. 8:5](#).) He calls them "good things to come," not so much because they were yet future, but by adaptation, from a Jewish point of view. The things that are now and will yet be ministered by Jesus are the realization of "the good things to come," of which the fathers had spoken and to which they had looked forward. The "greater and more perfect tabernacle" is contradistinguished from that which was "built with hands." Compare [Heb. 9:24](#) and [Heb. 8:5](#). [104]

Spiritual Meaning of the Tabernacle.

The commonly received interpretation of the tabernacle structure is that the first portion, where the priests ministered, represents the church; and the most holy place behind the veil, where only the high priest could go once a year with the blood of atonement, represents heaven, the place of God's throne, and "Jesus our High Priest entered." Now, without disputing the truth and fitness of this interpretation (for types and prophecies often embody in themselves various meanings and applications and have several fulfillments), we here meet with a different conception. Jesus, the High Priest, like his type, Aaron, the high priest, passes through the holy place, and, with blood, into the most holy; for the tabernacle (whether the earthly or its counterpart, the spiritual) had only one entrance: to go into the most holy, one must pass through the holy place. Now, what was the holy place "through" which Christ passed? Not a thing made with hands, as [verse 11](#) shows; nor yet "the church," for there was no church established then. It becomes clear that, from that point of view, it must have been the old covenant, in which men served and worshipped God at a distance, a veil intervening; for Jesus lived under the old covenant and [105]shared in its law and worship. Then the most holy place would naturally refer to the new covenant, in which men have a direct access to God's throne, through Jesus Christ, in whose person we have already entered and approached God's presence. Since Jesus removed the veil, the two tabernacles are thrown into one, and the worshipers of God have access through him into the holiest of all; for now the old tabernacle stands no longer ([verse 8](#)); a way into the holiest has been made manifest; and we, here and now, consecrated by Christ's blood, have boldness to enter in ([Heb. 10:19](#)), and are come "to God the Judge of all, . . . and to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant" ([Heb. 12:22-24](#)).

That in another sense, and by another application of the type, we are yet absent from God ([2 Cor. 5:6-8](#)), and a veil of flesh is between him and us, need not affect this interpretation. They are both true, and only contemplated different ideas of access to God. The term "holy place" in [verses 8, 12, 24, and 10:19](#) evidently refers to the Most Holy.

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The Power of Christ's Blood.

This is the chapter of the blood, which, heretofore not named, is mentioned here twelve times. Through the whole Bible, from Abel's [106] sacrifice to the song of victory in the Apocalypse, rings that awful word--"blood!" What terrible thing is it that came between God and man, that man could not draw near to his Maker, even typically, without blood? What a conception of the justice and incorruptible righteousness of God! He loved men, he yearned for them, he called for them, he sent blessings to them, he was a Father to them, in much mercy and kindness he drew them; yet without blood they cannot come near. And what is blood? The forfeit of life, the price of sin. "For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh atonement by reason of the life." ([Lev. 17:11](#).) Sin cannot come near to God. The penalty of sin is death, and by death alone can it be paid; and blood, the lifeblood, is evidence of death. Such is the teaching concerning the blood. Without shedding of blood, there is no remission. That the blood of goats and calves could not atone for sin is plain. If man has sinned, man's blood alone can atone. Those were shadows-- pictures prophesying a real sacrifice and an efficient blood of atonement, which would give real access to God's presence. The mere justice of God would have ordered that each man must pay for his own sin with his own [107] blood; but in God's wisdom and mercy there came One who was spotless, who needed not to shed his blood for transgressions of his own, but who willingly poured it out for an atonement of the sins of men. And as Adam in his person affected the many by his disobedience unto sin and death, so, in God's wise counsel, the obedience and sacrifice of Christ was ordained for the atonement and salvation of many; for all men were in Adam when he sinned, and so became partakers of the results of his sins. In like manner shall those who are "in Christ" be sharers in the results of his obedience and death.

The wonderful protecting power of Christ's blood was foreshown in the offering of the passover lamb, whose blood on the doorposts and lintels of a house preserved that house from the angel of death whose scourge fell upon all Egypt. ([Ex. 12](#).) "Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world." His suffering for us was foretold ([Isa. 53](#)), and the shedding of his blood, in the words: "He poured out his soul unto death."

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Cleansed to Serve God.

The cleansing received through the blood of animals was simply outward and ceremonial--appropriate, however, for a typical service. [108] But the blood of Him who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish unto God reaches into the very heart and cleanses the conscience, so that henceforth, forsaking the service of dead typical works, the man may be fitted to render true, living service to the living God. There are no outward ordinances in the new covenant. Even baptism, so often misrepresented and despised as "a mere outward thing," is not outward; but, like the blood of Christ, it has nothing to do with the external, ceremonial cleansing of the flesh, but affects the conscience. ([1 Pet. 3:21](#).)

But here we must stop. This chapter will furnish matter for another study. Begin, then, at [verse 15](#) and study to the end of the chapter. Consider the line that is drawn in [verses 16, 17](#); Consider the use of the blood in [verses 18-22](#), and how that applies to the present dispensation; the work of Christ in heaven and his second coming, in [verses 23-28](#).



Our Father and our God! With more reverence and better understanding we draw nigh unto thee. Now we know that we have access into thy presence in the Spirit, having been cleansed by the blood of Jesus. What a [109] wonderful revelation of thy righteousness is given us through this blood! What a discovery of thy unsearchable wisdom and thy unfathomable love! More than ever we realize our unworthiness. We cannot stand alone. We fear and tremble. Without the blood of Jesus our sins would separate us from thee, the Fountain of all good and all joy and happiness, forever and ever. We pray thee, cleanse us by that blood from all our sin, draw us near unto thee in thy sanctuary, and keep us clean always through the power of Jesus' blood. In his name we pray it. Amen. [110]

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LESSON XIV.--HEB. 9:15-28.

15 And for this cause he is the mediator of a new covenant, that a death having taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, they that have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. 16 For where a testament is, there must of necessity be the death of him that made it. 17 For a testament is of force where there hath been death: for it doth never avail while he that made it liveth. 18 Wherefore even the first *covenant* hath not been dedicated without blood. 19 For when every commandment had been spoken by Moses unto all the people according to the law, he took the blood of the calves and the goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, 20 saying, This is the blood of the covenant which God commanded to you-ward. 21 Moreover the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry he sprinkled in like manner with the blood. 22 And according to the law, I may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and apart from shedding of blood there is no remission.

23 It was necessary therefore that the copies of the things in the heavens should be cleansed with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. 24 For Christ entered not into a holy place made with hands, like in pattern to the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear before the face of God for us: 25 nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place year by year with blood not his own; 26 else must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once at the end of the ages hath he been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of [111] himself. 27 And inasmuch as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this *cometh* judgment; 28 so Christ also, having been once offered to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for him, unto salvation.

A Landmark.

It is very important that the word of God be rightly divided. In [Heb. 1:1, 2](#) we had the first line of division which God drew: "God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets, . . . hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son." This division is quite general--does not point out the exact beginning of Christ's covenant nor of his distinctive message. [Heb. 2:3, 4](#) is more particular. There we find that our great salvation was at the first spoken through the Lord, and "was confirmed unto us by them that heard"--that is, by the apostles. In [Heb. 5:8-10](#) it is seen that Jesus became to us "the author of eternal salvation" when he had been made "perfect through suffering," and "named of God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek." The new covenant is mentioned in [Heb. 8:13](#). But the lesson before us gives us a clear landmark, and enables us to say with all certainty that the "testament" (or "covenant"--the Greek word has both these meanings) was not in force until [112] after Christ's death. The cross of Christ stands between the two, being the guarantee of the new covenant and the virtual end of the old. ([Heb. 10:9](#); [Col. 2:14](#).) So, for instance, the point that is often made that the thief on the cross was saved without baptism, and that, therefore baptism is a nonessential, has no weight, because that occurrence belongs to another dispensation, another order of things, having transpired before the death of Jesus. But his covenant, his will and testament, went into force after his death. Now he is the Author of eternal salvation to all that obey him; and if in his new covenant baptism is at all required, obedience to it is in order to salvation.

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Old Accounts Settled.

But the old covenant could not be set aside without the satisfaction of its claims. For more than a thousand years an ever-increasing account of sin had been rolled forward from year to year, from atonement day to atonement day. The blood of those animal sacrifices could not really atone for sin. Sin was remitted temporarily, a year at a time. ([Heb. 10:3, 4.](#)) None of it had been truly blotted out. All of the forgiveness accorded to men then depended for its efficacy upon the great atonement that was to come after--the sacrifice of Jesus, the Lamb [113] "which taketh away the sin of the world." And none of the promises based (as all God's highest promises are) upon previous forgiveness and cleansing were actually conferred upon the people of God then; for "these all, having had witness borne to them through their faith, received not the promise, God having provided some better thing concerning us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect." ([Heb. 11:39, 40.](#)) But Christ came and settled all the past accounts, making atonement for all the transgressions which were under the first covenant by his death--that is, with his blood. Now was the way clear for a new covenant; now does he become the Mediator of a new covenant; now shall they who are called, both the faithful ones of this and of former dispensations, receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. ([Heb. 9:15.](#))

The Cleansing of the Tabernacle.

Once more does he draw the parallel of type and antitype, this time to show yet more clearly the necessity of that death upon the cross. It required blood of animals, representative of man's blood, for the dedication of the first covenant. The terms of that covenant were announced; then the book, the people, the tabernacle, the vessels--all were sprinkled with [114] blood. This, he tells us, was necessary for cleansing--a typical tabernacle, a typical cleansing, and typical blood foreshadowing the true tabernacle, the true cleansing, the efficacious blood. In almost the identical words in which Moses spoke of that blood ([Heb. 9:20](#)) did Jesus speak of his own. ([Matt. 26:28; compare 1 Cor. 11:25.](#)) As the typical tabernacle--its vessels, its worshipers--had to be cleansed, so must also the antitype (the "heavenly things") be--only, the greater covenant, with its realities, required the great and real atonement blood. So, then, we who are of God's church are cleansed with the blood of Christ. ([Rev. 7:14.](#)) Every item connected with the new covenant, its worship and service, is cleansed, sealed, and sanctified with that blood. Apart from that blood there is no new covenant, no remission, no cleansing, no acceptance.

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How awful and stern are the demands of God's justice appears in the light of this. How wonderful his wisdom and the love which sent the Son to become our sin offering and our High Priest! How the man errs who presumes to think that he can be saved on his morality without the blood of Jesus and Jesus' high-priestly ministrations; who thus would stamp the whole work of the Savior as superfluous and foolish [115] and give Christ's mission the lie! ([1 John 1:10.](#))

We see further that the shadow of the defilement of our sins had in some way reached into heaven itself, and that there it had to be blotted out before the face of the Almighty. So, then, there was not, could not have been, a new covenant until Jesus had died, risen, ascended, made purification of sins, and sat down at the right hand of God. This is the great landmark. It was after that he was made Lord over all, and constituted Head of the church ([Eph. 1:20-23](#)), and sent forth the Holy Spirit ([Acts 2:33](#)), and that the terms of the new covenant were for the first time proclaimed to the world "in the name of [by the authority of] Jesus Christ." ([Acts 2:38.](#))

Finally, note how Jesus came to the earth the first time ([Heb. 9:26](#)); how he returned to God ([verse 24](#)); and that he will "appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for him, unto salvation" ([verse 28](#)). We hear so little of Christ's second coming, and yet the Bible says so much concerning it. It is said to be mentioned or alluded to three hundred and eighteen times in the New Testament alone. The Spirit teaches us to wait for him and look for him, and live in this continual expectation. ([Luke 12:35, 36, 40; 21:34-36.](#)) To them that [116] wait for him he brings the final salvation. ([Heb. 9:28; 1 Pet. 1:5, 9, 13.](#)) The church at Corinth waited for him ([1 Cor. 1:7](#)); the church at Thessalonica ([1 Thess. 1:9, 10](#)); the Philippians, Paul included ([Phil. 3:20](#)); all Christians, wherever the message of the grace of God went ([Tit. 2:11-14](#)). At his return we receive our crown and our full reward. When will he come? No man knows. Therefore be ready always. "He who testifieth these things saith, "Yea: I come quickly. Amen: come, Lord Jesus. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with the saints. Amen." These are the last words of the New Testament.



Thou hast shown us wonderful things in thy word, O God. Thy word is more precious than gold--yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey. We rejoice greatly before you, for that you have washed us in the blood of Jesus from all our sins, and hast cleansed our conscience that we might serve thee, and, serving thee, become a blessing to our fellow-men. Thou hast given us the promise of the eternal inheritance. We reverently thank thee for thy grace and condescension to usward; and we love because you have so greatly loved us. Cleanse us, Father, and keep us clean. Create within [117] us a clean heart and a right spirit. Help us to live faithfully under

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the covenant of thy grace and love, revealed in Christ Jesus; and may we be found ready and waiting when he comes again to gather his own to the place he has prepared, the Father's house of many mansions. Amen.



Questions and Suggestions for the Next Lessons.

[Heb. 10:1-18](#) is the next lesson. This finishes the argumentative portion of the Epistle. [Verses 1-4](#) are plain in the light of the above lesson; [verses 5-10](#) treat on "the change of will;" and [verses 11-18](#) show the power of Christ's sacrifice. It is a lesson to be studied reverently and prayerfully. Does repetition imply imperfection? How does the Holy Spirit bear witness to us in this case? ([Verses 15-17.](#)) [118]

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LESSON XV.--HEB. 10:1-18.

1 For the law having a shadow of the good *things* to come, not the very image of the things, can never with the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer continually, make perfect them that draw nigh. 2 Else would they not have ceased to be offered? because the worshippers, having been once cleansed, would have had no more consciousness of sins. 3 But in those *sacrifices* there is a remembrance made of sins year by year. 4 For it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins. 5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith,

Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not,
But a body didst thou prepare for me;

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

7 Then said I, Lo, I am come

(In the roll of the book it is written of me)

To do thy will, O God.

8 Saying above, Sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein (the which are offered according to the law), 9 then hath he said, Lo, I am come to do thy will. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. 10 By which will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. 11 And every priest indeed standeth day by day ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, the which can never take away sins: 12 but he, when he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; 13 henceforth expecting till his enemies be made the footstool of his feet. 14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. 15 And the Holy Spirit also beareth witness to us; for after he hath said, [119]

16 This is the covenant that I will make with them

After those days, saith the Lord:

I will put my laws on their heart,

And upon their mind also will I write them;

then saith he,

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

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

What does not suffice to-day will not satisfy the morrow. The sacrifice that does not remove sin the first time will not remove it the second time, nor the third, nor the fourth. It affords only a temporary passing over of sins; it must be repeated again and again. This was the imperfection of the law sacrifices; for "in those sacrifices there is a remembrance made of sins year by year. For it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins." Why not? Because that was not the real sacrifice, but a shadow of the good to come. The sacrifices being imperfect, those who were cleansed by them were not perfectly cleansed, and, therefore, could not gain access to God.

The Real and Efficacious Sacrifice.

The power and perfection of the sacrifice which Jesus brought stands out clearly by contrast. Here is no repetition. (See [Heb. 9:24-26](#).) "Once at the end of the ages hath he been [120] manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Unlike the priests of the law, he did not "*stand*" day by day, ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices the which can never take away sins; but he, when he had offered

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one sacrifice for sins forever, "*sat down.*" ([Heb. 1:3.](#)) That task was completed. The sacrifice being perfect, it answered its purpose perfectly, and rendered those who come under the efficacy of it perfect, as far as atonement and cleansing from sins are concerned. "Once for all"--that includes past and present; "forever" takes in all the future. "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin." "For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." Therefore we have access to God, before whose consuming holiness no sin-defiled being can stand.

The Holy Spirit also bears witness to us. The Spirit bears his witness in speech, words to be understood and believed. ([John 16:13](#); [Acts 4:25](#); [Heb. 3:7.](#)) What is the testimony of the Spirit on this point? He declares that in that new covenant God shall remember their sins and their iniquities no more. So there is no more need for a further sin offering. [121]

The Will of God.

Although God ordered the sacrifices of the old dispensation, and the observance of them was according to his will as then given, and formed the only means of even that distant approach to God that was granted to the worshipers of the old covenant, yet they never were any part of God's ultimate will and purpose. Just like the scaffolding is not the plan of the architect, so those gifts and sacrifices were only "imposed until a time of reformation." They were the stitching that loosely connected God with his people until the true work perfectly united them. The inspired men of old were often made to see the inefficiency of those sacrifices, even while they were still in force. (See, for instance, [Ps. 51:16.](#)) The words quoted in our lesson are from [Ps. 40:6-8](#), and are prophetic of Jesus Christ. It was granted to him to take away the first "will" of God, that he might establish the second. The first will commanded the typical sacrifices. The second will, the true sacrifice, was brought by our Lord. The time had come. God willed no more of whole burnt offerings. Now, with what sacrifice shall Christ fulfill the will of God? "A body didst thou prepare for me." And what shall be done with that body? For what purpose was it given? [122] "To do thy will, O God." This sacrifice had a moral value. It was not the unwilling death of an unintelligent creature, but the willing obedience unto death of a free moral agent. Christ's death was only a part of that sacrifice. His blood stands simply for the end and perfection of a lifelong sacrifice. Christ's whole life was one continued act of obedience. ([Rom. 5:18, 19.](#)) He came by God's will ([John 8:42](#)); came to do God's will ([John 6:38](#)). He died for God's will. ([John 10:18.](#)) The freedom from physical blemishes required of the animal sacrifice found its antitype in the spiritual perfection of the Son of God, which, tested and proved and established in the temptations of his lifetime, made his death acceptable and truly efficacious as a sin offering. And this death marked the

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establishment of the true "will" of God. "And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."

What it Means to Us.

Those who are in Christ must share in the mind of Christ. (See [Phil. 2:5-8](#).) In the manner above described Jesus dedicated the new and living way to God. To take that way (the only way), we must follow him. He leads us on the road of obedience and sacrifice unto God. [123] It must be with us, as with him, the motto of our lives that we have come to do God's will, not our own. As for him, so for us God has prepared a body, whose proper use is in the doing of God's will even unto death, not the gratification of its own lusts and desires. For "the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body: and God both raised the Lord, and will raise up us through his power. Know ye not that your bodies are members of Christ? . . . Or know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God? and ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body." ([1 Cor. 6:13-20](#).) If I am in Christ, I can say with Christ, "A body hast thou prepared for me." Far from this body being simply a clog and hindrance to me, it becomes the very instrument of God for doing God's work in the earth. ([Rom. 6:13, 19](#).) My feet for hastening unto his work and worship, my hands to minister in his name, my eyes to look for him, my ears to hear for him, my head to think, my mouth to speak, my voice to sing--all my members and all my faculties for God: this is consecration, happiness, and salvation. "Lo, I am come; in the roll of the book it is written of me: I [124] delight to do your will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart."



We pray thee, Holy Father, sanctify our bodies and spirits unto thy service, through the blood of Jesus, having washed us from all sin through the atonement of his perfect sacrifice. May we give day by day our body a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is our spiritual service. Inasmuch as we have been bought from the power of Satan, and sin, and darkness, and death, with a great price, set thou thy seal upon us; for we belong not to ourselves, but to thee. Work thou in us both to will and to work of thy good pleasure. Sanctify us wholly, and may our spirit and soul be preserved entire, without blame, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to thy faithful word. In Jesus' name. Amen.



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Questions and Suggestions for the Next Lesson.

We now enter upon the second half of this Epistle, which is practical and hortatory, as the first half was chiefly doctrinal. Lesson 16 is [Heb. 10:19-39](#). Note three divisions--[verses 19-25](#); [26-31](#); [32-39](#). Find what each of these [125] three paragraphs specially treats on. Look at each verse in each paragraph, and note every statement. How shall we take advantage of our new privileges? What is that willful sin mentioned in the second paragraph? What evidence of faith in the Hebrews? ([Verses 32-34](#).) What did they need now? Find a similar expression in [Heb. 6](#). What is patience? [126]

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LESSON XVI.--HEB. 10:19-39.

19 Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holy place by the blood of Jesus, 20 by the way which he dedicated for us, a new and living way, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; 21 and *having* a great priest over the house of God; 22 let us draw near with a true heart in fulness of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience: and having our body washed with pure water, 23 let us hold fast the confession of our hope that it waver not; for he is faithful that promised: 24 and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works; 25 not forsaking our own assembling together, as the custom of some is, but exhorting *one another*; and so much the more, as ye see the day drawing nigh.

26 For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and a fierceness of fire which shall devour the adversaries. 28 A man that hath set at nought Moses' law dieth without compassion on *the word of two or three witnesses*: 29 of how much sorer punishment, think ye, shall he be judged worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? 30 For we know him that said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. 31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

32 But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were enlightened, ye endured a great conflict of sufferings; 33 partly, being made a gazing-stock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, becoming partakers [127]with them that were so used. 34 For ye both had compassion on them that were in bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of you possessions, knowing that ye have for yourselves a better possession and an abiding one. 35 Cast not away therefore your boldness, which hath great recompense of reward. 36 For ye have need of patience, that, having done the will of God, ye may receive the promise.

37 For yet a very little while,

He that cometh shall come, and shall not tarry.

38 But my righteous one shall live by faith:

And if he shrink back, my soul hath no pleasure in him.

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

We are now beginning on the second half of this Epistle, which consists chiefly of practical application of the truths set forth in the first part. It is one thing to know a thing, and quite another to appropriate that knowledge to our use. Many men understood the theory of electricity, but Thomas Edison knew how to turn the knowledge to practical account. As long as a truth is simply an abstract truth to us, it is dead. It may be the purest gold, but it sleeps, as it were, hidden in the earth, unavailable. We live away beneath our privileges. We know much of which we never make gain; many truths and facts which we believe, but never use--yea, of whose application we have never dreamed. Dead capital does not help us. It is the highest and most profitable part of Bible study to seek at once for the means and ways of [128] turning every truth we have learned to the best possible account. Let us, then not be content with the knowledge of the deep and wonderful ways of God to usward, but follow on to find to what spiritual advantage they may be applied.

I. How to Take Advantages of Our Privileges. ([Verses 19-25.](#))

"Let us draw near." How dare we? It was a very dangerous thing for the high priest to draw near unto God, even in that typical tabernacle. ([Lev. 16:2.](#)) Our God is a consuming fire, awful and terrible. That was the lesson of the old covenant. In the new, although the old basis of profound reverence and fear of the Almighty is

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retained, God manifests his tender love in being a Father to his people, making his very terror their refuge, permitting them to draw unto close, intimate nearness and fellowship with him. But "not without blood." We have, indeed, boldness to enter into the most holy, but only "by the blood of Jesus" and through his sacrifice. Yet, having such boldness through the blood; having the open road, the new and living way, dedicated by Jesus; having a great Priest over the house of God who previously made atonement for us, sustains us, keeps us clean every moment--let us be sure to make use of our privilege: "let us draw nigh." [129]

Four qualifications: A true heart, fullness of faith, hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, body washed with pure water--the first having reference to the sincerity and purity of motive; the second, to that faith (not feeling) that gives us access ([Rom. 5:2](#)); the third, the sprinkling of the blood of Christ which takes away our sins, thus cleansing our conscience ([Heb. 9:14](#); [1 Pet. 1:2](#)); and the fourth, after the similitude of the priests' consecration ([Ex. 29:4](#); [Lev. 16:4](#)), can have reference only to baptism.

Then follow four exhortations. ([Verses 23-25.](#)) On what grounds shall we hold fast the confession of our hope? "He is faithful that promised." (Compare [Heb. 6:17-20.](#)) The faithfulness of God is often pointed out as ground of assurance, especially in matters where doubts and fears are liable to oppress us. (See, for instance, [1 Cor. 1:7-9](#); [1 Thess. 5:23, 24](#); [2 Thess. 3:3.](#)) "Consider one another"--the kind consideration of our brethren's peculiar disposition, strong and weak points, that we may not provoke them to anger and bitterness, but to love and good works. Love provokes love; the humble example of good works will induce others to follow it. Next, the assembling of the saints. The apostolic worship was conducted "stedfastly" ([Acts 2:42](#))--that is, regularly. We have the example of it [130] on the first day of the week ([Acts 20:7](#)), the account there implying that it was the regular custom for the church to meet on the first day of the week to break bread. The neglect of that will harden our hearts, destroy our interest in God's word and work. Lastly, "exhort one another"--a repetition of [Heb. 3:13](#), but this time in connection with the assembling. What "day" is spoken of in this passage? Whether the day of assembly or the day of judgment, matters not. They have so much connection that to exhort in regard to the one always points to the other.

II. The Willful Sin. ([Verses 26-31.](#))

There are many Christians who needlessly worry themselves with the thought of having committed the sin here spoken of. But those who have committed it are the very ones that do not worry about it, for they are hardened and impenitent. It is "impossible to renew them again unto repentance." That sin is not "backsliding," but apostasy. Backsliding is often fatal, and sometimes terminates in apostasy. But why should earnest and faithful Christians ever fear having committed this great sin, when such a clear description is given of it? Note what is said concerning it. Drawing his

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illustration from the case of a man's "setting at naught" the law of Moses--the [131] willful, proud thrusting aside of God's commands through Moses--and the extreme penalty inflicted upon it (a penalty of this world), he shows that severer punishment than simply death without mercy awaits him who has in like manner rejected Christ's word. The greater the messenger and the message, the more serious the sin of rejection. ([Heb. 12:25.](#)) The higher the advantages and privileges offered, the greater the responsibility, the deeper the condemnation in case of disobedience. Now note the description: (1) Treading under foot the Son of God. (2) Counting the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing. (3) Doing despite unto the Spirit of grace. Weigh each of these expressions and note their meaning. This is no ordinary sin nor any mere weakness, but a conscious, determined, malicious repudiation of Christ and the Holy Spirit.

But if you wish to know just where that "sin unto death," against Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, begins, so that, whatever other sins you do, you may refrain from this, no one can tell you. Any sin is liable to lead you into the unpardonable sin. Every kind of sin is very dangerous and may end in your destruction. The way to refrain from this "willful sin" is to refrain from all sin and live [132] unto God. It is risking eternity to play with the fires of sin and temptation. Some time you may step beyond the line and plunge yourself into a destruction from which there will be no recovery, inasmuch as you will never again have the mind to truly repent. "Who can discern his errors? Clear thou me from hidden faults. Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be clear from great transgression. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Jehovah, my rock, and my redeemer."

III. Faith and Patience. ([Verses 32-39.](#))

He never warns and threatens so as to discourage. We saw that in [Heb. 6:4-12](#). No sooner has he shown them the fathomless abyss that opens beneath, but he points them upward and onward, cheering them with good assurance and hope. If you take this exhortation, it is proof in itself that there is hope for you. He recalls for them their early faith, when they gladly endured sufferings and persecutions for the sake of the hope laid up for them in heaven, were not afraid or ashamed to own their Lord, and joyfully gave up the things that were seen for that which is unseen. This disposition they must hold fast, and not cast it away. This is [133] faith. Ally faith with patience, and it will lead you to glory. In this case patience is not a passive, but an active, virtue: perseverance, steadfastness; not idle waiting, but continuing steadfastly, like the husbandman "waits" for the fruit of the earth ([James 5:7, 8](#)), hoeing and plowing the while he is waiting. Then in due time, having done the will of God, you shall receive the promise.

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It is only a little while; only a little while till the Lord shall come; only a little while, at any rate, till our little day is done and "the night cometh, when no man can work."

Stand up, stand up for Jesus,
The strife will not be long;
This day the noise of battle,
The next the victor's song.

"Behold, I am come quickly," says the Lord, "and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." "Take heed that no man take thy crown." This strain shall not last forever. Let us not grow weary; in due season we shall reap if we faint not. Meanwhile, to live in faith, in hope, in patience, is God's will concerning us; for "the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him," saith the Lord. [134]



Suggestions for the Next Lesson.

The next lesson takes a general view of [chapter 11](#). Read it over several times before looking at the notes. See how the description of faith in [verse 1](#) applies throughout.



Our Father in heaven, we pray that thou might help us day by day in the practical application of the great truths we have learned. Renew us unto greater hope and patience in following the new and living way opened for us by Jesus Christ our Lord. We realize how unable we are to stand alone; without thy keeping we should soon fall away and be lost beyond return. Give us not over to our own lusts. Keep us back from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over us. And inasmuch as our time is short, help us to be faithful till the Lord shall come, that we may receive our crown of life from him who loved us and loosed us from our sins by his own blood. Amen.
[135]

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LESSON XVII.--HEB. 11.

1 Now faith is assurance of *things* hoped for, a conviction of things not seen. 2 For therein the elders had witness borne to them. 3 By faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the word of God, so that what is seen hath not been made out of things which appear. 4 By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he had witness borne to him that he was righteous, God bearing witness in respect of his gifts: and through it he being dead yet speaketh. 5 By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and he was not found, because God translated him: for he hath had witness borne to him that before his translation he had been well-pleasing unto God: 6 and without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing *unto him*; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that seek after him. 7 By faith Noah, being warned of *God* concerning things not seen as yet, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; through which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith. 8 By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed to go out unto a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. 9 By faith he became a sojourner in the land of promise, as in a *land* not his own, dwelling in tents, with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: 10 for he looked for the city which hath the foundations, whose builder and maker is God. 11 By faith even Sarah herself received power to conceive seed when she was past age, since she counted him faithful who had promised: 12 wherefore also there sprang of one, and him as good as dead, [136] *so many* as the stars of heaven in multitude, and as the sand, which is by the sea-shore, innumerable.

13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. 14 For they that say such things make it manifest that they are seeking after a country of their own. 15 And if indeed they had been mindful of that *country* from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 But now they desire a better *country*, that is, a heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed of them, to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city.

17 By faith Abraham, being tried, offered up Isaac: yea, he that had gladly received the promises was offering up his only begotten *son*; 18 *even he* to whom it was said, In Isaac shall thy seed be called: 19 accounting that God *is* able to raise up, even from the dead; from whence he did also in a figure receive him back. 20 By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, even concerning things to come. 21 By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, *leaning* upon the top of his staff. 22 By faith Joseph, when his end was nigh, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones. 23 By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months by his parents, because they saw he was a goodly child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment. 24 By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; 25 choosing rather to share ill treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; 26 accounting the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he looked unto the recompense of reward. 27 By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible. 28 By faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of the blood, that the destroyer [137] of the firstborn should not touch them. 29 By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were swallowed up. 30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they had been compassed about for seven days. 31 By faith Rahab the harlot perished not with them that were disobedient, having received the spies with peace.

32 And what shall I more say? for the time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah; of David and Samuel and the prophets: 33 who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, 34 quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, waxed mighty in war, turned to flight armies of aliens. 35 Women received their dead by a resurrection: and others were tortured, not accepting their deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: 36 and others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: 37 they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were tempted, they were slain with the sword: they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated 38 (of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves, and the holes of the earth. 39 And these all, having had witness borne to them through their faith, received not the promise, 40 God having provided some better thing concerning us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

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Faith Unto the Saving of the Soul.

Looking back over the last few verses of [Heb. 10](#), we see how the apostle begins the great theme of faith and what meanings the word conveys. Faith is reliance on God through his word. Faith is the sense by which we perceive the unseen. It is that which enables one [138] to give up the goods of this world in conviction that he possesses in heaven a better and more enduring wealth. ([Heb. 10:34](#).) In the [next verse](#) he calls it "boldness"--which is dauntless, fearless confidence--and speaks of its great reward with God. But what makes this faith efficient unto the saving of the soul is its enduring quality. That is what the Hebrews needed above all things--a faith that becomes an unwavering principle of life, that patiently continues in the path of obedience under all circumstances. Not an initial belief simply, not a mere assent to the probability or truth of God's message, but a steady state of trust, a living for the world to come, a continuous looking unto God. He contrasts it with "shrinking back." Saving faith does not shrink back from any command or demand of God. The righteous shall live by faith; those that shrink back, shrink back "unto perdition." Faith or shrinking back, life, or destruction--these are the alternatives. Which do you take?

Turn back to [Heb. 3:6, 14](#), and note the "if's." Compare [Col. 1:22, 23](#). The disobedience and unbelief of [Heb. 3:18, 19](#) lay just in this "shrinking back" after they had already started on the way of faith. Note also [Heb. 6:11, 12, 15](#). Hope is founded upon faith. This [139] teaching is for those in danger of backsliding and apostasy, and is very much needed now.

The Chapter of Faith.

Faith is the great need. First, last, and middle, he exhorts us to have faith. And here he traces faith in its various manifestations; its triumphs and glories; its earthly results, good and bad; and its eternal crown. So far he has shown us what God has done for us, what Christ did and is doing, the great sacrifice, the glorious gospel, the Mediator upon the throne interceding for us, the privileges of the Christian. And what for? That we may have faith. All is prepared, all is promised. Now trust and appropriate this salvation through a life of faith.

It is faith that makes the glories we hope for real to us, so that they are not dreams, air castles, vain imagination, but a real inheritance. It is not only the basis of our hopes, but our assurance of them. All that is involved in the expression: "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for."

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Faith is "a conviction of things not seen;" puts us into touch and relationship with the unseen, informs us concerning it, and thus shapes our whole lives; for to him who lives in this conviction of things unseen the world looks different than to one who simply knows and [140] accepts what he can perceive with his natural senses. He who has faith lives according to the unseen world, and often loses advantage in material things, even incurring danger--yea, laying down his life and all for the sake of the things that are unseen. That this is the true way to live and be acceptable to God is seen in the fact that God bore witness in approval of such a course. ([Heb. 11:2, 4, 5, 39.](#)) That, on the other hand, it is the wrong way to live and displeasing to God to follow after the things that are seen and seek after temporal advantages is the lesson of the whole Bible. God's children walk by faith, not by sight. They set not their minds on things that are upon the earth ([Col. 3:1, 2](#)); lay not up for themselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust does corrupt, but seek for treasures in the unseen. But if man minds earthly things, he becomes an enemy of the cross of Christ. ([Phil. 3:18-20.](#)) Now the only possibility of our knowing anything of the things unseen lies in God's word. ([1 Cor. 2:9-14.](#)) He, therefore, who accepts God's account of those things as absolutely true, acts according to it, stakes everything upon it--in short, is convinced of it as he is of what he knows by bodily sense--he has faith.

To such a man the visible universe means more than the face it presents. Over all, [141] behind all, he sees God. In every pebble, in every flower, he sees the power and Godhead of the Creator. In the rain and sunshine and fruitful seasons he sees God's hand dealing out life and love, even to the unthankful and evil. He ceases to value good things in and for themselves and learns to appreciate the Giver more than the gifts, and the gifts the more because of the Giver. Wherever he turns, there are marks and traces of God; for "by faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the word of God." He learns to worship God by faith, like Abel; he walks with God by faith, like Enoch, living continually in that great and wonderful Presence. He understands by faith that his life's purpose consists in seeking after that God, and that in so doing he cannot come to naught, for God "is the rewarder of them that seek after him." He learns to obey God by faith, relying upon his word rather than his eyes or his reason ([Prov. 3:5, 6](#))--like Noah, at the cost of time and labor and money; like Abraham, at the cost of home and kindred, looking with all assurances for the better home and more abiding city of God's promise. He forsakes the guidance of his own wisdom, the fruit of his experience and observation, when God's word would direct him into other paths, as did Sarah when she believed that she should bear [142] a son in her old age; as did Abraham when he offered up Isaac upon the altar--the climax of walking in the dark, with no light except that of the simple word of God.

The inspired writer points again to the man of faith pronouncing blessings upon his grandsons, in solemn assurance, yet without evidence other than God's word of

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promise (Jacob); giving commandment concerning his bones in view of a future exodus of which there was neither sign nor prospect, except that God had said, "I will surely bring them up again from the land of Egypt" (Joseph); then the daring of faith, that, realizing itself backed by the Almighty, is afraid of no king (Moses' parents); then the sacrifice of the faith, which, perceiving the glories of God's recompense of reward so much greater than aught kings, thrones, pleasures, and treasures can offer, rejects these and chooses affliction and reproach that it may obtain the blessing (Moses); the endurance of a faith that rests in the resources of the infinite God; the faith that finds protection behind the God-appointed sacrifice; the faith that, being in league with Him who has all power, fears not to walk between two walls of water; the faith that is convinced of God's ability to overthrow walls and towers if only it complies with his will; and, lastly, [143] the faith that seeks friendship with God by showing kindness to his people (Rahab). All these are different manifestations of the same faith; and in all these instances faith is the assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen.



Questions and Suggestions for the Next Lesson.

This is only a general view. Let us this week meditate on each example more particularly. Note the instances where the "things unseen" are mentioned. Consider the manifestation of faith in Abel, Enoch, Abraham, Sarah, Jacob, Joseph, Moses; also the names mentioned in [verse 32](#). What did each one of these do? How did each one's act show faith? How does faith come? In how many instances here did faith manifest itself in sacrifice, in risk of life, in risk of possessions? In what instances did it incur ridicule, reproach? Who in the New Testament lived entirely unto things unseen?



Almighty God, we know thee by faith, that thou art above all, and that thou lovest us and directest us to eternal happiness and glory; and seeing that our own senses cannot penetrate [144] into the real nature of even the things they perceive, and thus misguide us, thou hast in grace shown us the truth concerning all things, as we need to know it, in thy holy word. Thou turnest our hearts to the things unseen; thou teachest us how to live truly and profitably; thou hast sworn to us a promise of inheritance beside which all the glory of the visible universe fades. O God, we believe; help thou our unbelief. We believe in thy love and forgiveness and goodness. Help us to-day to do thy will. Make us able, in view of thyself and our unseen home, to sacrifice and deny ourselves. Cleanse us from all evil with the sacrifice we plead in faith, Jesus

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Christ our Lord; and through him make us thy children indeed, heirs of God and joint heirs of Christ forever. Amen. [145]

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LESSON XVIII.--HEB. 11:1-31.

1 Now faith is assurance of *things* hoped for, a conviction of things not seen. 2 For therein the elders had witness borne to them. 3 By faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the word of God, so that what is seen hath not been made out of things which appear. 4 By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he had witness borne to him that he was righteous, God bearing witness in respect of his gifts: and through it he being dead yet speaketh. 5 By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and he was not found, because God translated him: for he hath had witness borne to him that before his translation he had been well-pleasing unto God: 6 and without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing *unto him*; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that seek after him. 7 By faith Noah, being warned of *God* concerning things not seen as yet, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; through which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith. 8 By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed to go out unto a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. 9 By faith he became a sojourner in the land of promise, as in a *land* not his own, dwelling in tents, with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: 10 for he looked for the city which hath the foundations, whose builder and maker is God. 11 By faith even Sarah herself received power to conceive seed when she was past age, since she counted him faithful who had promised: 12 wherefore also there sprang of one, and him as good as dead, [146] *so many* as the stars of heaven in multitude, and as the sand, which is by the sea-shore, innumerable.

13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. 14 For they that say such things make it manifest that they are seeking after a country of their own. 15 And if indeed they had been mindful of that *country* from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 But now they desire a better *country*, that is, a heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed of them, to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city.

17 By faith Abraham, being tried, offered up Isaac: yea, he that had gladly received the promises was offering up his only begotten *son*; 18 *even he* to whom it was said, In Isaac shall thy seed be called: 19 accounting that God *is* able to raise up, even from the dead; from whence he did also in a figure receive him back. 20 By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, even concerning things to come. 21 By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, *leaning* upon the top of his staff. 22 By faith Joseph, when his end was nigh, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones. 23 By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months by his parents, because they saw he was a goodly child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment. 24 By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; 25 choosing rather to share ill treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; 26 accounting the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he looked unto the recompense of reward. 27 By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible. 28 By faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of the blood, that the destroyer [147] of the firstborn should not touch them. 29 By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were swallowed up. 30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they had been compassed about for seven days. 31 By faith Rahab the harlot perished not with them that were disobedient, having received the spies with peace.

Faith is a simple principle, easily learned; but it has a multitude of various applications in human affairs--as the same law, showing itself in many manifestations; the same melody, ringing through unending variations. When you say that faith is an implicit reliance upon God through his word, it is all summed up. But see now how this reliance appears in the acts of Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Israel, Rahab, Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephtha, David, Samuel and the prophets, changing its manifestation according to the peculiar circumstances of each case.

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Abel.

The first instance given us is one of sacrifice--the first shedding of blood with a view to atonement and remission of sin, itself a prophecy according to God's will of the great Sin Offering to come. Now, although we have no record of God's messages to men in those days, we are bound to conclude that God must have offered man access through the bloody sacrifice, [148] and must have given directions concerning the offering of the same; for not only would it be impossible for human wisdom to hit upon such a means of worship and approach to God, but even if it had been of Abel's ingenuity that he thought of bringing that kind of sacrifice, it would not have been of faith in such a case, for faith comes by the word of God. ([Rom. 10:17.](#)) Abel, therefore, relying upon God's word and the promise of acceptance connected with it, brought a sacrifice well pleasing to God. Cain, on the other hand, relied not on God's word of instruction and promise, but, rather, followed the light of reason, his sense of the fitness of things, and brought a sacrifice of his own devising. This is the bloodless religion of the world which survives unto the present day in many forms--the deistic religions, the æsthetic religions, the philosophic religions. To this Cain religion belong all those systems that reject the Sacrifice, the blood of Jesus Christ; and every scheme of worship and service that has been invented by man. It is an important lesson, and one which the great majority even of professed Christians have never yet learned, that not every act of worship, nor every sacrifice (though it may commend itself ever so much to our reason) which is offered with good intention, is, therefore, acceptable to God. Our [149] worship and approach to God must be in God's way, by the true Sacrifice, and by faith.

Enoch.

Of Enoch we are told that he walked with God. His faith brought him into communion and fellowship with the Almighty, a sense of his presence and nearness, and a life according with it. To him God was real. He lived as in the sight of God; and who would do evil while God is at his side? Moreover, he walked with God; in God's ways--where he knew God would be with him--and was so little influenced by the appearance of things that are seen that he consulted and chose God's way only, and that in everything. He was one of those who through "faith wrought righteousness" ([verse 33](#)), and, therefore, he was translated that he should not see death, for he had been well pleasing to God.

Noah.

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Noah's faith came by the word of God, as faith does in every case. He was "warned of God." The things of which God told him were yet unseen, future--yea, as far a human wisdom could see, improbable and impossible. So Noah relied on the word, and had nothing else to rely on. God's warning filled him with fear, and he took God's proffered way of safety. The [150] rest of mankind were doubtful as to these matters. Some gave the word as preached by Noah ([2 Pet. 2:5](#)) no credit at all; others played "agnostic"--professed to know nothing about it, and "they knew not until the flood came, and took them all away" ([Matt. 24:39](#)), which thing is repeating itself today in reference to the serious warnings of God to the wicked, the prediction of their fearful destiny just at hand. But Noah believed God and feared. His faith worked and obeyed to the letter. Yet it was faith that saved him, not works; but works made his faith perfect and efficient before God. It is evident here that faith does not exclude the strictest obedience or the hardest work. Noah staked his time, his labor, and his capital on God' word, and (humanly speaking) incurred the risk of loss and ridicule for the sake of his convictions.

Abraham.

Most noted of all men for faith stands Abraham. Reared in the midst of idolatry, he hears God's messages, the call to leave his kindred and country, and obeys. He put confidence in the Author of the commandment, counting him trustworthy, left the consequences in his hands, and so went out, not knowing whither he went. Thus his faith conquered his love of [151] home and kindred and his fear of the unknown lands and the unknown future. He became a wanderer and a pilgrim on the earth, steadfastly looking for the unseen home of God of which he had heard in the promise. His faith staked home and kindred and property and life upon God's word; so that, if the promise could have failed, he would have lost all. He and the heirs with him of the same promise committed themselves to a steadfast life of faith (compare [Heb. 10:36-38](#)), preferring to walk by faith and hope, although the way back to their old home and its tangible advantages stood continually open. Sarah's faith also, basing itself on the faithfulness (reliableness) of Him who had promised, gave her light and hope where human reason saw no hopeful prospect, and through faith she received a power above the natural. See the beautiful description of faith in [Rom. 4:18-22](#).

But it was in the sacrifice of Isaac that Abraham's faith reached its climax, for in that son all hope was centered. Before the son was born, Abraham depended solely upon the promise. Now he is apt to trust in Isaac. So Isaac himself must be given up, that faith may indeed be shown to rest upon that which is not seen, in God's power and faithfulness rather than in any visible prospect. And Abraham did not [152] hesitate. He loved his son, but he loved God supremely. He saw in his son the

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fulfillment of the promise, and could not see how the promise could be redeemed if Isaac died. But Abraham never stopped to consider what things looked like. God spoke; that was enough. His simple logic was: God is true; therefore the promise cannot fail, contrary appearances notwithstanding. If God chooses, he can bring Isaac back from the dead; for is he not the child of promise, and did not God bring him forth, as it were, out of death in the first place? So Abraham offered up his son. In sacrificing him he received him; in losing him he found him; and in giving him up he obtained him forever. This is God's way of giving back to us everything we sacrifice to him sweeter and better a hundredfold.

Other Names.

We must pass hurriedly over the remaining names. It will not be difficult now to show just how faith manifested itself in Jacob's blessing and in Joseph's making mention of the departure of Israel. Nor is it hard to understand how Moses could make his strange choice, for it was to him a greater privilege to be one of God's people than to belong to the royal family of Egypt. As he understood it, God's promises were sweeter, surer, and more enduring than [153] all the pleasures and treasures and glittering glories of the court; "for he looked unto the recompense of the reward." Moses was not foolish, though "men of the world whose portion is in this life" would call him so. Faith does not make men unreasonable; it simply gives them a higher reason, a truer reliance, a higher motive, and a greater object for which to work and live. And it has always been true that men who followed after the things that were seen became debased and corrupted in their pursuit; while those who lived unto the things that are not seen, as revealed in the word of God, were ennobled and purified. It is, then, man's true life to live by faith; and his true goal is not here, but among "the things unseen"--in God himself.

So lived all these heroes of faith; so must we live, if our lives are not to be eternal failures. With Abel, we draw near to God by the blood; like Enoch, we walk with God; with Noah, we fear and prepare, that we may be able to stand in that day; and, like Abraham, we become strangers and pilgrims ([Phil. 3:20](#); [Heb. 13:14](#); [1 Pet. 1:11](#); [Col. 3:12-3](#)), looking for the better country; choosing, with Moses, rather to share ill treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than [154] the treasures of Egypt. In all these things we follow Him who lived wholly unto the world unseen and unto his Father's will--the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, "who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

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Our Father, it is thy will that we should seek after the things unseen, inasmuch as they only are true and abiding and eternal, and the visible world and the lust thereof passeth away. Yet how we are in bondage to the things that are seen, and how low we rate thee and thy reward because these things do not appeal to our present senses! Therefore are we despondent and without peace; for "thou hast made us for thyself, and our hearts are restless till they rest in thee." Lord, help our unbelief. Help us to make the first trusting steps, that thus we may be led into a deeper faith. May we, in humble and obedient study of thy word, come into touch with thy unseen universe and obtain that pilgrim spirit which characterized our father Abraham. Help us, after the example of thy servants of old, to seek and find thee a God so faithful and true that we may learn to rely wholly on thee, staking life and goods and [155] talents and all we have and are upon thy word, and by faith to win the final victory through our intercessor, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



Questions and Suggestions for the Next Lesson.

The next lesson is [Heb. 11:32 to 12:2](#). Look up the history of the names in [verse 32](#) and see how they showed their faith. What kind of successes did they make through faith? What failures did they endure by faith? Were men of faith universally successful and victorious? Why does the Lord refer those Hebrew brethren and us to these examples? Can we accomplish similar things by faith? Was not that in the age of miracles? How, then, can it encourage us? [Chapter 12](#): What cloud of witnesses does he speak of? What is the "weight" we should lay aside? What is "the sin which doth so easily beset us?" [156]

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LESSON XIX.--HEB. 11:32 TO 12:2.

32 And what shall I more say? for the time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah; of David and Samuel and the prophets: 33 who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, 34 quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, waxed mighty in war, turned to flight armies of aliens. 35 Women received their dead by a resurrection: and others were tortured, not accepting their deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: 36 and others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: 37 they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were tempted, they were slain with the sword: they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated 38 (of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves, and the holes of the earth. 39 And these all, having had witness borne to them through their faith, received not the promise, 40 God having provided some better thing concerning us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

1 Therefore let us also, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2 looking unto Jesus the author and perfecter of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

The examples of faith in the [eleventh chapter](#) follow the chronological order. Beginning with [157] the mention of creation, he speaks of Abel, then of Enoch, then Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses; whereupon comes the exodus from Egypt, the crossing of the Red Sea, and some events connected with the possessing of the promised land--the fall of Jericho and the saving of Rahab. The rest of Israel's history he cannot enter into particularly, but briefly mentions the names of a few bright stars in the nation's galaxy of faithful ones, and then gives a general summary of great things done through faith.

Ten kinds of victories of achievement. Who subdued kingdoms by faith? Who obtained promises? Who was delivered from lions by his trust in God? Who from the power of fire? Who from the violence of men--the edge of the sword? Who received a new influx of strength from God, a supply of their weakness? (Samson's history; see about Sarah, [verse 11](#); compare David--[Ps. 18:29-34](#).) Who waxed mighty in war and turned to flight armies of the aliens? What women received their dead by a resurrection? Any reference Bible will enable one to answer all this.

Notable Points.

Now, in regard to these victories of faith, there are several notable points to be mentioned. [158]

1. The faith of those heroes met with trying circumstances and was victorious in dangers and difficulties. Nothing is further from the truth than the idea that trusting in God will insure an easy and comfortable life, smooth sailing under clear skies, with continually favorable breezes. Not so. Even when Jesus was himself in the boat with

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his disciples, there arose a great storm. Victory means conflict; and conflict mean adversaries, obstacles, evils, and dangers. "The memory of the heroes and heroisms of the olden time," says Andrew Murray, "may be most instructive if we regard them in their true light. One thing that impresses us is how little God has promised to faith that it will be freed from difficulty and danger. It would be as easy to God to prevent the enemy coming as to give the victory over him. To do this would be infinite loss; faith would never be called into exercise; man would never learn to know either his God or himself as God's child. Every trial accomplishes a double purpose. It gives us the opportunity of honoring God by the trust with which we wait on him, and it gives God the opportunity of showing how faithful he is in watching over his child, and how truly God is working for him and in him. It is in trial that all the heart of the child is drawn out toward the father in [159] dependence, humility, and trust. It is in trial that God can reveal in the opened heart of his child all the tenderness and all the saving power of his love. Without trial there could be no school of faith, no growth of spiritual character, no strength of will given up to God and clinging to him. Let us bless God for every trial, small or great."

2. The great things these heroes accomplished were done by faith--that is to say, in reliance upon God and at the bidding of his word. The man who follows his own will or wisdom is not walking by faith. Aside from the one reason that they were following the word of the Almighty, the actions of those men of faith had no justification--were utterly unreasonable. It was not Gideon's human wisdom that led him to attack the numberless host of Midian with three hundred men, but the wisdom of God, which to men seem as foolishness. [Luke 5:4-6](#) illustrates the principle of acting by faith--that is, on God's word alone; likewise [Matt. 14:29](#).

3. The winning of those victories and triumphs required power. We can also see at a glance that the power was not of man; for the weakness of these men, in each case, was the very reason why they trusted in God. The power was of God. It was God that gave [160] victory to Gideon, Barak, David. Even Samson had no abnormal strength of his own, but his strength was given by God--not of man, nor of human nature. From all of which we gather the vastly important lesson that faith walks in the power of God, acts in the power of God, fights by the power of God; and since God's power is invincible, faith can never fail or be overcome.

What Does it Mean to Us?

What, then, have those great examples to do with us? Simply this: That when we, as they did, go forth to do God's bidding, we may count upon God's power to enable us to do; and when we at God's word go forth to meet Satan in all his power, the

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principalities and powers and spiritual hosts of wickedness, the world and the flesh besides, we shall be held up in the conflict, though we are weak, because it is the fight of faith; we shall be more than conquerors, for we stand in the Lord and in the power of his might. We can do all things through Christ that strengthens us. "Through God we shall do valiantly, for he it is that will tread down our adversaries." We depend upon him. When we go to obey him, we trust no human prospect, for we are weak. But God is with us, as he was with them. Let us not fear, nor be [161] discouraged at the immensity of the task or the strength of the adversary. "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard? The everlasting God, Jehovah, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary. . . . He giveth power to the faint; and to him that hath no might he increaseth strength. [Mere human strength will not suffice, for] Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men [man at his best] shall utterly fall: but they that wait for Jehovah shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint." ([Isaiah 40:28-31.](#))

Victories of Endurance.

Faith always was, is, and shall be, successful and victorious in every undertaking, every battle. That is according to God's idea of success. But as men see it, some of the heroes of faith were vanquished and left dead upon the battlefield. As others by faith won in conflict, so these by faith could afford to fail and lose for God. But did they fail? Did they lose? Is it not as great a victory to endure loss, torture, and death in holding fast a principle when hostile forces by bribe or threat would compel you to give it up? Death is no failure to God's people; whereas surrendering loyalty to God in [162] order to save one's life would be failure indeed and ignominious defeat. "Thy saints in all this glorious war shall conquer, though they die." The same faith, then, that made some strong to do great feats and win successes of achievement, made others strong to win great successes of endurance. These, suffering all manner of evils and cruelties, and being sustained in the darkest hour by trust in the God who would not allow that they would come to naught in the end, counted not the sufferings of the present time worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed. Chief of this class of sufferers was Jesus Christ himself. They might have escaped that fate had they chosen to do so; but they lived for the unseen, and gave up this present life that they might obtain a better resurrection. ([Verses 35-38.](#))

That those saints of old had to wait for Jesus before they could be truly cleansed and perfected and obtain the promise in its fullness and reality ([verses 39, 40](#)) has already been brought out in connection with [Heb. 9:15](#).

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The Christian Race.

Who, then, are the great cloud of witnesses? The men of faith mentioned and alluded to in the [eleventh chapter](#). And of what are they witnesses? Of God's faithfulness and the [163] reward of faith? No doubt. But here they are represented as witnesses of our Christian race. It may be too much to conclude from this that the spirits of the departed faithful men are cognizant of our affairs and are watching our race. By an easy figure of speech these men, who are examples to be emulated and before whom we need to be ashamed if with all the light and advantage of this day we fail in a race which they won in those darker times, could be represented as witnesses; just as Napoleon, in his speech under the shadow of the Egyptian pyramids, said to his soldiers: "Frenchmen, forty centuries are looking down upon you; quit you like men!" If, however, the import of this verse ([12:1](#)) is literal, it certainly implies a knowledge of, and a moral participation in, our race by those victorious souls of old.

Preparation for the Race.

The first preparation now is to lay aside every weight. Weights are not sins. The man who runs in a race must deny himself many things that are good and lawful, because they hinder and encumber. "And every man that striveth in the games exerciseth self-control in all things. Now they do it to receive a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible." ([1 Cor. 9:25](#).) In eating and drinking, in apparel, in [164]possessions, in pleasures, in associations, here and there, we find a weight that hinders us. Blessed is he who will cast all drawbacks and needless bulk aside and concentrate all his heart on winning the race. Let every man be his own judge in these matters and deal faithfully with himself. "And if thy right hand causeth thee to stumble, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not thy whole body go into hell."

The next preparation is to lay aside the sin which does so easily beset us. Every man will himself know best what sin that is in his case. There, where our weakest point is, we must fight the strongest fight. That particular sin we must turn against with our whole heart, and put it to death, cutting off its every avenue, forestalling its approach, rejecting it in every guise, watching and praying.

Now that the hindrances and bars are removed, comes the exhortation: "Let us run." There is no other figure that so represents entire concentration of soul and purpose upon one end. During the race the runner has but one aim, one thought--to

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make the goal. Paul said: "One thing I do: forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal unto [165] the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." So run, and you shall obtain. Moreover, this is not a sport only, but "run in patience"--it is a Marathon run of steady, patient endurance. The meanwhile look unto Jesus; from Him is all your strength, in Him is your life. He will sustain you. He first originated your faith; continue in it now, and he shall be its perfecter and rewarder.



Father, give us help and grace that we may run a good race. Help us to divest ourselves of everything, however lawful and pleasant, that would encumber us and draw our hearts away from the goal of the high calling. We know that in this race no other man's success can mean failure to us, and that there is no doubt of our reward if we run patiently and faithfully. We look unto thee, O Lord; our souls look up unto thee. Be thou near to encourage us and strengthen us. May we also, after the example of thy people of old, meet our adversary in the armor of faith; stand fast in faith through whatever trial and danger we may have to encounter. Show us the joy of believing, and give us the calm that fills the heart which is stayed on thee. Guard us safe in thy power through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the [166]last time; keep us from stumbling, and set us before the presence of thy glory without blemish in exceeding joy, through Jesus Christ our Lord.



Questions and Suggestions for the Next Lesson.

([Hebrews 12:3-13.](#))

Why does God allow us to suffer? What is chastening? What is the Bible teaching as to the meaning and aim of chastening? How shall we take chastening? Does anything depend upon the spirit in which we receive it? [167]

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LESSON XX.--HEB. 12:3-13.

3 For consider him that hath endured such gainsaying of sinners against himself, that ye wax not weary, fainting in your souls. 4 Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin: 5 and ye have forgotten the exhortation which reasoneth with you as with sons,

My son, regard not lightly the chastening of the Lord,

Nor faint when thou art reprov'd of him;

6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth,

And scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

7 It is for chastening that ye endure; God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is there whom *his* father chasteneth not? 8 But if ye are without chastening, whereof all have been made partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. 9 Furthermore, we had the fathers of our flesh to chasten us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? 10 For they indeed for a few days chastened *us* as seemed good to them; but he for *our* profit, that *we* may be partakers of his holiness. 11 All chastening seemeth for the present to be not joyous but grievous; yet afterward it yieldeth peaceable fruit unto them that have been exercised thereby, *even the fruit* of righteousness. 12 Wherefore lift up the hands that hang down, and the palsied knees; 13 and make straight paths for your feet, that that which is lame be not turned out of the way, but rather be healed.

Let us divide the twelfth chapter into three portions, according to the paragraphs in the American Revised Version--the first, on God's [168] teaching about chastening ([verses 3-13](#)); second, an admonition and warning ([verses 14-17](#)); third, a final contrast between the two covenants and the respective relationships of their worshipers toward God, and exhortation drawn from these facts ([verses 18-29](#)).

I. Chastening. ([Verses 3-13.](#))

It is hard to believe in God's love and care when we are troubled. That goodness and mercy follow us in the bright, happy days of life, we gladly acknowledge, chiefly because we think we can see it; but the assurance that "goodness and mercy follow us all the days of our lives"--more especially in regard to the dark days--only faith can maintain. Sight fails us there. That calamities and sufferings work for our good is not often apparent. We think they injure us; at least, they might have been avoided. If we are under the shadow of his wing, it seems God could and would protect us from misfortunes. We feel tempted to distrust him. At any rate, we are inclined to distrust ourselves--the sincerity of our faith, the reality of our religion. God seems to have left us. Something must be wrong. Then comes the danger of casting away our boldness and our confidence and hope, to become unfaithful, and perhaps apostatize altogether. Against this danger all these exhortations in Hebrews are directed. Hold [169] fast! Do not be discouraged. Cast not away your boldness. Do not shrink back. Continue steadfastly, firmly, patiently unto the end. Come or go what may, hold to your faith, to your gospel, your God, your Savior. Through fire and flood, through tempests and earthquakes, keep your good courage and loyalty to your Lord. These things, far from proving that God is not with us, show that you are accepted in his army of soldiers,

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sufferers, and martyrs. These afflictions invariably accompany such acceptance, and are a proof in themselves that God regards us as his own. ([Matt. 5:10-12.](#))

With one voice the Scriptures, old and new, declare this strange and consoling fact. Just in the [preceding chapter](#) there is an enumeration of sufferings endured in faith by men of faith, to whom God bore witness. Jesus, the very Son of God himself, stands for an example of sufferings and afflictions; and God's pleasure rested upon him always in all fullness. In the midst of the conflict, Jesus knew that God had given his angels charge concerning him, to keep him in all his ways to bear him up in their hands lest he dash his foot against a stone. He knew that nothing could happen to him, except as the father ordered it, and that no real and final harm could possibly befall him. See the many passages that tell us that we must "suffer [170] with him." The apostles considered it a great privilege. ([Acts 5:41.](#)) Paul spoke of it as though it were a special favor granted. ([Phil. 1:29.](#)) He emphatically assures all of us who have come to Christ that all things work together for our good; that in tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or nakedness, or peril, or sword, we are more than conquerors through him that loved us; and that neither life, nor death, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. ([Rom. 8.](#))

The words in this lesson are very plain, and need no comments. We can, however, arrive at a better understanding by directing our attention to a few items. The first admonition is: "Regard not lightly the chastening of the Lord." If you do, you will lose the benefit of it. Human wisdom and philosophy offer all kinds of false refuges from sorrow. There is a modern stoicism, illustrated in "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch," which is the old heathen stoicism revamped, painted here and there with a very thin coating of Christian sentiment, all of which, after all, amounts to but little more than deadened feelings and callousness of heart. Or there is the "New Thought" philosophy of which [171] Ella Wheeler Wilcox is an exponent, which exalts self-confidence in the place of faith, ignores trouble and danger, and lives in a blind, happy expectation of good. It borrows from Emerson, Plato, and the heathen Epicurean doctrines; adapts the despairing optimism of Omar Khayyam. The world's crude remedy for trouble is: Shake it off; travel, visit, laugh, sing, work--anything to drown out the pain and forget; by pessimism, optimism, fatalism, or in whatever way possible to remove its sting. These are the poisonous potions human doctors recommend to the heartsick. God's remedy is signally different. You must not despise his chastening nor regard it lightly. Jesus would take no stupefying draught to allay the sufferings on the cross. Why should he seek to escape that which his wise and good Father saw best to lay upon him? "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" There is no ignoring of its darkness, no effort at indifference or deadening of sensibilities. Witness Gethsemane.

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On the other hand, the admonition comes: "Nor faint when thou art reproved of him." This is the other extreme. To faint is to give up in discouragement or despair. God wants us to conquer in these things--not, as the world would teach us, evade them. To this end he gives us these blessed assurances: (1) He loves [172] us. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth." Our affliction is from him--not accidental, not wanton, not needless. "For he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men." ([Lam. 3:33](#).) His love also assures of his sympathy. "In all their affliction he was afflicted." ([Isa. 63:9](#).) "His soul was grieved for the misery of Israel" ([Judg. 10:16](#).) (2) The very fact that we are chastened is the foundation of hope and joy; it proves that we are sons. ([Heb. 12:7, 8](#).) "All that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." (3) He is good and wise. If we need to be chastened, who can do it better than God? He knows just when, where, how, how much--not one stroke too many. He is our good and all-wise Father in heaven; let us take affliction as from him in childlike confidence and submission. (4) He chastens us for our profit--not to let out irritation or satisfy his wrath on us, as sometimes do earthly fathers. He has a living purpose. "Every branch that beareth fruit, he cleanseth it, that it may bear more fruit." ([John 15:2](#).) If we are to enjoy him and live together with him forever, we must become holy, as he is holy. So he chastens us that we may be partakers of his holiness. It is well to note here that chastening does not primarily imply the idea of punishment for sin. Though it may include [173] that, its first meaning is "purifying." These hardships and sufferings strengthen and purify the soul. The best men of earth have been children of adversity. "It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth." ([Lam. 3:27](#).) Again: "I will bring the third part [of the people] into the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried." All their dross will he consume. And during that time of chastening God will be especially near to his people, their stay and comfort. "They shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, Jehovah is my God." ([Zech. 13:9](#); [compare Ps. 23:4](#).) (5) There will be good and happy results--peaceable fruit of righteousness to all that have profited by God's chastening. The Christian's suffering has a background of true hope. It is the very means to our final salvation from all sin and grief forever. "Our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory." ([2 Cor. 4:17](#).) "God's ways," says Martin Luther, "are like a Hebrew book: one must read them backward to understand them." But if you go to the end and look backward--lo, the past sufferings are not worthy to be compared with the glory that meets your view. There they who came out of great [174] tribulation stand, clothed in white robes and palms in their hands, before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple. He that sits upon the throne spreads his tabernacle over them. They hunger no more, neither thirst any more; the sun cannot strike them, nor any heat; the Lamb himself is their Shepherd and guides them unto fountains of water of life. "And God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes."

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Let us be of good courage, and lift up the weak hands and confirm the feeble knees. Jesus said: "In the world ye have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." We also shall overcome in him and through him, if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end, for he is faithful that promised.



Our Father in heaven, forgive us if in our ignorance we have murmured against thee because thou dost chasten us. We know now that all thy dealings with us are only goodness and mercy, and thou lovest us even as thou lovest thy Son, Jesus Christ. Keep thou before our minds these eternal truths concerning thy love and tender sympathy. May we never doubt them. Whatever comes upon us, may we see [175] thy hand in it, and may thy love and thy nearness make every sorrow sweet. In all our sufferings grant us thy comfort also; and may we, like thy servant Paul, learn the secret to be "sorrowful, yet always rejoicing." We are very thankful to be in the hands of a Father who works for our interest in wisdom and love, who directs all our affairs, and who gives us tears and smiles in due season for our greatest profit and usefulness. Guide us, Holy Father, the more as we place our lives more fully and perfectly into thy hands. Preserve us from the corroding sorrow of the world, which worketh death. Be thou the administrator of our chastening and sanctifier of our grief. Teach us to neither regard it lightly nor to faint under it, that we may be exercised thereby; and having been made partakers of thy holiness, may we rejoice in unspeakable glory before thee through all eternity, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



Questions and Suggestions for the Next Lesson.

([Heb. 12:14-17.](#))

Who is sanctified? Why does he yet tell us to "follow after" sanctification? What kind of man was Esau, and wherein did he do wrong? [176]

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LESSON XXI.--HEB. 12:14-17.

14 Follow after peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord: 15 looking carefully lest *there be* any man that falleth short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble *you*, and thereby the many be defiled; 16 lest *there be* any fornication, or profane person, as Esau, who for one mess of meat sold his own birthright. 17 For ye know that even when he afterward desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected; for he found no place for a change of mind *in his father*, though he sought is diligently with tears.

II. Admonition and Warning. ([Verses 14-17.](#))

The lesson opens with the exhortation to "follow after peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord." We are children of peace. Jesus is the Prince of Peace. The final result of his work will be that "they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." ([Isa. 2:4.](#)) A Christian cannot obey his Master and engage in carnal warfare at the same time. The parents who are educating their sons for a military [177] career are preparing them unto a life of disobedience to Christ. If Christ is going to ultimately bring peace on the earth and to teach the nations to cease war, it is evidently absurd to maintain that a follower of Christ may take part in the very things Jesus came to abolish. In private affairs also, "as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men;" for all that engenders strife--envy, malice, hatred, jealousy, unkindness, lack of patience, ungoverned temper, uncontrolled tongues, vengefulness--these are works of the flesh. ([James 4:1.](#)) Jesus calls us to be meek and lowly in heart; to meet insult and injury in love to man, committing ourselves unto Him that judgeth righteously, and who will not fail to vindicate us and our cause. "Vengeance is mine, I will repay." Read carefully what is written on this subject in [Rom. 12:18-21; 1 Pet. 2:19-22.](#) Jesus taught his disciples the doctrine of nonresistance to evil. ([Matt. 5:38-42.](#)) But if, as in Jesus' case, all this good will of God is obeyed, and yet men hate and oppose us, we are not guilty, for "as much as in us lieth" we have lived for peace. Jesus' life and work occasioned much strife. But that was not Jesus' fault. "Blessed is he whosoever shall find no occasion of stumbling in me." So likewise if we faithfully live for Christ, we shall meet with opposition and strife; [178] for all that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

SANCTIFICATION.

On this subject much is spoken and written that is wrong and hurtful. Neither is the mistake all on one side of the controversy. Let us learn first that all Christians are sanctified through Christ's sacrifice and blood. ([Heb. 10:10; 13:12.](#)) Even the weak

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Corinthian Christians who were yet carnal ([1 Cor. 3:1, 3](#)) and guilty of divisions, envyings, strife, and several other evil practices for which Paul rebukes them, are addressed as the "sanctified in Christ Jesus" ([1 Cor. 1:2; compare 6:11](#)). Just as God claimed all the firstborn of man or beast for his own, because he had saved them through the blood of the passover lamb, so does he claim all those who through the blood of Jesus Christ have been redeemed as his own. They are thus "sanctified," "set apart" unto God. ([Ex. 13:2, 12](#).) But "sanctified" not only means "set apart" to God's service, but, by implication, "pure," "clean," "undefiled." Any one by taking a concordance can verify that without difficulty. Therefore the same blood that set us apart also washed us whiter than the snow. Now here is the chief item for our consideration: When first we became Christians, God [179] gave us a clear title to sonship, but afterwards tells us that on certain conditions we shall be children of God. ([2 Cor. 6:17, 18; Rev. 21:7](#).) When we were baptized, we put on Christ ([Gal. 3:27](#)); yet long afterwards he exhorts us to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ" ([Rom. 13:14](#)). When we obeyed the gospel, we received the perfect righteousness of God by free gift and imputation; yet he exhorts us to "follow after [pursue] righteousness." ([1 Tim. 6:11](#).) What does it mean? Simply that these gifts, which in name and standing we fully enjoy as soon as we are in Christ, must be actually worked and lived out day by day, so that our "state" may correspond with our "standing" before God, that the righteousness and sanctification we have in Christ may be verified and vindicated in our daily lives, and the power of this faith in him may be manifest to the world. To those, therefore, who already have been sanctified in Christ Jesus it is commanded to pursue after "the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord." The pure in heart shall see God. "Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." ([2 Cor. 7:1](#).)

Very many Christians never so much as attempt that. "Why, we can't do that; we can't [180] live sinless lives," they say; and so they lay that aside as an impossibility, ridiculing the very thought of it. Moreover, much valuable time, breath, and space is wasted, both in pulpits and papers, in trying to prove that we cannot live without sinning, and disparaging those who would aim at it. Now this is an extreme at least as bad and harmful as that presented by the so-called "sanctificationists." "Zeal without knowledge" is hardly worse than compromise with sin. It is not our business, in the first place, to determine what we can or cannot do in this matter. When God commands, it is for us to "trust and obey." It is to such that God gives grace and strength. That colored preacher who said, "When the Lord leads me to a brick wall and tells me to jump through, it is my business to jump and God's business to make the hole," had the right idea of faith. The Duke of Wellington ordered a bridge built across a ravine. The chief officer of the engineering corps came to him with representations concerning the extreme difficulty of the task. "I did not ask your

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opinion, sir," replied the Duke; "I gave my orders, and expect them to be obeyed." If such is the standard of respect and subordination required among men, how much more should it be so toward the God who is over all, who demands nothing unreasonable [181] of his children, and is able to make all grace to abound toward us in all things, and make us perfect in every good work, working in us the things that are well pleasing in his sight!

Note, then, that this sanctification we are to follow after is nothing short of entire consecration and purity of heart and life. "Every one that hath this hope set on him purifieth himself, even as he [Christ] is pure." ([1 John 3:3](#).) Is this your aim and daily motto? Then you are following "the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord." Again see how that will affect your conduct: "As children of obedience, not fashioning yourselves according to your former lusts in the time of your ignorance: but like as he who called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living; because it is written, Ye shall be holy; for I am holy." ([1 Pet. 1:14-16](#).) Examine the contexts of [Lev. 11:44; 19:2; 20:7](#), whence Peter quotes the last clause above, and see that there, too, the chief idea is purity of life. There are other passages to the same effect. Can you afford to ignore them?

Do not now begin to split hairs and make fine points as to what constitutes "absolute sinlessness," and such like. Neither set up a straw man, and, having named him "Sinless Perfection," proceed to knock him over. That is [182] subterfuge, and irrelevant. Paul said he knew nothing against himself (can you say that?), from which, however, he did not conclude that he had time to sit down or no more room for growth. (Read [1 Cor. 4:4](#).) Neither did he claim perfection on that score. (See [Phil. 3:12-14](#).) Let it be our sole aim to live free from all *known* sin, and then to follow a yet higher walk as we grow in understanding and knowledge of Jesus Christ. By following after sanctification day by day the churches at Smyrna and Philadelphia ([Rev. 2 and 3](#)) arrived at a state in which Jesus found nothing to reprove. So also the members of the church at Sardis, who "did not defile their garments." "And they shall walk with me in white; for they are worthy. He that overcometh shall thus be arrayed in white garments; and I will in no wise blot his name out of the book of life, and I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches." ([Rev. 3:4-6](#).)

Roots of Bitterness.

Look carefully. This is addressed to all for a safeguard. Some evils come unobserved. Like the tares, you cannot easily recognize them in the seed or in the bud; but only when they have fully established themselves do they show [183] their true

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nature and fruits. For illustration, behold how a few apparently harmless innovations, a few slight additions and changes here and there in the things of God, issued in the enormous perversions of the Church of Rome. And that history is constantly repeating itself. Many roots of bitterness spring up unnoticed, unsuspected. Sometimes a bad or foolish man, sometimes a false doctrine, sometimes a wrong practice, becomes a scourge and plague unto the church. Look carefully. A fire is much more easily quenched at its beginning than after the whole house is ablaze.

Esau.

Esau stands diametrically opposite in character to his father, Abraham. Even as Abraham lived for the unseen and sacrificed temporal advantages for the unseen promise, so Esau lived for the things that appeal to sense, and sacrificed his share in the promise for a very trifling temporal good. For the momentary gratification of his appetite he willingly gave up his birthright. He is the type and father of all the "men of the world, whose portion is in this life." ([Ps. 17:14](#)); and their name is Legion.

Esau was not utterly bad. Probably he had all the qualities that go to make the "jolly good [184] fellow" that is everywhere welcome. He was of a forgiving turn of mind, even magnanimous. See how kindly, almost tenderly, he received Jacob, who once by guile had taken advantage of him. His fatal fault was that he had no aspiration beyond the flesh, no appreciation of things unseen. He had no faith, wanted no faith. This world was good enough for him. God's promise was very good as far as promises go, but a bird in the hand was, to him, worth two in the bush. O, the Esaus in the world to-day--men almost exemplary as citizens, neighbors, husbands, fathers--brave, kind-hearted, liberal, sympathetic, charitable, hospitable, obliging--yet bound to the earth and to the flesh, self-complacent, not desirous of higher good, with only a distant respect for spiritual things; men whom for their loveableness we hold dear, and the thought of whose perdition makes our hearts ache!

Yet not only in the world, but even in the church, Esau is represented. Moses, the man of faith, chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; but these are allured by the pleasures of sin and forsake the lot of God's people. He esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt, for he looked unto the recompense of reward; but these know [185] no greater reward than treasures of gold, and forsake the cross of Christ at the call of Mammon, honor, popularity, or fleshly gratification. It is the same conflict between faith and sight, the things seen and things unseen.

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We have a birthright. Glorious as that of Esau or Jacob was, ours is greater. We are sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus, and belong to the general assembly and church of the firstborn whose names are in heaven. Take heed that you sell not this infinite privilege and blessing for any of the trifles and vanities of the world, the flesh, and the devil. You cannot have both. Take Christ, and you crucify the flesh; follow the flesh, and you crucify to yourself afresh the Son of God. There is an "afterwards" both to the life of faith and the sensual life. As some one said regarding the prodigal son: "Every 'when' has its 'then:' 'When he had spent all, then a mighty famine arose in that country.'" So here. When he desired to inherit a blessing, then there was no longer any possibility of it; and he "cried with an exceeding great and bitter cry." ([Gen. 27:34.](#)) After the sowing time comes the reaping; and as sow one thing or another we must, even so must we reap what we have sown: "He that soweth unto his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth unto the Spirit [186] shall of the Spirit reap eternal life." ([Gal. 6:8.](#))



Great and dreadful are thy words, O Jehovah our Father; and the lessons we have learned to-day cut us to the heart. We are not such as thou wouldest have us to be; for neither have we ever earnestly endeavored to follow after holiness, and to be pure as Christ is pure, holy as thou art holy; but, on the other hand, we have too often entertained the spirit of Esau. But now in this day of salvation we come to thee for forgiveness and healing and help. Lord, increase our faith. May we by thy grace have boldness to refuse Satan all quarters, and make no allowance for sin, no provisions for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof. Thou wilt be with us in the conflict if we truly trust. We can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth us. Keep us from the power of darkness and temptation, and preserve us until we shall obtain the promise of the eternal inheritance, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



Questions and Suggestions for the Next Lesson.

([Heb. 12:18-29.](#))

Note each point of contrast between the two covenants here given. Why greater responsibility on us? What awful revelation of God in his attitude toward the rebellious? [187]

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LESSON XXII.--HEB. 12:18-29.

18 For ye are not come unto *a mount* that might be touched, and that burned with fire, and unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, 19 and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which *voice* they that heard entreated that no word more should be spoken unto them; 20 for they could not endure that which was enjoined, If even a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned; 21 and so fearful was the appearance, *that* Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake: 22 but ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable hosts of angels, 23 to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, 24 and to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better than *that of* Abel. 25 See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not when they refused him that warned *them* on earth, much more *shall not* we *escape* who turn away from him that *warneth* from heaven: 26 whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more will I make to tremble not the earth only, but also the heaven. 27 And this *word*, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that have been made, that those things which are not shaken may remain. 28 Wherefore, receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us have grace, whereby we may offer service well-pleasing to God with reverence and awe: 29 for our God is a consuming fire.

III. Final Contrasts. ([Verses 18-29.](#))

Let us consider our privilege. We are not [188] come to Mount Sinai, with its awful phenomena, its terrible voice which dismayed the people and made them to plead tremblingly for a mediator. ([Deut. 18:16.](#)) We are not under the law, but under grace. We have not received the spirit of bondage again unto fear, but the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry: "Abba, Father." That covenant looked backward to the tangible, material mount (the "mount that might be touched"); but ours looks forward to, and centers in, Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, invisible, spiritual--"not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation." It is not simply a thing future and distant, whither as strangers and pilgrims we travel; we have already come to it in a sense. We are connected with it, in fellowship with it. Our citizenship is there. ([Phil. 3:20.](#)) We are in communion with God, the Judge of all ([Rom. 8:33](#)), and Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant; in contact with the sanctifying blood--better than that of Abel's sacrifice and all sacrifices like it; put in relationship with innumerable hosts of angels (compare [Heb. 1:14](#); [Ps. 34:7](#)); in fellowship with the spirits of just men made perfect--the saints of God, who lived by faith in bygone days, and who are now awaiting the day of their glorious resurrection--and with the whole [189] church of God, the assembly of the firstborn ([James 1:18](#)), whose names are enrolled in heaven.

The lesson, however, which God in those days of rudimentary teaching, under the former covenant, first impressed on his people--the greatness, power, awful glory, majesty, and consuming holiness of his presence--was not to be forgotten. True, we have come to know the tender mercy and love of our God, but that fundamental reverence and fear is the groundwork of all our faith. God has not changed. If he was terrible then, so is he now. But our attitude toward him has changed. We have fled to him, instead of from him, and his terror has become our defense and our refuge. We

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are in Christ, clothed with a perfect righteousness, delivered through the blood from that wrath which must surely fall upon every sinner. Woe unto him that forsakes his fortress! The liberties of the new covenant are not of the nature of license to sin. Its wonderful privileges furnish no immunity to the willful sinner. "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard, lest haply we drift away from them. For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great a [190] salvation?" ([Heb. 2:1-3.](#)) "A man that hath set at nought Moses' law dieth without compassion on the word of two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, think ye, shall he be judged worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." ([Heb. 10:28-31.](#))

It is evident, then, that the greater glory and privilege of the new covenant is coupled with graver responsibility. We dare not, must not, think of turning back. Behind us is only destruction--the wrath of God is revealed from heaven. "Remember Lot's wife." Our hope is in pressing onward, forward, at any cost, nearer to God, on to perfection. Let us say with Paul: "This one thing I do." Let no one be discouraged over failures past or present; only press on. You cannot fail if this is your motto. Look ahead; go ahead. Hell is behind, heaven before.

The old covenant, indeed, was a covenant of slavish fear and terror; but while the slavery has been abolished and we do not dread God as a taskmaster, but rather love and serve him as [191] a Father in nearness and confidence, we need to cling close to him, lest, becoming presumptuous and neglectful, we should yet have to meet him as Judge and Avenger. God forbid it! With greater authority, greater power, greater glory, comes now the call of God from heaven. "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh." If it was a serious matter under the old covenant, it is yet more so now. ([Heb. 12:25.](#))

Now he points us on to the end of things. "Yet once more"--only once more--will God shake, not the earth only, but also the heaven--a final shaking, in which all that is human and subject to ruin shall fall into ruins. "For the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." "The world passeth away, and the lust thereof." "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up." Then where shall the Esaus appear--who lived on the earth, were of the earth; whose aspirations were for the earth; whose hopes, pleasures, and treasures are in the earth?

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But you--"seeing that these things are thus all to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be [192] in all holy living and godliness?" ([2 Pet. 3:10-13.](#))

Not simply will it be a destruction, but a removal of all that is thus shaken. (Compare [Rev. 20:11.](#)) "The first things are passed away. And he that sitteth on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new." ([Rev. 21:4, 5.](#)) Then will be a new heaven and a new earth, in which dwells righteousness; and then shall we have our place in the heavenly Jerusalem, amid the innumerable hosts of angels, with God the Judge of all and with Jesus the Savior, and shall go out from there no more.

Jerusalem, the golden, with milk and honey blest,
Beneath your contemplation sink heart and voice oppressed.
I know not--O, I know not!--what social joys are there,
What radiancy of glory, what light beyond compare.

That Jerusalem is the glorified church, and pertains to the kingdom which cannot be shaken. If, then, we deem it a prize worthy of our life, "let us have grace [for without it we can not hope to attain], whereby we may offer service well-pleasing to God with reverence and awe: for our God is a consuming fire."



Keep thou before our eyes, our Father in heaven, the hope of our calling, and the riches [193] of the glory of thy inheritance in the saints, and the exceeding greatness of thy power to usward who believe, which has been manifested in the resurrection of Christ from the dead. With such assurance of help and grace, and with the view of thy eternal promises and the glory of our Father's house, let us walk in thy love and in the fellowship of Jesus. Help us to realize that if we turn away, it is only to darkness and despair, without a single ray of hope to lighten its path; and if we press on unto perfection, it is light and glory and joy, without a single shadow of cloud or menace of hell. Father, preserve us from the eternal failure; we flee unto thee for refuge. Keep us unto thy heavenly kingdom, and set us before the presence of thy glory without blemish in exceeding joy, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



Questions and Suggestions for the Next Lesson.

[Heb. 13](#) is a chapter of various exhortations and admonitions, and the concluding chapter. What is the importance of brotherly love? Who entertained angels without knowing it? What application does he make of the quotation in [verse 6](#)? [194]

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LESSON XXIII.--HEB. 13:1-6.

1 Let love of the brethren continue. 2 Forget not to show love unto strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. 3 Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; them that are ill-treated, as being yourselves also in the body. 4 *Let marriage be had in honor among all, and let the bed be undefiled:* for fornicators and adulterers God will judge. 5 Be ye free from the love of money; content with such things as ye have: for himself hath said, I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee. 6 So that with good courage we say,

The Lord is my helper; I will not fear:
What shall man do unto me?

Final Exhortations.

Brotherly Love.--Let it continue. Hold it fast. Do not let it die out. Without it Christianity has no meaning. The greatest of all the graces, it is also the chief end and aim and fruit. It includes all else. There are many commandments, many virtues; but love sums them all up. There are many tasks to be got, many problems to be solved; but the one lesson of it all is love. "The end of the charge is love out of a pure heart and a good conscience and faith unfeigned." ([1 Tim. 1:5.](#)) "Seeing ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth unto unfeigned love of the brethren, love one [195] another from the heart fervently." ([1 Pet. 1:22.](#)) By it does God recognize us as his children. "Every one that loveth is begotten of God." ([1 John 4:7.](#)) Love is the mark by which the world is to know us. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." ([John 13:35.](#)) And, thirdly, that is our own means of knowing that we stand right with God. "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren." ([1 John 3:14.](#)) If we have been exhorted to continue steadfastly in faith and hope, now he says: "Let brotherly love continue." But let no one suppose that this love is obtainable except through faith and hope and the obedience connected. We cannot learn this supreme lesson without taking in God's school. We cannot have the full ear without root or blade or stalk. In all our Christian walks let us keep our eye on love, remembering that it is to be the essential purpose of all we believe, confess, or practice.

Hospitality.--Not simply hospitality, but hospitality "without grudging" ([1 Peter 4:9](#)), free, liberal, full of kindness. Show love unto strangers, more especially to those who need it and cannot requite you by entertaining you again. ([Luke 14:12-14.](#)) This is evidently not simply the sentimental love, but the practical kind-- [196] not without its proper sentiment, for sentiment and practice are hard to divorce. "My little children, let us not love in word, neither with the tongue; but in deed and truth." ([1 John 3:18.](#)) We are unduly exercised over the danger of bestowing a gift upon an unworthy person, ostensibly because we are "afraid to encourage them in idleness," and lest we actually "do them an injury by helping them along when they ought to help themselves," etc. Often, however, the real reason is that we grudge to give to or

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to do for others, especially for strangers and very needy people; and so we get very scrupulous about doing them an injury indirectly, and willing rather to risk doing them a real and direct injury by withholding from them what they ought to have. It is an instance of pharisaism--straining out gnats and swallowing a camel. If I am imposed upon, it is only a mistake; if I misjudge, and accordingly mistreat, another, it is a cruel wrong. Which should I risk? True, there is room for wisdom in bestowing gifts and hospitality. True, there are many who habitually lean and sponge on their fellows and "beat their way" through life. But while God sharply rebukes such persons, saying, "If a man will not work, he shall not eat," yet he adds this to those who had been imposed upon: "But ye, brethren, be not weary in [197] well-doing." ([2 Thess. 3:10-13.](#)) And when a man is in need, it is no good time to ask questions. Sometimes, as Victor Hugo says, it is the man who has most reason for wishing to conceal his name that needs our help most. Let us not be overinquisitive or overscrupulous there, that we may be the children of our Father who is in heaven; "for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." And have you never received a gift of his unworthily or misused one of his blessings? Yet he has not withdrawn his help.

As to the question, "Who entertained angels unawares?" there is, as far as I know, but one case on record--Lot. ([Gen. 19.](#)) Abraham ([Gen. 18](#)) showed by the form of his address (in the Hebrew) that he recognized the greatness of his visitors, whereas Lot seems to have taken them as ordinary travelers. We have opportunity of entertaining not only angels, but the Lord himself. "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me."

Brotherly Sympathy.--If we are bound together in the same body, having the same Head, the same life, the same Spirit, the same hope, sympathy follows as a natural inference. How quickly, in the physical body, one member flies [198] to the relief of another! How the whole frame is distressed over the suffering of one part! So let it be in the body of Christ. Rejoice with them that do rejoice; weep with them that weep. "And whether one member suffereth, all the members suffer with it; or one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it." (See [1 Cor. 12:25-27.](#))

Marriage.--Marriage is holy before God and must be held in honor among men. God himself is the avenger of any breach of fidelity in the marriage relation. ([1 Thess. 4:6.](#)) Any laxity on this point is simply the undermining of the foundations of society, family, State, and religion. Moreover, there will be a terrible individual retribution. ([Prov. 6:27-29.](#)) God will see to that. David's sin was forgiven him, but the rest of his days were embittered by its consequences, and his whole posterity after him labored under the curse of the sword which came upon his family because of the crime. And what will God do about the adulterers and adulteresses of to-day, who, under the cover of law and the name of "divorce," flagrantly violate the holiest obligation of

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earthly life? "Be not deceived; God is not mocked." They shall in no wise go unpunished.

The popular novels of to-day, the scenes enacted upon the stage and in the moving [199] pictures, often turn upon marital unfaithfulness, sometimes representing it in pleasing and attractive guise. Thus the youth of the land become accustomed to look upon this evil. It becomes a familiar thing, and the natural, high-principled abhorrence of this great wrong wears away. What will the outcome be?

Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,
As, to be hated, needs but to be seen;
But seen too often face to face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.

Shun the popular novel! Shun the theater! Impurity, vice, adultery, are there broadly, shamelessly flaunted into your face, arrayed with all the glitter and enticement of the world. Abhor that false, devilish sentimentality that speaks of "soul affinity," and "souls that met in space and recognized each other," and "hearts that were made for each other," etc., in excuse for adultery--fine, specious phrases to hide the enormity of its wickedness; the spawn of filthy minds, the perfumed lies wherewith they cover the abyss of their foul putridity; the hypocrisies of Satan clothed in high-sounding poetry and philosophy; the venom of hell in palatable form. Flee every suggestion of this terrible, damnable sin! The wife's first earthly duty is to her husband; the husband's, to his wife. They are joined for better or worse. [200] If for worse, it is a school of patient endurance, doing the will of God, learning love, meekness, and goodness under difficulties. And God will not forsake those who in the fear of him bear that burden--yea, he is able to bring forth light out of gloom and change the burden into a blessing even in the earthly days. ([Ps. 27:13.](#)) But for divorce there is no reason or excuse, save that which is written. ([Matt. 5:32.](#))

The Love of Money.--Free from the love of money. Of all that is in the world--its lust, its glory, its pride--money represents the sum. Therefore the love of money is the love of the world. The world is purchasable with money, and most men seek the world through the channel of money. Money is a god, in whose service and worship thousands in Christian lands spend their lives. "Mammon" is his name. Love him, and he will come to you; trust him, and he will furnish you with all you want and need and wish for as to this life. Therefore, covetousness (the love of money) is idolatry. What I look to and trust in for my support, that is my god. ([Job 31:24, 25, 28.](#)) And as idolatry has always been the source of darkness, degradation, and every sort of crime, so here also; for "the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil: which some reaching after have been led astray from the faith, and have pierced [201] themselves through with many sorrows." ([1 Tim. 6:10.](#))

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This love of money is occasioned in the first place by an anxious concern for the morrow. What shall I eat? What shall I drink? Wherewithal shall I be clothed? Now you may seek assurance on these questions in two ways. One would be to look to money, laying it up in store, hoarding it, securing it, obtaining it by all means; the other, to look to the true and living God, who owns all things and who has all power. As soon as you draw this distinction, however, some one is ready to say: "Yes, but you must work. God will give you nothing if you do not work." No one denies that men should work. But you can do the same thing on different principles. One may be, to use an illustration, circumcised for hygienic reasons; another, as a religious act. Both did the same thing; but the one did no wrong, whereas the other rejected Christ. One man is baptized to obey God; another, to win favor of certain church members. Both did the same thing; but the one pleased God, the other was an abomination to him. So one man works, and he is serving God the while he does it; another works, and is an idolater--doing service to mammon. Moreover, one man works to secure his own welfare and comfort; and having thus fixed [202]himself comfortably, he looks around to see what he can do for God's kingdom with what he may happen to have left. Another seeks first "the kingdom of God, and his righteousness," trusting that as he is faithful to God, God will be faithful to him. Which is better? Which is right?

Note now carefully the argument of our Lord Jesus Christ. ([Matt. 6:19-34.](#)) "Lay not up." Earthly treasures are uncertain. Treasure in heaven is better. "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." The single eye--just the one good end in view, just the one purpose--that means light to the whole man. "No man can serve two masters." "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." "Therefore"--mark it. "Therefore I say unto you, Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink." Do not throw away your life for food or your body for the sake of raiment. There are higher uses. The life is worth more than the food; the body, more than the raiment. There are higher uses. The life is worth more than the food; the body, more than the raiment. God cares for all his creatures--even the birds, the lilies, the grass. How much more shall he see to you and your needs! Do not be anxious, therefore, for such things. The Gentiles, who know not God, do that. "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Aim at [203] the higher things, and the lower shall be adjusted. Even as Solomon desired wisdom above all, and he received it and everything else thrown in besides, so shall it be with you. Seek after God's kingdom and righteousness. Let this be your single aim day by day. All things else will come in incidentally. God careth for his own.

There is no fetter or clog on the church so heavy as this concern about money and "what shall we eat?" etc. If it were not for that, how many missionaries would go out! What willingness to support those who have gone out! How much liberality, charity, good works! How much self-denial, devotion, and earnest, self-sacrificing effort

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would result if there were faith to believe what God has actually said on this subject! And see now what assurance God has given us here: "Be ye free from the love of money; content with such things as ye have: for himself hath said, I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee. So that with good courage we say, The Lord is my helper; I will not fear: What shall man do unto me?" For where God "himself" says such things, we may "with good courage" respond as above. It is a question of believing in God and trusting ourselves unreservedly into his faithful hands. [204]



Our Father, we pray that thou make us to abound more and more in love toward our brethren and toward all men; for this prayer thou didst thyself, by the holy Spirit, put into the mouth of thy servant, Paul. It is good, and thou wilt hear it. May we excel before thee in this, the greatest of all virtues and graces, that we may be like thee, for thy name is "Love." May thy love fill our hearts and through us extend to men--to the poor and to the stranger who knocks at our door; to the brethren who are suffering privations and afflictions and persecutions; in our home circles, in parents towards children, in children toward parents, in husband toward wife, in wife toward husband. To those who are battling with domestic difficulties, be thou a forgiving and gracious Helper, lest they fall into condemnation. Help thou thy children who are wives to wear that ornament which is in the sight of God of great price--a meek and quiet spirit--and by their chaste behavior, coupled with fear, command respect of their husbands and win them to Christ; and husbands, that they may give honor unto their wives and love them even as Christ also loved the church. O Lord, preserve thou the purity and sanctity of our Christian homes; may thy peace rule in them; and keep each one of us from contamination from the [205] corruption that is in the world. Inasmuch as thou hast called us, like Abraham, to seek after the things unseen, help us to renounce the love of money; for money is the chief representative of things that are seen, and our hearts are prone to cleave unto it for want of faith. Lord, we believe; help thou our unbelief. May we seek after the higher things with single eye, and in boldness, inspired by thy eternal promise, exclaim: "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear!" In Jesus' name. Amen. [195]

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LESSON XXIV.--HEB. 13:7-21.

7 Remember them that had the rule over you, men that spake unto you the word of God; and considering the issue of their life, imitate their faith. 8 Jesus Christ *is* the same yesterday and to-day, *yea* and for ever. 9 Be not carried away by divers and strange teachings: for it is good that the heart be established by grace; not by meats, wherein they that occupied themselves were not profited. 10 We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat that serve the tabernacle. 11 For the bodies of those beasts whose blood is brought into the holy place by the high priest *as an offering* for sin, are burned without the camp. 12 Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people through his own blood, suffered without the gate. 13 Let us therefore go forth unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. 14 For we have not here an abiding city, but we seek after *the city* which is to come. 15 Through him then let us offer up a sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of lips which make confession to his name. 16 But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. 17 Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit *to them*: for they watch in behalf of your souls, as they that shall give account; that they may do this with joy, and not with grief: for this *were* unprofitable for you.

18 Pray for us: for we are persuaded that we have a good conscience, desiring to live honorably in all things. 19 And I exhort *you* the more exceedingly to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.

20 Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep with the blood of an eternal covenant, *even* our Lord Jesus, 21 make you [207] perfect in every good thing to do his will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom *be* the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

"Them That Had the Rule Over You."

To whom does it refer? ([Verse 7.](#)) Notice it is not those that "have," but those who "had," the rule. They have it no more. Not those who "speak," but those who once "spake," the word of God. They are passed away, for he says "considering the issue of their life." So their lives are finished. We must conclude that they were the men of God of old--patriarchs, kings, leaders, judges; prophets especially, from Moses to Malachi. They are held up as examples repeatedly. (See [Heb. 11](#); [James 5:10](#); [Matt. 5:12.](#))

But when in [verse 17](#) we meet the expression, "Obey them that have the rule over you," it can have reference only to the elders, for they are those that watch in behalf of your souls.

It is well here to consider [Matt. 20:25-28](#). The elders have no absolute authority or rule. It is written (by Peter himself, fortunately, to the confounding of the extravagant claims of those styled his successors) that they were not to lord it over God's heritage. ([1 Pet. 5:2, 3.](#)) Christ alone is Ruler and Lord. But the elders, by loving concern for the welfare of the souls, [208] by patient teaching and the power of true example, were to keep the Christians in the way of truth. It is not the elders' privilege to command, to dictate, to make arbitrary rules and requirements. The fear of being lorded over by self-willed, puffed-up, stubborn men prevents many congregations from having any elders at all. It would, indeed, be a bad move to place such power in the hands of a few men who think they must thenceforth take it upon themselves to

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"run" the church and possibly tyrannize over it. But that never was God's will. The elders' rule lies simply in the gospel--the teaching and practice of the same. But in matters of expediency, while their judgment is always worthy of special deference, they can submit as gracefully as any one else.

"Divers and Strange Teachings."

There are minds peculiarly fascinated by anything that is new and strange. Let every one who recognizes this tendency in himself cling with firmer purpose to God's word. There are some who are always seeking after things curious rather than profitable, forever tunneling beneath the surface to find something queer and unusual. There is a pride of reason that glories in its keenness of discrimination and logical acumen, but which can be only displeasing to [209] Him who dwells with those who are poor and of a contrite spirit, who tremble at his word. There is a self-conceit that is forever seeking applause by unheard-of arguments, fanciful interpretations; that boasts of being different from others and having peculiar ideas. This disposition must be overcome, for we shall never attain unto truth that way. God's light is for the humble, the poor in spirit, rather than for the philosophers and hair-splitters and wiseacres of this world. We shall be original and peculiar enough if we are true to ourselves and read the Bible, not with a view of being either like others or differing from them, but with simple intent to learn the will of God in humility that we may do it. But this far-fetchedness and this effort at originality is weak and wrong; it leads both thee and thy hearers away from the truth into fads and fancies, "divers and strange teachings."

Beware especially of the preposterous claims of those who claim to have direct revelations or "inner light" on the Bible which is not accessible to others. There is the pope of Rome, infallible *in cathedra*; Emanuel Swedenborg, specially illumined; Mrs. E. G. White, of Seventh-Day Adventist fame; Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy, originator of "Christian Science," whose "key" to the Scriptures certainly unlocks [210] marvelous things "which God commanded not, neither came they into his mind;" John Alexander Dowie, of peculiar memory, third Elijah, who managed to make his godliness a way of gain; the Joseph Smiths and Brigham Youngs, with their "apostles" and other authorities of Mormondom, who get "revelations" just in the nick of time and exactly as they wish them; and so forth. By accepting the claims of such you abandon yourself to the wild fancies and vagaries or even intrigues of men. Better follow your own fancies, if you are just bound to follow some one's. For what is the difference? But if you want truth, go to the fountain of God's word. If Paul himself, or an angel from heaven, preach any gospel other than what has been preached, let them be accursed. ([Gal. 1:8, 9.](#)) False prophets come in sheep's clothing. Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light, and his ministers into ministers of righteousness. Whom can

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you trust? Try the spirits, for many false spirits have gone out. The true spirit glorifies Jesus as Lord and Ruler (compare [Col. 2:4-9](#)); stands for a clean life, faithfulness to God's word, obedience to the teaching of the apostles whom Jesus personally commissioned and sent forth ([1 John 4:6](#)). The true prophet has credentials from God ([Heb. 2:4](#)), and, above all that (for there are lying [211] miracles), speaks in strict harmony with God's word as already revealed. Thus Jesus, notwithstanding his great and mighty works, relied chiefly upon the (Old Testament) scriptures to validate his claims. ([John 5:36-39](#); study [Deut. 18:21, 22; 13:1-5](#).) These things are important, and are becoming more and more so as we approach the end; for false prophets and false Christs arise, and the many lo-here's and lo-there's confuse unstable minds.

Our Priestly Privileges.

In a spiritual sense we eat of our Sacrifice, Jesus Christ, even as the priests of the old covenant ate of the sacrifice that typified Christ. ([John 6:51-57; 1 Cor. 5:7, 8](#).) But the sin-offering under the old covenant must be wholly burned. ([Lev. 16:27](#).) They had no right to eat of it.

Then he changes the figure--"without the camp." That word sets him on a new line of thought. "Without the camp" was a place of reproach. It meant exclusion from the society and fellowship of the people. Outside of the camp (and, later, outside the city gates) were the unclean and the lepers. The sacrifice was burned outside the camp to signify the reproach of sin that was laid upon it. Outside the city Jesus Christ, the great sin offering, was offered [212] up. If he did this for us, let us, then, not fear to bear his reproach with him. If the Hebrew Christians should be cast out by their Jewish brethren, let them not refuse to bear it. Then, again, if we are true Christians, we are not of the world. The world will exclude us. Their frivolities, aims, amusements, pleasures, and desires are not ours. We are not congenial with them. Therefore we are as strangers among them, cranks and fools in their eyes, for Christ's sake. We shall not miss our measure of exclusion and persecution. But what matters it? We have no abiding city here; we seek for one to come. But in that city the tables will be turned. There Jesus and his own will dwell within the gates; but without are the murderers, whoremongers, dogs, sorcerers, idolaters, and every one that loveth and maketh a lie. "And there shall in no wise enter into it anything unclean: . . . but only they that are written in the Lamb's book of life." Remember, my brother, we cannot be "within the gates" at both places. The friendship of the world is enmity against God. Let us be content to be outcasts here, that we may be citizens and children over there.

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Jesus, Our Sacrifice, Our High Priest, Once More.

Only through his blood can we minister before God in prayer and praise and acceptable worship, in good works and giving. No service or sacrifice on any other basis than the sanctifying blood can be accepted. Moreover, it must all go through the hands of the High Priest and Mediator.

The worship of certain secret societies in their lodges, which is not offered on the basis of the atoning blood nor in the name and by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, is not acceptable before God, and especially in the case of Christians partaking in it, is little short of blasphemy and "counting the blood of the covenant an unholy thing."

The Concluding Prayer.

That the inspired writer of this Epistle believed in more than the "reflex action" of prayer is evident from [verse 19](#). He actually believed that by means of their prayers he would be restored to them sooner, just as Jesus implied that the movements of the Roman army and the plans of the Roman general could be affected by the prayers of the disciples. ([Matt. 24:20](#).)

The concluding prayer is beautiful. He calls upon the God of peace, who has done so much [214] to bring us unto himself, to finish the good work he began in us--to make us perfect in every good thing to do his will, "working in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ." (Compare [Phil. 2:12, 13](#).) "To whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen." As when he ends the argumentative portion of the Epistle to the Romans: "For of him, and through him, and unto him, are all things. To him be the glory for ever. Amen."



Thou God of peace, who in thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, hast prepared for us so great a salvation, who hast called us by thy gospel and chosen us unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, work thou in us now, that we may work out that salvation thou hast freely granted to us. Make us more desirous of thy promises; increase our faith; make us willing to do thy will. May we find more blessing in prayer through an increase of our faith in thee; may we have more delight and earnestness in the study of thy word; may we not be ashamed to bear the reproach of our Lord Jesus Christ, that he may not be ashamed to own us before thee and the holy angels. Amen.

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Suggestions and Questions for the Next Lesson.

Read the Epistle again. Go over each chapter and sum up what is taught about God, about Christ, and the way of rightly dividing the word. What are the chief admonitions and exhortations? What do you consider the keynote? Note the contrasts and comparisons. What requirement of God does he exalt most of all? [216]

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LESSON XXV.--A VIEW OF THE WHOLE OF HEBREWS.

What Does This Epistle Teach About God?

1. God spoke to men through prophets and through Jesus Christ. ([1:1, 2.](#))
2. God bore witness to the apostles of Christ. ([2:4.](#))
3. God subjected all things to Christ. ([2:8.](#))
4. All things are for God and through God. ([2:10; compare Rom. 11:36.](#))
5. God made the plan of "bringing many sons unto glory." ([2:10.](#))
6. God made the Author of our salvation (Christ) perfect through sufferings. ([2:10.](#))
7. God built all things. ([3:4.](#))
8. God is a living God (not, as some even to-day seem to think, a figurehead--a deaf, dumb, dead, powerless being). ([3:12; 9:14; 10:31.](#))
9. God has a people. ([4:9.](#))
10. "There is no creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of him." ([4:13.](#))
11. We have to deal with God whether we wish to or not--"him with whom we have to do." ([4:13.](#)) [217]
12. God called Christ to the high-priesthood. ([5:4-6, 10.](#))
13. God blesses him who brings forth good fruit. ([6:7.](#))
14. God is not unrighteous or unfair. He does not forget our work and our love toward his name, which is manifested in showing kindness and doing service to his children. ([6:10.](#))
15. God assured the heirs of the promise by two immutable things--his promise and his oath. ([6:17, 18.](#))

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16. It is impossible for God to lie. ([6:18.](#))

17. God found fault with the people under the old covenant, and announced a new covenant, in which they should be recipients of greater privileges and mercies. ([8:7-12.](#))

18. God, toward one who meets him in guilt, is a terrible avenger and judge. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." ([10:30, 31.](#))

19. God's soul has no pleasure in him that shrinks back. ([10:38.](#))

20. God is. ([11:6.](#))

21. God is "a rewarder of them that earnestly seek after him." ([11:6.](#))

22. God is the builder and maker of our heavenly city. ([11:10, 16.](#))

23. God has special favors for those who trust in him. ([11:4, 5, 7, 11, 16, 19, 32-40.](#)) [218]

24. God chastens and scourges his sons in wisdom and love, that they may be partakers of his holiness. ([12:5-10.](#))

25. God is the Father of Spirits. Our earthly fathers are represented, by way of contradistinction, as the "fathers of our flesh." ([12:9.](#))

26. God will shake and remove heaven and earth. ([12:26, 27.](#))

27. Our God is "a consuming fire." ([12:29.](#))

28. God will judge all adulterers. ([13:4.](#))

29. God will in no wise fail us or forsake us (if we love and trust him rather than money), and will be our helper (in such emergencies where people usually depend upon money for help). ([13:5, 6.](#))

30. God is well-pleased with such sacrifices as praise, benevolence, fellowship with brethren in earthly things, if they are offered through Christ. ([13:15, 16.](#))

31. God is "the God of peace." ([13:20.](#))

32. God raised Jesus from the dead. ([13:20.](#))

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33. God can and will make us "perfect in every good thing to do his will, working in us that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ." ([13:21](#).) [219]

What Does the Epistle Teach Concerning Christ?

Christ is held up from first to last. The writer sees in that the only hope of rescue for the half-hearted Christians. Look to Christ. Consider Christ. Space would fail if the teaching concerning Christ were as particularly itemized as that concerning God above. But let the student draw up a list of things taught concerning Christ in this Epistle, making an effort to note down every particular statement, in reverence and godly fear. Here only some main facts can be given.

Chapter 1. Christ the agent through whom the world was made, the heir of all things, the upholder of all the universe ([verses 2, 3](#))--therefore, first, last, and middle; God's spokesman, ([verse 2](#)) and perfect representative ("image"--[verse 3](#)); made purification of our sins; sitting at the right hand of God--the place of honor of the universe; far greater than the angels ([verses 5, 6](#), etc.); called "God" ([verse 8](#)) and "Lord" ([verse 10](#)) in the old Scriptures (from which these words are quoted).

Chapter 2. Was made for a little while lower than the angels, but now crowned with glory and honor; tasted, by the grace of God, death for every man; was perfected through [220] suffering to be the author of our salvation; made common cause with us, having taken human nature upon him and calling us "brethren;" was made like us; was tempted and suffered that he might be able to succor us.

Chapter 3. He is the Apostle and High Priest of our confession; worthy of more honor than Moses; a Son over God's house (whose house we are).

Chapter 4. Christ is a great High Priest, the Son of God, and has passed through the heavens (into God's presence).

Chapter 5. Christ fulfils in himself the characteristics of the true high priest; but is not after the order of Aaron, but of Melchizedek. He had to learn obedience through sufferings, and (thus) became "the author of eternal salvation to them that obey him."

Chapter 6. Jesus is our forerunner, entered within the veil, by right of his being high priest forever "after the order of Melchizedek."

Chapter 7. He is not made priest "after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life." He is "the surety of a better covenant," and "able to save

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to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." [221]

Chapter 8. He is the minister of the true tabernacle, the real sanctuary in the heavens; the mediator of a better covenant.

Chapter 9. Not only high priest, but also sacrifice, his blood cleanses us; his death began a new testament, and he "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Christ "shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for him, unto salvation."

Chapter 10. Christ brought a sacrifice of a spotless body surrendered to perfect obedience unto God, unto death, according to the will of God. "By which will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." "Yet a very little while, he [Christ] that cometh shall come, and shall not tarry."

Chapter 12. Jesus as a perfect example of the life of faith. ([verses 2, 3.](#))

Chapter 13. Through him (only) our praises and good works are acceptable to God. He is "the great shepherd of the sheep," whom God raised up from the dead. Through him God works in us "that which is well pleasing in his sight."



Now in like manner go over the chapters and see where the Holy Spirit is mentioned and [222] what is said of him. ([2:4; 3:7; 9:8, 14; 10:15.](#))

Look again at the chief admonitions, warnings, exhortations. ([2:1-4; 3:7 to 4:11; 5:11 to 6:20; 10:19-39; 12; 13.](#))

Note most especially what God teaches us on the right way of dividing his word.

1. Main division. ([1:1, 2.](#))
2. Who first spoke our salvation and who confirmed it to us? ([2:3, 4.](#))
3. Christ became the author of our salvation after he had been perfected through sufferings and had been named high priest after the order of Melchizedek. ([5:9, 10.](#))
4. Change of law followed the change of priesthood. ([7:12.](#)) When did Christ become priest? ([7:28.](#))
5. The old and the new covenant. ([8:6-13; 10:9, 10; 12:24.](#))

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6. After Christ's death, a new testament. ([9:16, 17.](#))

7. The old law, but a shadow, figure, and testimony to the new. ([3:5; 8:2, 4, 5; 9:8, 23.](#))



The keynote is "Behold the Christ;" and faith is pointed out as the great thing needful. The words "boldness," "glorying of hope," [223] "confidence," "strong encouragement," "hope," "faith and patience," "not shrinking back," "counting God faithful," "looking unto Jesus"--these are expressive of the one great need of the lukewarm, faint-hearted, backsliding Christians, and are in their connection but descriptive of simple faith.

Repeated reading of Hebrews will now bring you richer returns than ever. New meanings will reveal themselves, obscure places become plain, seemingly insignificant phrases become important, new trains of thought be discovered; a word here and there recurring arrests your attention, and you begin to note how often and in what senses it is used. Do not drop Hebrews now simply because these lessons are ended. Now is your reaping time. Read it and study it and meditate on it in view of the God who spoke it, reverently, prayerfully. Every hour thus occupied will be an hour in which you shall be kept from sin and during which you are being fortified to resist sin at some future time.



Holy Father, thy word is an exceedingly great and precious gift to the humble, contrite soul. So full of sweetness and love and truth, the expression of thy divine mind, it fills us with peace [224] and assurance and power to serve thee. Its wealth of truths and wonderful revelations is unsearchable. Truly thy thoughts are as much higher than our thoughts as the heavens are high above the earth, and through them thou dost lift us up to thyself. Grant unto thy children that the healthier desire of thy word, the true food of the soul, may supplant the perverse appetite for the poor wisdom and news of this world which is passing away. Having now arrived at the close of these lessons, we commend our work and study into thy hands for blessing and results; and may this be the beginning point with us of more earnest and thorough study of that word which is able to build us up and give us the inheritance among the sanctified, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. [225]

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