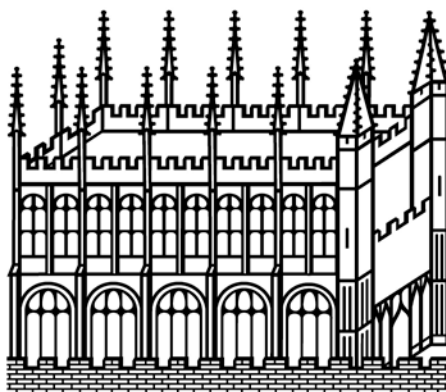




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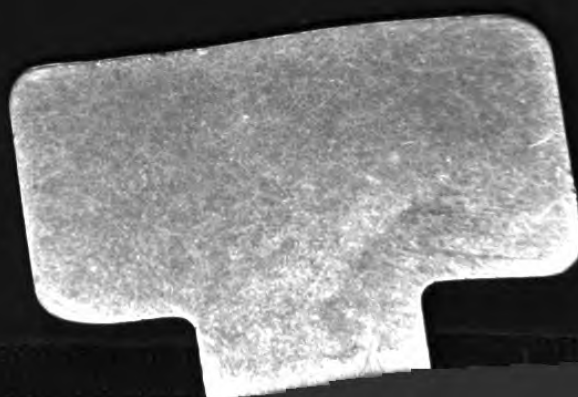
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Notes on Hebrews

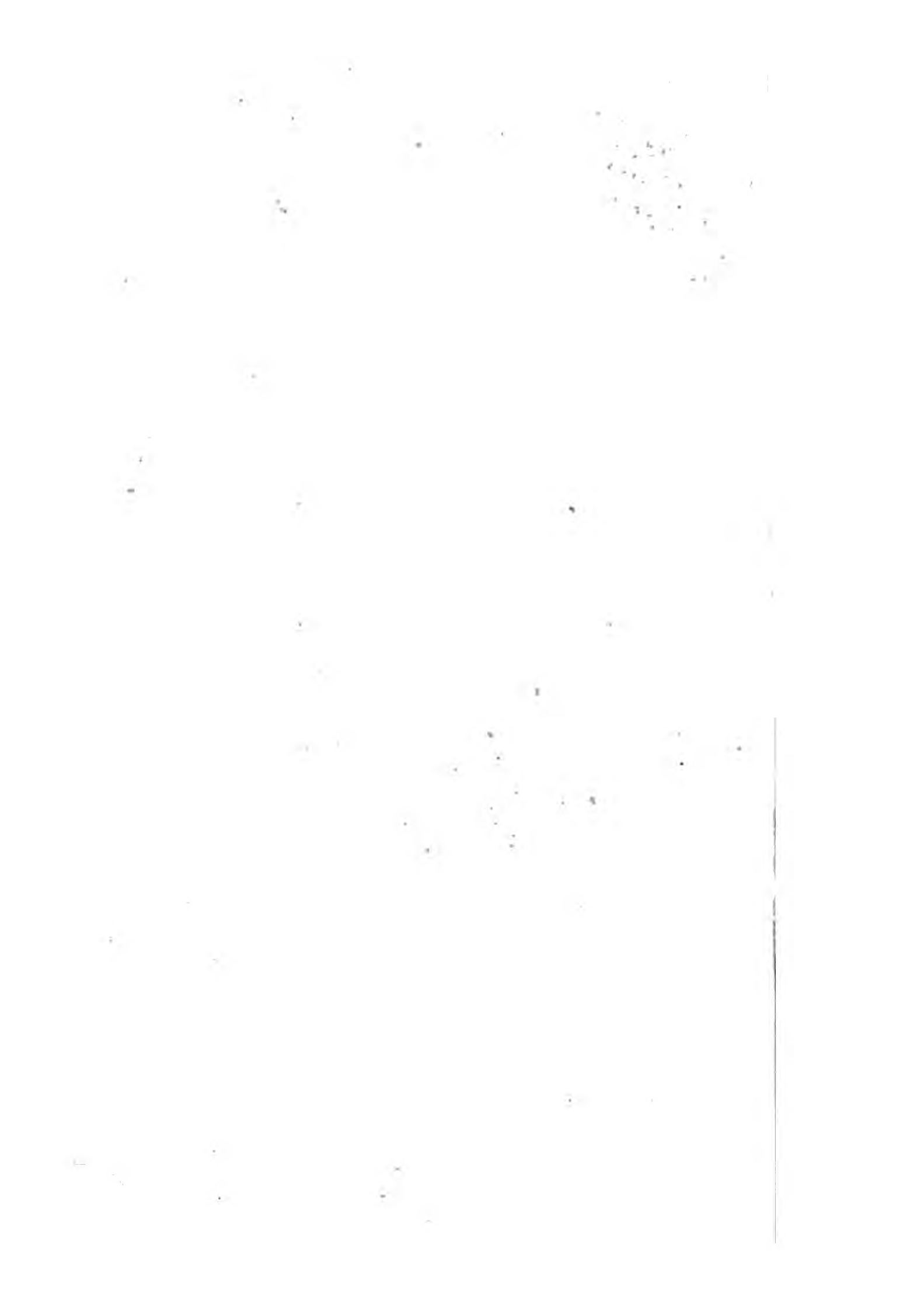
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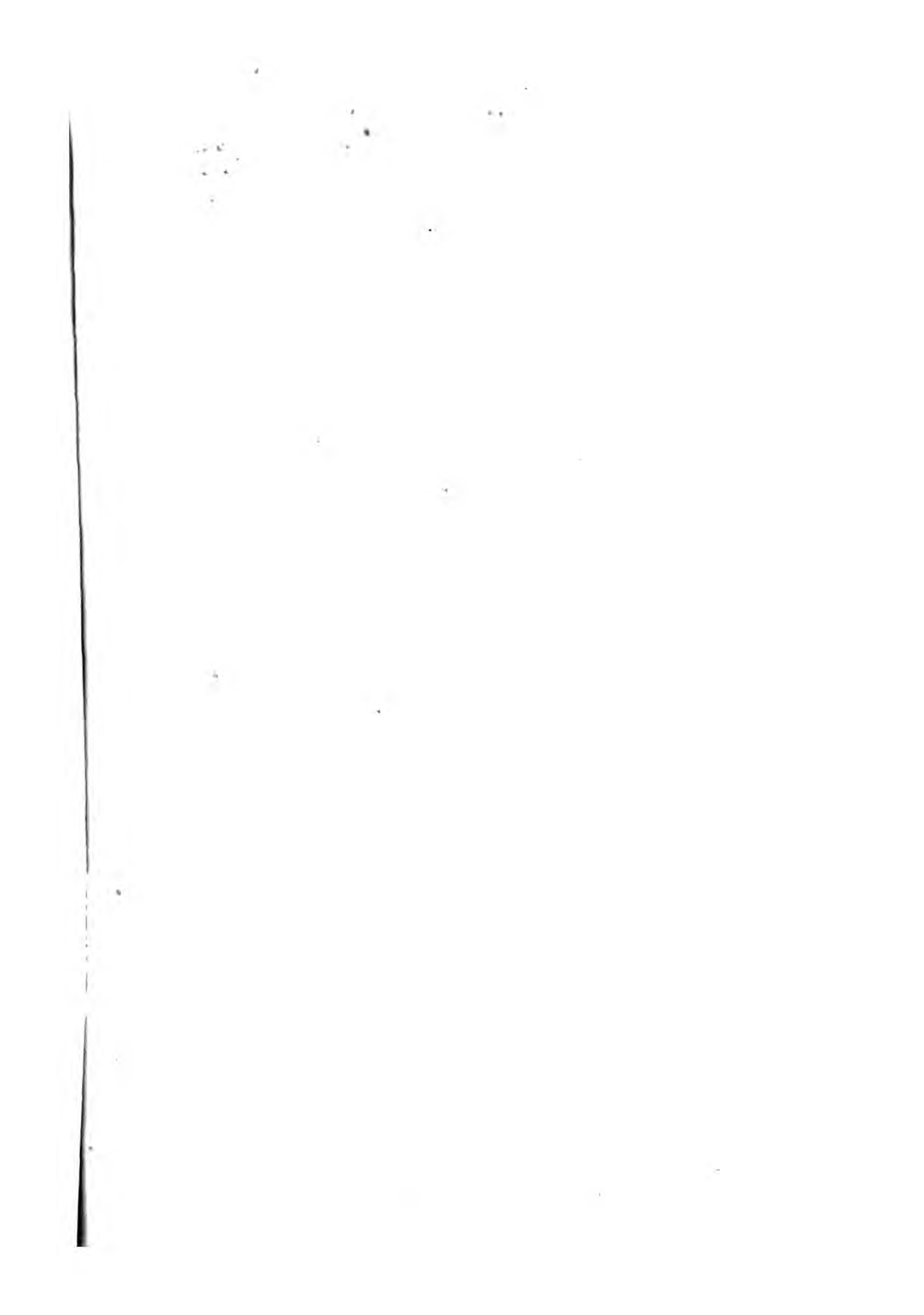


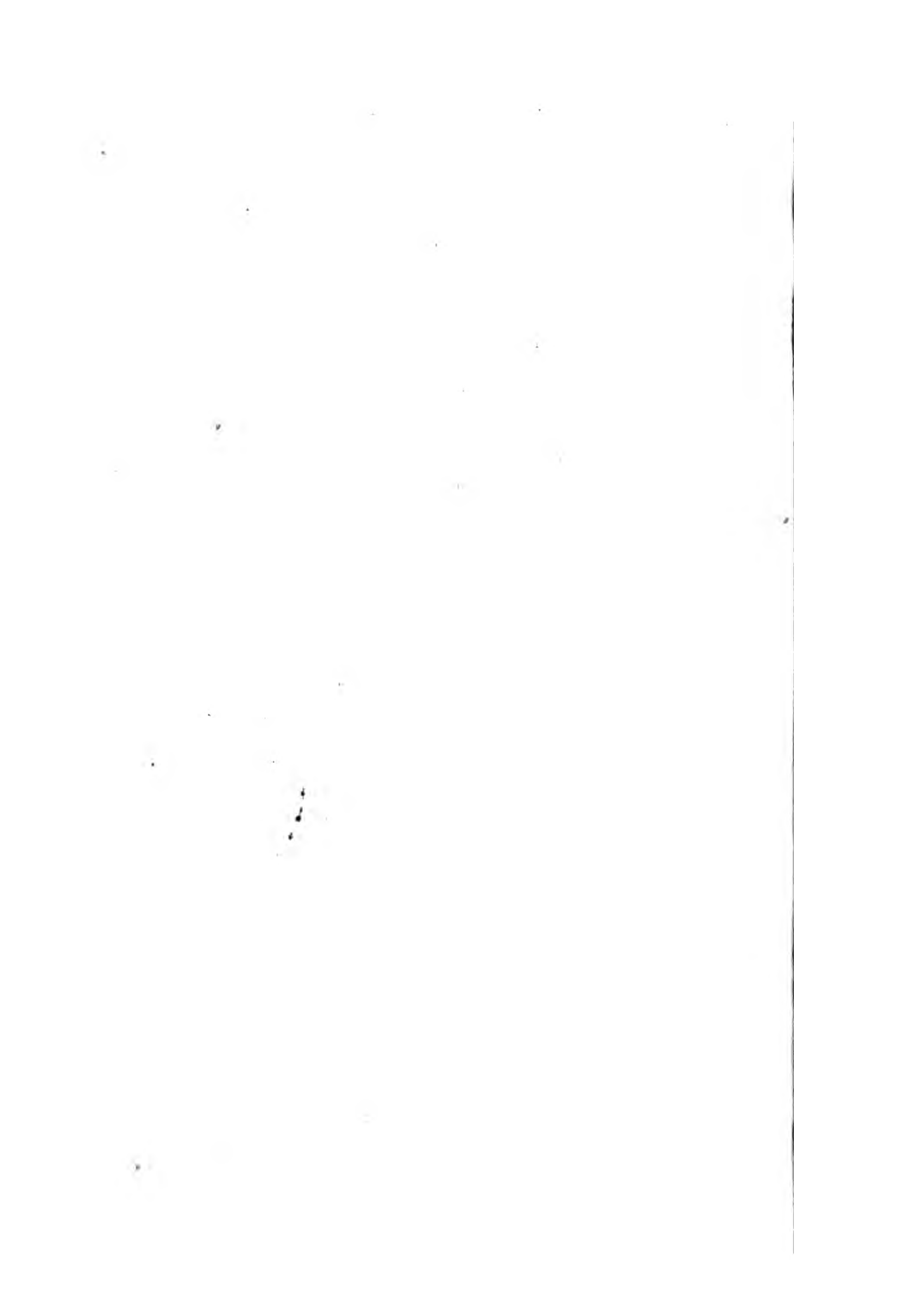
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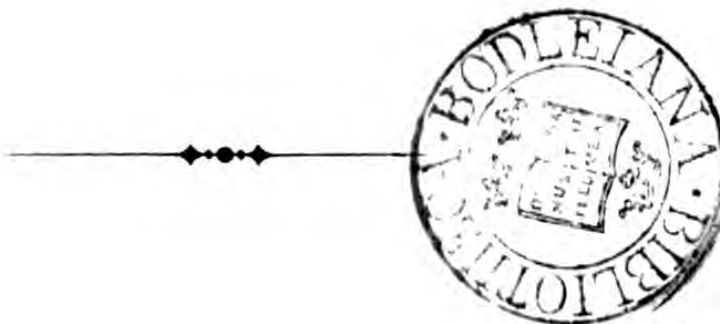
NOTES

ON THE

EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS,

FROM NOTES OF LECTURES.

By J. N. D.



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THOUGHTS ON HEBREWS.

CHAPTER I.

THE Spirit of God in this epistle distinguishes between the way in which God spoke, or dealt, in time past and now. So in Romans iii. the apostle speaks of Christ, "whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past." There he applies the death of Christ to the sins committed before He came. The day of atonement in Israel was for the putting away of *past* sins. He had been bearing with them all the year, and then when the sacrifice came on, that day the sin was all put away and all bright in the presence of God. There is the day of atonement yet to come for Israel as a nation, when in their land. Then the other part was "to declare at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him," &c. This is for the present time. By ascending before God on high, He establishes a *present righteousness*—all sins forgiven and we made the righteousness of God in Christ. Romans iii. 25, gives it historically, for the sins of all who were saved in the Old Testament times

are put away by this sacrifice ; but *we* may apply it immediately, and see that not only *our* past sins are put away, but we stand in righteousness for the present.

Ver. 1., "God who at sundry times," &c. That was before the time came for the revelation of Himself. Messages were sent through others. They had communications from God, for He spake to them through the prophets: but now we have the manifestation of *Himself*. The Son of God has now come. "God hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son." Thus the word of God is so exalted. "'Thou hast magnified thy *word* above all thy name." His name up to that time was exalted—He had made Himself known to Abraham as the Lord Almighty, telling him to trust His *power*, when he had to walk up and down as a stranger, with none to take care of him. Then again He was made known to Nebuchadnezzar as the most High God, higher than any of the gods of the nations ; and to Abraham too He was called thus, when he returned from the slaughter of the kings. He will take it again when the kingdom comes. Then, again, He was known by the name *Jehovah*—"I am," the practical force of which is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." All these names were glorious; but the Word He has magnified above all. The *Word* is that which tells all that God is—holiness, love, wisdom, &c. His word expresses His thoughts and feelings ; it is the revelation of Himself. God speaks by Christ. Everything that Christ did was the mani-

festation of God. Who could heal the leper but God? "I will, be thou clean," are His words. Who could raise the dead but God? "Lazarus, come forth!" (John xvii. 8.) "I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me." He has committed His words to us, to be the vessels of His testimony according to our measure. "He that hath received His testimony hath set to his seal that God is true."

We are not only brought to God now, but to God *revealing* Himself, God manifest in the flesh. Christ came declaring the Father. "Believe me that I am in the Father . . . or else believe me for the very works' sake." What a blessed place we have in Christ, having Him as the revelation of God to us! The mind of God is brought before us in Christ. "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart." This is what makes Scripture so precious. It is indeed the written word, but the revelation of God. "No prophecy of Scripture is of private interpretation." You have got the mind of God in *writing*, and there it is stable and imperishable—in contrast to traditions merely handed down from one to another. There cannot be the Church speaking, without Scripture. If the Church can say anything itself, then Christ's words go for nothing. I have another master over me. I am speaking of authority now, not of *gift*, which of course there is in the Church for the bringing out of truth. But *authority* in the Church trenches on the lordship of Christ over His

house. It is a great thing to treasure in our souls that we have this revelation of God in Christ; and the beginning of the next chapter takes us up on the ground of possessing it. "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip." These were Jews to whom the apostle was writing, and they had heard the Lord Himself speak, and afterwards His apostles; and that is the reason why Paul did not put his name to this as to other epistles, when inditing them. You Jews hear what God Himself had said to you. You have heard Him. Thus, the apostle only confirmed what He had said. It is blessed thus to see how Paul drops his own apostleship, (he was not, it is true, the apostle of the circumcision,) and only speaks of the twelve who confirmed Christ's own words.

In this chapter we have first the glory of Christ shown in His being "heir of all things." He was the Son of the Father, and the everlasting Father, by virtue of His own power; and He will take everything. He will inherit all things. If a Son, we may say, then an heir; and it is even said of us, "If children, then heirs." All that is the Father's is His. "He shall take of *mine*, and shall show it unto you." Psalm viii. is alluded to in chap. ii., when in the counsels of God it is appointed that as a man He should take all things; but in this chapter we have this same One as the Son of God and "heir of all things;" and for this glorious reason, He "made the

worlds." In Colossians we have it, they "were created *by* him and *for* him." There it is His title over creation, but as "the image of the invisible God, the first-born," &c. So here it is "heir of all things, by whom also *he made* the worlds." He is distinguished from God the Father—the right hand of His power. By wisdom He planned and by power He wrought. Christ is that wisdom and that power.

Ver. 3. "The express image of his person." Christ was the outshining of God's glory. That is more than testimony made by the prophets in other ages. John xii. 38-41, in connexion with Isaiah vi., shows the shining out of His glory very remarkably. See also Heb. xii. 27 in connexion with this word, "the express image of his person."

"Upholding all things," &c. Of course this is a divine act. Who could keep the universe going? How could it all go on without God, so that not a sparrow falls to the ground without Him? How could it be without Him who made it? Though He has established the order of all things, it is He who is keeping it all going. The one actually acting and possessing all is Christ. We see His *glory* in all this.

Another divine work there is spoken of in His having "purged our sins;" and it is just as much a divine act to purge our sins as to create a world, and in one sense far more difficult, because sin is so hateful to God. It would be easy enough for Him to create another world out of nothing. He could look at His creation and say it was all "very good;" but

He is so holy, He cannot look upon sin. Therefore, there is something He must take away, and he does come to put sins away. We have sinned against God, and it is impossible for any to forgive the sin but the person sinned against. We have sinned against God, not man primarily, and man cannot forgive sins. This is another reason why God should be the only one who can forgive sins.

Mark another thing. He must *purge* before He can *forgive*. In passing through this world, man has to pass over a great deal, and get through as well as he can; but God cannot do that. He "is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity." Then if God is to have anything to do with us, He must purge it. There is this dreadful necessity, that God should be occupied with our sins; and He had love enough and power enough to do it. If He passed it over, He would have to give up His holiness. Therefore there was this moral necessity of His holiness, that if He is to have any such poor sinners in His presence, He must cleanse us. So there must also be the feet-washing, if we are to have part with Christ.

"When He had by Himself purged our sins"—it must be by Himself. No one could help Him in it; angels could have nothing to do in it, though they were sent to minister to Him when engaged in the work. Man could not, for man can do no more than his duty; if he did more, it would be wrong. It must be a divine work to purge away sin. There is a divine necessity upon God to do it—and that by

Himself, because He could not allow sin. This is how I am purged. Because He could not bear sin, He must take it away Himself, and “the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin.” It is a work that has been done : not anything that He will do, and may do—not something yet to be done. *It is done*, and He has sat down. We then no longer have a prophet coming to tell us He will do it, but there is the testimony of the Holy Ghost that it has been done.

“The brightness of God’s glory,” it is said, not the Father’s. Sin is connected with God as its judge, not with the Father. He “sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.” The whole work is accomplished, and so perfectly done that He can take His own place again, and with the blessed difference, that He goes back as a man, which He never was before. Stephen saw Him as the “Son of man,” standing on the right hand of God. Here He is “sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high,” He has taken our sins, and yet is on the right hand of the throne of God. This shows that the righteousness wrought out was so perfect and divine, that though he has taken our sins, He could sit down on the throne of God, and not soil it. He had a right, of course, on the ground of His divine person; but there is more than that here. Divine righteousness is presented to God, as an accomplished thing, just as the Divine Son was manifested to man when He came down amongst us. It is all divine glory throughout.

Psalm ii., “Kiss the Son,” &c. Blessed is the

man who trusteth in God; but cursed the man who trusteth in man. (Jer. xvii.) We find in the prophets certain traits in mystery. as it were, to display the divine person of the One who was coming in humiliation. See Isaiah l. 3—5. The same glorious person who said “I clothe the heavens with blackness,” &c., says, “The Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious,” &c. In Daniel vii. again, see ver. 13, “the Son of man,” brought before “the Ancient of days,” and in ver. 22, He is giving out Himself to be “the Ancient of days.” Heb. i, 7. “Who maketh His angels spirits,” &c., but He does not *make* when speaking of the Son. “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.” (See Psalm xlv. 1—7; Heb. i. 9.) He whose throne is for ever and ever has been put to the test; and He loved righteousness and hated iniquity while amongst us, and has brought us up as *His* fellows out of our iniquity. See the contrast in the connexion in which “fellows” is mentioned here, and in Zech. xiii. 7, where Jehovah speaks of the man, His fellow who has been “wounded in the house of His friends.”

Thus we see the glory of *Christ* shining through the Old Testament continually, but in this chapter it is fully brought out. He is owned as God, though a man, and glorified above all others.

Ver. 10, 11, &c. See Psalm cii. “Thy years are throughout,” &c., is in answer to ver. 23, and first clause of ver. 24. This is still more pointed and precise. Jesus, in His humiliation, breathes out His broken

heart to Jehovah. The psalm anticipates the rebuilding of Zion. If so, where would this smitten Messiah be? If cut off in the midst of His day, how could He be there? God's answer is, that *He*, the holy sufferer, is Jehovah, the creator and disposer of all things. What a testimony to His unchangeable deity!

This is the time of grace, when those who are to be His companions in the glory are being gathered out (His fellows, ver. 9). Ver. 13. Angels have a very blessed place and office, but it is never said to them, "Sit on my right hand," &c., but Jehovah did say so to the man, Christ Jesus. He has His own place there.

What a blessed Saviour we have! The *Lord* Himself has come and taken up our cause. The One whom we look to, and lean upon as a Saviour, is the Lord Jehovah.

Then, besides the glory of His person, there is the other blessed truth, essential to our peace, to see what a wonderful salvation we have: our sins completely purged away! There is a wonderful and divine glory in this salvation, and divine and ineffable love—the love of One who is not like an angel, who could only do his work when told.

Our souls are thus called to worship *Him* who clothes the heavens with blackness, who indeed made all things: even Jesus, the Son of God.

CHAPTER II.

THE first four verses of this chapter are an exhortation founded on the preceding one. Observe, this epistle does not begin with an apostolic address, as the others do; but Paul puts himself entirely among these Jewish believers, and speaks of *Christ* as their Apostle, not himself; and, throughout, he is unfolding all the riches of Christ, to keep them from sliding back into Judaism. Though the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed to Paul, as that of the circumcision was to Peter, yet is Paul the one used to these Hebrew believers. In chap. i. 1, 2, God hath “spoken to us:” that is, he puts himself among them. In the Hebrews, the Church is not addressed as such, but the saints *individually*—not in their aspect of oneness with Christ. Even in the Epistle to the Romans it is said “whom he justified, them he also glorified;” but here we get *Him only* “crowned with glory and honour.” Further, I would remark, as it is not of union with Christ of which the apostle speaks here, responsibility is pressed; continual “ifs” and warnings flow from this. These warnings do not one whit touch the final perseverance of the saints, as the doctrine is called; though I would rather say, the perseverance of *God*, *His* faithfulness, for He it is who keeps us to the end. “If you continue,” does not throw a doubt on your

continuance. The quickening work of the Spirit of God is scarcely referred to in this epistle save in one or two cases. (Chap. ii. 2.) "The word spoken by angels," means the law given at Sinai. In these verses the whole Jewish nation is addressed, while those only who had faith would receive the warning. And I would notice that the warnings of God are not merely against sin, but not to let slip truth, &c. Christ came into the world, not imputing their trespasses unto them, but they added to their rebellion of heart by rejecting Him who came to warn them. *Neglecting* salvation is despising it. By the rejection of Christ the Jews bound their sins upon them. To have broken the law was bad enough, but to reject grace was worse; and these first four verses press this upon them.

God's purpose for man (ver. 5, and following), is to set him over everything; but that purpose is still unfulfilled. "The world to come," is not heaven, for that does exist now; but it is the *habitable earth to come*, not this earth in its present state. The Jews expected a new order of things; they looked for blessing and peace, and they were right, for so it will be. The present world is in subjection to angels. God's hand is not seen directly, but His angels are ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation. Everything in this world, however mercifully ordered in providence, is a proof of sin—the clothes we wear, the houses we live in, &c. All this was not God's purpose. He is not, as I said, *now acting directly*.

He permits and overrules, but He draws His own people from the world (delivering us "from this present evil world"), and then teaches them to walk through it, as not of it. He protects us through His angels; they are His ministers in His providential dealings. (Ver. 6.) But it is a man who is to be set over the world to come. *Once* (in Adam) dominion was committed to man, but he lost it. (Ver. 8, &c.) God's purpose, that is, His order of things, is not thereby touched. *Now* we see *Jesus* crowned, and when *we are*, then all things will be accomplished. The Head is now glorified, and the members are down here in suffering. Christ is sitting at God's right hand, waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. Take Psalm ii. and compare it with Psalm viii. God says, "Yet have I set my king upon the holy hill of Zion." Christ is come, and is not yet set there as king. Now Psalm viii. shows that, though rejected as Messiah, Jesus took the place of Son of man. So when Peter confesses Him as the Christ, Jesus charges him straightly not to tell any, for the "*Son of man* (His title in Psalm viii.) *must* suffer many things," &c. Sin must be put away before God could set up His kingdom. We are now passing through that order or state of things which is not yet put under Jesus. Christ has gone through this very world, and been tempted before He took His place as priest, that He might succour them that are tempted. This is not *sin*, for we do not want sympathy in sin, but help and power to get out of and overcome it, and

all this we have in Him. He went perfectly through reproach and tribulation. All that Satan could do to stop Him in His godly course Satan did; but all was in vain. The Lord “resisted unto blood.” We need to pray God for help to judge sin, each in himself. Sympathy in distress and suffering is another thing, and this we have as well as forgiveness.

I began by saying there were two things—the *purpose* and the *ways* of God. Now, the latter it is our privilege to trace, while the former remains still unaccomplished. Instead of being merely Son of David, Christ is Son of man. He takes possession in our nature—not, of course, in the state in which it is in us, but still in our very nature. Now, as to the *ways* of God, we get these in ver. 10: “By the *grace* of God he tasted death,” &c. Mark this well—our *sin* brings us to the same place which, by the *grace of God*, He took. Perfect grace and perfect obedience we find in Him. When Christ came, as in Psalm xl. to do the will of God, God’s majesty needed to be vindicated; and I would say, unhesitatingly, that God’s truth, His righteousness, His love, His majesty were all vindicated by the death of Christ, aye, far more than they would have been, had we all died. In anticipation of this, He said, “I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!” His love could not fully flow forth till then. In the words, “It became him,” I find the character of God; while in the expression, “many sons,” I find the objects of his love. He could not

bring us to glory in our sins. We get Christ taking up the cause of this remnant ; and where, *historically*, did he begin ? It was in John's baptism that He outwardly identified Himself with His people, that is, with the sanctified ones. (Ver. 11. See Psalm xvi. 2, 3.) His association was with the saints ; and there cannot be a step in the divine life in which Christ does not go along with us. Christ, in all that he is, is with us in the smallest fibre of divine life, from the repentance which is at the beginning. Not, of course, that he had aught to repent ; yet His heart is with us in it. This is as true now, as it will be when manifested in glory. (Ver 16.) There was no union of Christ with the flesh. The associates of Christ are the excellent of the earth ; while in grace one of His sweetest titles was "the friend of the publicans and sinners."

Verse 12 is a quotation from Psalm xxii. 22, where Jesus in resurrection takes the place of leader of the praise of His brethren. Our songs should, therefore, ever accord with His. He has passed through death for us ; and if our worship express uncertainty and doubt, instead of joy and assurance in the sense of accomplished redemption, there can be no harmony, but discord, with the mind of heaven.

Verse 13 is quoted from Psalm xvi., where as also elsewhere, Christ on earth takes the place of the dependent man. He is specially thus described in Luke's gospel, where it is so frequently recorded that *He prayed*. Again, "Behold I and the children," &c.

This passage from Isaiah viii. 18, is particularly applicable to these Hebrew believers. While waiting for Israel, He and His disciples are for signs.

In ver. 14 we find the consequence of His association with us. In these latter verses we have these two things: He took our nature that He might die, and also that He might go through temptation. We were alive under death; then Christ comes, and He takes upon Him all the power of Satan and death, and destroys thus him that had the power of death. By His death He made propitiation for sin. The feelings of His soul, the temptations of Satan, were before His actual death, in the garden of Gethsemane, where His language was, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." This was because of Satan's power; for He said, "This is your hour and the power of darkness." But all this He went through, as part of His appointed sufferings. In the three first Gospels, we have His cry in Gethsemane. In John we have His remembrance of His Mother, and His other cries ("I thirst!" and "It is finished!") *on the cross*; and this is in character with that Gospel in which His divine aspect is given. After the conflict with Satan was over, Christ took up the cup from His Father's hand. They who were sent to secure Him had no power against Him for they all fell back; but He gave Himself up. Satan pressed the cup upon Him; but He took it from the hand of His Father.

As regards temptation, I shall hope to speak more about it another time. I would only now say that

succouring is not dying instead of me ; but now that I am going through this world, I need succour. The ark in Jordan was like Christ preceding us through the waters of death, which to Him overflowed its banks, while we follow dry-shod. For what is dying to the Christian ? It is passing away from all sorrow into the presence of the Lord—the happiest moment in a Christian's existence.

CHAPTER III.

THE first title of our Lord in this chapter is connected with the first part of the epistle ; the second, viz., the priesthood, refers to what follows afterwards. In chapter i. also we have His qualification for being the Apostle ; in chapter ii., His qualification for the priesthood. He was the Divine Messenger for the testimony He was to bring to earth ; and He is gone up on high to exercise His priesthood on behalf of a needy people down here where He has been. “ God manifest in flesh, justified in the Spirit...received up in glory,” referring to His having come down and become man. He must be in the holy place in order to carry on His work as Priest ; but He must be a man. Therefore what He was on earth fitted Him, as it were, for this work. There is a third character connected with Christ brought out in this third chapter ; Christ set “ over His own House.” In this epistle we do not get the unity of the body at all ; we get a Mediator speaking to God for us, and speaking from God to us : “ Let us hold fast the profession,” &c. If He spoke of the unity of the body, that is inseparable ; there is one Holy Ghost uniting the members to the Head,—“ ye in me, and I in you.” It is not so here. Therefore, profession is spoken of, and the *possibility* of that being not true profession ; yet assuming it might

be sincere, "we are persuaded better things of you," &c. (Chap. vi.) There might be all these privileges and no fruit, but falling away. These Hebrews had made a public profession of having embraced Christ, and received a heavenly calling. In speaking of the body of Christ, we know it is perfect—no possibility of a false member getting in; but in a living congregation, I may address them as hoping they are all saints, but the end proves. No man can tell the end, whether they will all persevere; but if there is life we know they will.

"Apostle of our profession,"—it could not be said Apostle of life. We never can understand this epistle properly, unless we get hold of this truth. In Ephesians, where the body is more the subject, I do not get such an expression as this, "that he might sanctify the people with his own blood."

The character of this epistle not being understood is the reason many souls are tried and exercised by passages they find in it. They are addressed with the possibility of their not having life, and so not continuing to the end. The Church supposes a body in heaven. "Heavenly calling" does not necessarily imply that, because they are called to heaven, they are part of the body of Christ. The kingdom and the body are different. "Head over all things to the Church" is wider, too, than the kingdom. Kingdom implies a king; a body implies a head. The Church is precious to God. Everything that Christ has, I have; the same life, the same righteousness, the same glory.

If my hand is hurt, I say it is *I* who am hurt. Paul was converted by this truth, “Why persecutest thou *me*?” It shows what grace has done for us—taken us out of ourselves. The body of Christ shows out the fulness of redemption, and the purpose of God respecting it. But another aspect of the people of God is down here in infirmity, but having this heavenly calling: In this condition I need One in heaven; and there is not an infirmity, a need, a sorrow, an ache, an anxiety, but it draws out sympathy and help from Christ. This draws out my affections to Him. But before the priesthood is taken up, Moses is spoken of as a type:—“Christ Jesus, faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house.” The house is the place where God dwells: and there is another thing here—the Head of the house administering in it.

God has met His people according to the need in which they were. In Egypt they need redemption, and He comes to redeem. In the wilderness they were dwelling in tents, and He would have a tent too. In getting into the land they wanted One to bring them in, and there is the captain of the Lord’s host. Then, when they are in the land, He builds His palace, His temple. There is rest. We are not come to the temple yet—we have not rest: we get the tabernacle now, and “there remaineth a rest.” There was a temple existing when these Hebrews were addressed, but that was not for us.

The temple is a dwelling for God. There never

was a dwelling-place for God until redemption came in. Scripture never speaks of man getting back to innocency, or the image of God. God did not *dwell* with Adam; though in the cool of the day He came to talk with him. Neither did He dwell with Abraham. "The earth hath he given to the children of men"—"the heaven's are the Lord's." But when redemption comes in, God is forming something for Himself. Thus, in Exodus xv. 13, "habitation" refers to what they had in the wilderness; verse 17 to the rest at the end. (Ex. xxix.)

There were visits to Abraham (Abraham will dwell in heaven), but God could not have a habitation among men until He had made known redemption to them. The nature and character of God require it. Love is God's character: to enjoy God I must be with Him. Holiness is His nature. We are made sons of God ("the servant abideth not in the house for ever," &c.) In the divine nature communicated to us, we are capable of being at home in that house of God, and redemption gives the title.

The individual Christian is a temple now; but the temporary provisional thing is God dwelling with us. The full blessed thing is our dwelling with God. (John xiv.) I go not away to be alone there, but to have you there. "I go to prepare a place for you." In verse 23 the Father and the Son make their abode with us till we are taken to abide with them. God's having a house, as a general thought, is the consequence of redemption. Here in Hebrews it is rather

alluded to as to administration than dwelling. "Habitation of God," is the present thing; "temple," is future in Eph. ii. It is spoken of in a larger and more vague way in Hebrews, because here it takes in profession. He that built all things is God. In one sense creation is His house; in another, Christ has passed through the heavens, as High Priest, into the heaven of heavens, (through the two vails, as is represented in the type), into the holiest. In a third sense the body professing Christianity is His house, "whose house are we," &c.—the saints. There may be hypocrites amongst them; but they "are builded together for an habitation of God," &c. Christ administers in it, as Son over His own house. Moses was but servant in the building. There is immense comfort for us in this; first, because it is perfectly governed; second, when we look at the house, we may see all sorts of failures coming in; but though all may be failure, the One who administers in the house cannot fail. Therefore, though all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's, Paul could say, "Rejoice in the Lord alway," &c. There is One whom nothing escapes. Anyone who has a real care for the Church of God, need never distrust. Paul, in looking at the Galatians, sees so much wrong that he does not know what to think of them: he changes his voice towards them. Ye that are under the law, hear the law. But in the next chapter he says, "I have confidence in you through the Lord." Christ is over His own house. Two things follow then. He will turn every-

thing to blessing—Paul in prison, &c.; and there is present good too. When all the joints and bands do not play as they ought, the immediate ministry of Christ is more experienced. Christ connects everything with His glory; and faith connects the glory of the Lord with the people of the Lord. Moses did so. Faith does not only say, the Lord is glorious, and He will provide the means for His own glory; but it sees the means for it. Moses said, “Spare the people,” when with God; and when he came down amongst them, he “cut off the people,” because he was alive to God’s glory (in the matter of the calf in the camp).

We have to count upon Christ for the Church, not upon itself. Thus Paul, when tried by Nero, passes sentence as it were upon himself; (Phil. i. 23-25;) he settles it that he shall be acquitted. Why? Because he sees it is more needful for them—one single Church. It was divine teaching and faith in exercise which made him to judge thus.

There is failure on the part of the Church down here as to responsibility, but Christ has perfect authority in His Church, and He has interest in it. We have not to make rules for the Church; it is the Master must govern the house, not the servants. There is one Master, and that is Christ. He is over the Church, and not the Church over Him. “Whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence,” &c. Ah! people say, don’t you be too confident, because there is an “if.” But, I ask, what have you got? What he presses is, that you should not let it go. Is

that to be used to hinder my having the confidence? What did they believe? That Christ was come—a heavenly Saviour to them, and this far better than an earthly one. Do not give up that. There is a fear of their *giving up* that confidence, not of their being too confident. What am I to distrust? Myself? Oh! I cannot distrust myself too much. But is it Christ you distrust? Will His eye ever grow dim, or His heart grow cold? Will He leave off interceding? A proof that I am a real stone in the house is that I hold fast the confidence, &c. Those high priests under the old dispensation were continually standing; but He has sat down, because the work is all done. They needed for every sin a new sacrifice: sin was never put away. They needed a fresh absolution from the priest every time sin came up. Now, He says, “their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.” If you are under law, it is another thing; you have not got the confidence. If you talk of distrust, what do you distrust? If you trust in man at all, it is a proof you do not see that you are lost. If you give up confidence in yourself, and say, I am lost already, it is another thing. No one that has really come to redemption, has in the substance of his soul confidence in himself; and no Christian will say, you ought to distrust Christ. Our privilege is to have confidence in Christ as a rock under our feet, and to rejoice in hope of the glory of God. His righteousness has brought Christ into the glory as a man, and the same righteousness will bring me in.

Does another person say, I do not know whether I have a portion in it? You are under the law: God may be ploughing up your soul—exercising it for good; but you have not been brought to accept the righteousness of God. The soul in this state has not accepted the righteousness of God for it, instead of ours for Him. You are still depending on your own heart for comfort and assurance. It is a very serious thing to get the soul so empty of everything that it has only to accept what God can give. It is an awful thing to find oneself in God's presence, with nothing to say or to present. You never get love to Christ until you are saved; and it is the work of God's Spirit. The prodigal found what he was by what his father was. Did the prodigal doubt his interest when the father was on his neck?

The remainder of this chapter takes up the people of Israel—the professing people in the wilderness. They did not get into the land, but their carcasses fell in the wilderness. It is speaking of them on the road. The “to-day” quoted from Psalm xcv. never closes for Israel, till God has taken up the remnant at the end of His dealings with them, after the Church is gone up to heaven.

Ver. 14. “Partakers” is the same word as that translated “fellows” in chap. i. You are fellows of Christ if you are of this company. *This place* with the fellows is yours if you go on to the end. This kind of statement does not touch the question of the security of the saints. Both Calvinists and Arminians

might say, He will reach heaven, if he holds fast to the end. The certainty of salvation is the certainty of faith, and not that which excludes dependence upon God for every moment. I have no doubt that God will keep every one of His saints to the end; but we have to run the race to obtain eternal glory. Holding fast the faithfulness of God, it is important, along with this, to keep up the plain sense of passages such as the present, which act on the conscience as warning by the way. There is no uncertainty, but there is the working out our own salvation with fear and trembling. In 1 Cor. ix. 27, personal Christianity is distinguished from preaching to others. It is not a question of the *work*, but of the *person* being *ἀδόκιμος*, and this means disapproved or reprobate, *i.e.*, not a Christian. (Comp. 2 Cor. xiii.) In Rom. ii. eternal life is spoken of as the result of a course which pleases God. No doubt, His grace gives the power; but it is the result of a fruit-bearing course. In a word, it is equally true that I have eternal life, and that I am going on to eternal life. God sees it as one existence, but we have to separate it in time. Walk that road, and you will have what is at the end of it. This does not interfere with the other truth, that God will keep His own, and that none shall pluck them out of His hand. Our Father says, as it were, That is my child, and I watch him all the way, and take care to keep him in it.

CHAPTER IV.

THE word of God is connected with the apostleship. (Chap. iii. 1.) In the last verses the priesthood of Christ the subject. These are the two means of our being carried through the wilderness—the word of God, and priesthood of Christ. Israel were treated as a people brought out of Egypt, but liable to fall by the way. So the warning to these Hebrews, (chap. iv. 1,) “as to seeming to come short.” The word is softened. In chap. iii. we have seen them addressed as a body brought out under the name of Christ, but admitting the possibility of hypocrites among them.

There are two distinct things connected with the people—redemption, and being carried on when brought out into the wilderness.

The epistles to the Hebrews and to the Philippians both address saints as in the wilderness. In Philippians it is more personal experience that is spoken of, e.g., “I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer.” In both it is as passing through the wilderness, and not yet in the rest.

Ver. 1. We have “*His* rest.” Not merely *rest*, but *God’s* rest; and this makes all the difference. It is not merely as tired ones, and glad to rest: we are going into the rest *of God*. There is an allusion to creation when God saw all that He had made very

good. He delighted in it, and rested. Spiritual labour now is not rest, nor the worry and plague of sin. *God* will rest in His love. (Zeph. iii. 17.) How could He rest here? Not till He sees all those He loves perfectly happy. How can He rest where sin is? Holiness cannot rest where sin is. Love cannot rest where sorrow is. He rested from His works in the first creation, because it was all very good; but when sin came in, His rest was broken. He must work again. God finds rest where everything is according to His own heart. He is completely satisfied in the exercise of His love.

When conflict and labour are over, we shall get into the rest in which He is. That is the promise. "A promise being left us of entering into his rest"—God's own rest. If affections have not their object, they are not at rest. They *will* have this then, and we shall be like Him. There will be also comparative rest, even for this poor creation, by and by.

These Hebrews, who are addressed, are compared to the Jews who came out of Egypt, some of whom fell; but he says, "We are persuaded better things of you," ye "are not of them that draw back into perdition." What had they got? Their Messiah on earth? No. He was gone, and they were left strangers as to what was here below and not having reached heaven either. That is what every Christian is: the state of his heart is another thing.

Ver. 2. "Gospel preached." We have glad tidings preached to us as well as they. The apostle is speak-

ing of the character of those who go in (heaven, God's rest, the promise for us, as Canaan was for Israel). Unbelievers do not go into rest—believers do. That is the door they go in by.

As to God's creation, there is not rest for them in it—it is not come for them. "If they shall enter," &c. This means they shall not, but God did not make the rest for *no one* to enter. He begins again. (Ver. 7.) David came five or six hundred years after Moses, and in Psalm xcv. he says, "To-day after so long a time," &c. If they did not get into the rest by Joshua, there "*remaineth* a rest to the people of God." That is not come at all yet. It is to be under the new covenant, when Christ comes, the Messiah according to their own Scriptures.

"He that is entered into His rest hath also ceased from his *own works*," not only from sin. When God ceased, it was not from sin, but from *labour*. Godly works are not rest. God rests in Christ. I have ceased from my works, as regards my conscience because I have ceased from works for justification. I have not ceased from godly works; that rest is not come yet. Labouring to enter in here, does not mean as to justification. "There remaineth a rest." We have the former, but there is more we wait for.

The two means of carrying us through, spoken of before, are the Word applied by the Spirit, and the priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ. We never get union with Christ spoken of here; there is no discerning, judging, &c., connected with *that*; but as

Christians in the wilderness, there is, and the intercession of Christ is needed; as distinct, separate Christians going through the world, beset with snares on every hand, we are addressed.

It is remarkable how the word of God is made to be the revelation of God Himself. "The word of God is quick and powerful, manifest in His sight." Whose sight? The word of God, the revelation of Christ. *He is* called the word of God—"God manifest in the flesh." He was the divine life—the perfection of all divine motives in a man in this world. The word of God brings the application of God's nature. All that He is, is applied to us in going through this world. That begins by our being begotten by the word—born again, of incorruptible seed—the divine nature imparted, which cannot sin because born of God. Then all the motives and intentions of the heart have to be displayed by this word. The written word is the expression of God's mind down here. Divine perfectness, as expressed in the life of Christ, in the written word, is applied to us. What selfishness was there in Christ? I do not now refer to His going about doing good, but as to the feelings and motives of His heart. How much has self been our motive? Not like Christ. It is not gross sins that are spoken of here, but "thoughts and intents of the heart." How much self through the day!

In John xvii. our Lord says, "I sanctify myself." Christ set apart as the perfection of man—Christ, a model man, if I may so speak—all that God approves

in a man was seen in Christ. The same should be seen in us. "Sanctify them through thy truth." The word applied to us in all this path, in motives, thoughts, and feelings, is for this purpose. Christ was not only doing good; He walked in love, and He says to us, "Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and given Himself," "forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you." What comes down from God goes up to Him. Self may enter in our doing good; but only what is of a sweet savour goes up to God—"an offering to God." What is not done exclusively in the power of divine love, in the sense of an offering, is spoiled—self has come in.

"Dividing asunder of soul and spirit." God has created natural affections, but how much self and idolatry come in! Self-will, too, and self-gratification, how awfully it comes in! That is soul, and not spirit. The word of God comes in, and knows how to divide between soul and spirit, what looks like the same thing, the very same affections, as far as man sees. What a mass of corruption! Can we have communion with God when self comes in? How powerless Christians are now—you, and I, and every one. There is grace, blessed be God! but, in a certain sense, how low we are! "I will give myself unto prayer," said one. All blessing comes from the immediateness of a man's life with God. There are rivers of living water. How are you to get them? "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink."

and "out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." A man must drink for himself first, before there can be rivers, &c. In the time of the prophets they had a message, "thus saith the Lord," and then had to enquire the meaning of the prophecy, but with us, we *drink ourselves first*. We are so connected with Christ, that we have it ourselves from Him, before communicating it to others.

What would make us fall in the wilderness? The *flesh*. It has no communion with God; flesh in saints, as well as in others, is bad. What would make us fall is flesh—the unjudged "thoughts and intents of the heart." The word of God comes and judges all that is of nature in us, after He has brought us out of Egypt. According to the new nature, everything is judged. Everything in Christ is applied to the motives and intents of our hearts—everything is judged according to God Himself. The word is a sword—not healing, but most unrelenting in the character. It detects poor flesh, shows it up, and marks its thoughts, intents, will, or lust. All is sifted. But are there no infirmities? Yes. But whenever the will and intent is at work, the word of God comes as a lancet to cut it all away. For infirmities, weaknesses, not will, we have a high priest, who was in all points tempted like as we are, without sin.

This is beautifully expressed in a figure in the Old Testament. There was water wanted; the rock was smitten, and the water flowed. (There are resources

in Christ Himself, the smitten rock, for us ; but besides, for us there is the water, a well in us.) They were also tried all through the wilderness. The two-edged sword was wanted. There were murmurings. They must be turned back. God turns back with them. How did they get through? What was on Moses' part, for he was like the apostle here, set forth? How was he to get rid of their murmurings? The rock has *not* to be smitten again. The rods must be put in. There are leaves, buds, blossoms on Aaron's—life out of death—living priesthood. Then go and speak to the rock. Suppose God had only executed judgment! How would they have got through the wilderness? There was the living priesthood come in; grace in the shape of priesthood. That carries us through; and all the infirmities, and even failures, when they are committed, are met by Him who has passed through the heavens, &c.

There is not the least mercy on the flesh. This is judged by the word. Moses, the meekest man, failed in that. Abraham, who had been taught God's almightiness, goes down to Egypt, and fails through fear. God glorified Himself. He glorified Himself at the rock in the wilderness, but Moses did not glorify Him, and He was shut out of the land.

Ver. 14. There are things mentioned, very important, about the priesthood. 1st. The priesthood is exercised in heaven, where we need it; it is the place where God is. When it was an earthly calling, the priesthood was on earth. Ours is a heavenly calling,

and Christ, our high priest, has passed through the heavens. Another important part is, Christ in no sense has any of these infirmities while He is exercising the priesthood for us. He has passed through all the course in holiness, obedience, and sanctity. When He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them. He walks the sheep's path, and they follow Him. Christ went through all these exercises of a godly man (e.g., wanting bread, and being tempted to make it, but not yielding to it). Everything that a saint can want as a saint, Christ went through before in perfection. There is the example of perfectness in Him, in the sheep's path; but that was not the time of His priestly work. He has passed through the road, and now can be "touched with the feeling of our infirmities."

In Hebrews we have, as another brother has remarked, more of contrast than comparison. The vail in the tabernacle, and the priesthood of Israel all in a contrasted state to that in which we have them. Our high priest is not compassed with infirmity. Mark the consequence of that: His being in heaven, He brings all the perfectness of the thought and feeling of the place He is in to bear on us. I have these infirmities and difficulties, and He helps me up into all the perfectness of the heavenly places where He is. That is just what we want. He can show a path, and feel what a path is of passing through this world, and bear the hearts down here clean up into heaven.

People often think of priesthood as a means of

getting justified ; but then God has the character of a judge in their eyes. They are afraid to go straight to God, and, not knowing grace and redemption, they think of enlisting Christ on their behalf. This is all wrong. Many a soul has done it in ignorance and infirmity, and God meets it there, but it is to mistake our place as Christians. Does our getting the intercession of Christ depend upon our going to get it? It is when I have got away from God—when not going to him—I have an advocate with the Father. Again, Christ prayed for Peter before he committed the sin. It is the living grace of Christ in all our need—His thought for us, or we should never be brought back. It was when Peter had committed the sin that He looked on him. Even when we have committed faults, His grace thus comes in. It is in heaven He is doing it: then how can we have to say to Him if we have not righteousness? The reason I can go is because my justification is settled. He has given me the title of going into heaven in virtue of what He is, “Jesus Christ, the righteous,” and what He has done. Our place is in the light as God is in the light—sitting in heavenly places in Christ. Our walk on earth is not always up to this. Our *title* is always the same, but our walk not. Then what is to be done? I am within the veil, and not in a condition to go there at all. The priesthood of Christ is there to reconcile this discrepancy between our position in heaven, and our walk down here. Jesus Christ is the righteous one; and the righteous-

ness I have in Him is the title I have to the place. The priestly work restores me to the communion of the place where I am in righteousness. It is immediately connected with the perfectness of His own walk down here and the place where He now is.

Satan came to Him, when here, and found nothing. He ought to find nothing in us, but he does. I do not want to spare the flesh; then there is the word of God for that. But in all the feelings down here, as He said, "reproach hath broken my heart." In Gethsemane He was in an agony and prayed the more earnestly. He had the heart of a man; and all that the heart of man can go through, He went through but in communion with His Father, no failure possible. Apart from sin, is better than "yet without sin," because there was no sin in him inwardly any more than outwardly. In all these feelings He is now touched for us. Verse 16, "Come boldly to the throne of grace." This is going straight to God, not to the priest. It is to the "throne of grace." We want mercy; we are poor weak things, and need mercy; in failure we need mercy; as pilgrims we are always needing mercy. What mercy was shown to the Israelites in the wilderness! their garments not getting old; God even caring for the clothes on their backs! Think of the mercy that would not let their feet swell! Then, when they wanted a way, Oh! says God, I will go before with the ark to find out a way. That was not the place for the ark at all. It was appointed to be in the midst of the camp, but God

would meet them in their need. They want spies to go and see the land for them; fools that we are to want to know what is before us. They had to encounter the Amorites, high walls, giants. A land that devours the inhabitant, is their account of it, even with the grapes on their shoulders. Just like us on the way to heaven. They cannot stand these difficulties. We are as grasshoppers, say they; but the real question is, what *God* is.

As saints we are weaker than the world, and ought to be; but when waiting on God, what is that? When they have not confidence in God, they find fault with the land itself. What a wonderful God He is! He says, If you will not go into Canaan, you must stay in the wilderness; and He turns them, and turns back with them. It is grace, but the throne of grace. God governs: it is a throne. He will not let a single thing pass. See the people at Kibroth-hataavah! In case of accusation from the enemy, as Balaam, there is not chastening, but He says, "I have not seen iniquity in Jacob." The moment it is a question between God's people and the enemy's accusation, He will not allow a word against them; but when there is an Achan in the camp, He judges. Why? Because He is there. It is a throne. If you are not victorious, there is sin.

We may come boldly to the throne, &c. Still it is a throne (not a meditator), but all grace. If I go to the throne, instead of the throne coming to me, so to speak, it is all grace; I get help. I never can go to

the throne of grace without finding mercy. He may send chastening, but it is a throne of grace and all mercy—"grace to help in every time of need." If you have a will, He will break it; if a need, He will help you. Do you feel that you can always go boldly, even when you have failed? humbled, of course, and at all times humble, but humbled when you have failed.

CHAPTERS V., VI.

PERFECTION here means the state of a full-grown man. There is much, and, in a certain sense, more, contrast than similarity in the allusions in Hebrews to the Old Testament types. We are now in a different position; those things which went before were only a shadow, instead of their giving us a distinct perception of our position. While they were figures, they did not disclose what we have at the present time. We have boldness to enter into the holiest; with them, the vail was there to separate them from it. In this passage it is important to see the contrast. Christ is the high priest. "Every high priest taken from among men (though He was taken from men, I need not say) . . . can have compassion on the ignorant . . . for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity." Here is contrast, though the general image is taken up. They had infirmity, and had to offer for themselves as well as for the people. If we do not see this, we may make great blunders in drawing these analogies. Absolute analogy in them would draw us away from the truth. There are certain landmarks of truth that guard the soul, e.g., the atonement. The priesthood of Christ is in heaven. It has to be exercised as a continual thing in the place where we worship. We worship in spirit in heaven, and there

we want our priest. Those sacrifices were the memorial of sin ; we have no more conscience of sins. The priest is there, once for all, in virtue of the sacrifice made once and for ever. While, in point of fact, we fail, our place is always in Christ in heaven. When communion is interrupted, priesthood removes the hindrance.

Observe the dignity of the person called to this office. "Thou art my Son." The glory of His person is owned in order to His priesthood. "This day have I begotten thee." (Ver. 5.) He was as really a man as any of us, without the sinful part of it. He was neither like Adam nor us exactly. Adam had no "knowledge of good and evil." Christ had—God has. But now men have the knowledge of good and evil and, with it, sin. Christ was born of a woman, but in a miraculous way. The spring was sinless, and yet He had the knowledge of good and evil.

We cannot fathom what He was. Our hearts should not go and scrutinize the person of Christ, as though we could know it all. No human being can understand the union of God and man in his person—"no man knoweth the Son but the Father." All that is revealed we may know ; we may learn a great deal about Him. The Father we know: "no man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son shall reveal him." We know Him to be holy ; we know Him to be love, &c. But when I attempt to fathom the union of God and man—no man can. We know He is God, and we know He is man—per-

fect man, apart from sin; and if He is not God, what is He to me? What difference between Him and another man? Christ came in flesh. Every feeling that I have (save sin), He had. The quotation here from Ps. ii., "This day have I begotten thee," does not refer to His eternal Sonship, but to His being born into the world in humiliation. He is called to be high priest. He has this calling as a man, not only being taken from men. The glory of His person comes first. Looked at in the flesh, He was born of God; with us, "that which is born of the flesh is flesh." But He in His very nature is associated with God, and associated with man. He is the "daysman that can lay his hand upon us both." Job ix. I may fancy myself clean when away from God, but when I come before God, I know He will "plunge me in the ditch," &c. "Let not his fear terrify me." God takes away the fear through Christ. Christ was perfect holiness, and He was ready for everything. His lowliness was perfect; fear is taken away by Him; He is even as a man, the holy one—on that side He lays hold on God, and on the other He lays His hand on us; thus on both He is the daysman to lay His hand upon us both.

The priest in Israel had to take offerings to cleanse himself. Christ is fitted in Himself, without that. Aaron alone was anointed without blood; his sons after the sacrifice.

As to office, there is in Christ perfect competency. He is the Son, and therefore fit for God. He is man,

and so fitted for me. I am not speaking of His sacrifice, but of His person. "This day have I begotten thee;" there is *His person*. Then comes the office, "called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec," without beginning of days, &c.; not like man with descent from one to another, "but after the power of an endless life," without genealogies. These great principles are thus laid down concerning His person and office—the Son and a priest after the order of Melchisedec. Before He takes the office, there is another qualification necessary. Here would be a difficulty (not in the earthly priesthood, for it was connected with an earthly tabernacle, and earthly worship, but) now it is in a heavenly place, and the worship is in heaven. Then the priesthood must be in heaven. He could not have experience of infirmity there. What must He do? He goes through all first.

Priesthood supposes a people reconciled to God. There was the day of atonement, and daily priestly offices went on with the reconciliation for the year. The day of atonement laid the foundation for the priesthood for the year. Then on that day the high priest represented the whole people—laid his hand on the scapegoat in order to their reconciliation; (this was not the continued office;) that Christ did on the cross, as the victim and the representative. He gave His own blood. He suffered as well as represented the people, and then He went within the vail, in virtue of the reconciliation He has made. One of

these goats was the Lord's lot, (the other was the people's,) and the blood was put on the mercy-seat. There was no confession of sins in that. Christ's blood being on the mercy-seat is the ground on which mercy is proclaimed to all the world, even to the vilest sinner in the world. But suppose a person comes and says, "I find sin is working in me; how can I come to God?" I say, Christ has borne your sins; He has represented you there; confessed your sins on His own head, and God has condemned sin in the flesh in Christ. A person is often more troubled at the present working of sin in him than at all the sins past; but I say to that person, God has condemned your sin in Christ. God's character has been glorified, majesty, righteousness, love—all vindicated on the cross. God's truth is vindicated. He said, "In the day thou eatest thou shalt surely die," and Christ dies instead. Then when I get my conscience exercised, it is not enough to see God has been glorified in the death of Christ; I feel my own sin before God. Then I see that He has confessed my sins; and now, as Priest on high, He maintains me in the power of the reconciliation made.

Before He made the sacrifice, He has gone the path the sheep trod. It was before He began to represent His people,—“who in the days of his flesh”—a past thing, before He exercised His priesthood. When He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them in the paths of temptation, sorrow, difficulty. Therefore it is said of Him, “the author and finisher of faith,” not our faith there. We go through our

small portion of exercise of faith. He went through everything. Moses refused the treasures in Egypt; Christ refused the whole world. Abraham "sojourned in the land of promise as in a strange country;" Christ was a stranger in the whole world. In all His path we see him not screening Himself by His divine power, but bearing everything that a human heart could bear. There is not a trial but He felt it. If I speak of a convicted conscience, this is another thing. He did bear that; but it was in our stead, on the cross. In a still deeper way, He took it all upon Himself. What entire dependence! "Prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death," &c. Especially in Gethsemane did He realize the full power of what He came to meet. In His walk we are to follow Him, to "walk as he walked." But in Gethsemane it is another thing—He was alone there.

There are three parts in Christ's life. In the beginning He was tempted, first to satisfy His own hunger, and then with all the vanities of this world, but He would not have them, He did not come for that. The next thing was more subtle; the answer He gave, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God"—thou shalt not try the Lord. Tempting is not trusting. When the people tempted the Lord, they went up to the mountain to see if God would help them. Christ would not take these things from Satan's hands. He bound the strong man, and he departs for a season; then Christ goes on spoiling his goods—healing the

sick, raising the dead, &c. A power had come in grace, perfectly able to deliver this world from the power of Satan, to deliver us as to the consequences of sin—all the misery and wretchedness here. But there was something deeper: man had hatred to God—they would not have Him. “The carnal mind is enmity against God.” They entreated Him to depart out of their coasts in one place. For His love He received enmity. This world would have been a delivered place, if they would have had Him, but they would not; and man profits by the occasion of God’s humbling Himself so as to be within man’s reach, by seeking to get rid of Him! That brings out another point. Having taken up the people, He must take consequences. Satan says, if you do not give me my rights over them, you must suffer. Satan comes and uses all the power he has over man to deter Christ from going through. In the garden of Gethsemane, He calls it “the power of darkness,” and says, “my soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death; tarry ye and watch,” &c.; but they could not watch with Him, they went fast asleep. As Satan has power in death, He brings it over Christ. Does Christ go back? No; but being in an agony, He prayed the more earnestly; He does not defend Himself; He might have driven away Satan, but He would not have delivered us if He had. No other cup did He ever ask to be taken away; but He could not be under the wrath of God, and not feel it. He was heard because of His fear. He went down into the depth where Satan had full

power over His soul. He was in an agony, in conflict, but there was perfect obedience and dependence, "Not my will, but thine be done;" only He was crying the more earnestly to God, and then let His soul go into the depth under Satan's power. If He had not given Himself up, they would have gone away who came to take Him; they went backward and fell to the ground. Again He presents Himself to them, "I am Jesus of Nazareth. If ye seek me, let these go their way." He puts Himself forward into the gap. He goes to the cross; and there, before He gives up His soul to His Father, He has drunk that cup; then His soul re-enters the presence of His Father. Having gone through Satan's power in death, ("this is your hour and the power of darkness,") He goes forward; God raises Him from the dead, and gives Him a place in glory. He is the full-grown man, as the second man—perfect. Stephen saw Him as "the Son of man," on the right hand of God.

Now we might suppose that He had come to the end of His service, after humbling Himself and becoming obedient unto death as the servant. What more? See John xiii. He is going to be just as much the servant as ever!

Three things we have seen connected with His priesthood, besides His person. He has walked the same path we have to tread, only unfailingly, through it all, and even unto death. That is one thing. He understands the path. When there is sin, He dies. In His living, holiness is seen. The second thing is

in making propitiation for the sins of the people—blood is presented. Thirdly, He is a perfect man in the presence of God. I have, then, the path-trodden, sin atoned for, and a living man in the presence of God—an Advocate, Jesus Christ, the righteous. The foundation is not altered, righteousness remains. He has made propitiation for our sins. He has gone through all the trials of the way, and is proclaimed or saluted (“declared”) of God an High Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedec. The trial is gone through, and the work is wrought out before He enters in, and He is perfect righteousness in the presence of God. Aaron’s order was not Christ’s order at all. Christ’s is Melchizedec’s order; but the analogy is according to Aaron. What was Melchizedec’s order? Blessing. He blessed Abraham from God, and God from Abraham. When the full time of blessing is come for heaven and earth, He will have it as Melchizedec had it. It will be praise and power. We have the taste of it now. 1 Peter ii. 9. When we are with Christ in glory, we shall shew forth His praises. While He is within the veil, not yet come out, He does not publicly take this title; outward blessing is not come. Why? Is He indifferent? slack concerning His promise? No; but if He put all this evil down by judgment, men must perish; but He is long-suffering, not willing any should perish, &c. While Christ is within the veil, the operation of the Spirit is going on, gathering in poor sinners. He has the title now, but not display. It is, therefore,

after the analogy of Aaron. We enter with Him in spirit, there to offer up spiritual sacrifices. The display of power is not come, but we are within the vail, therefore the apostle presses them to go on unto perfection, full stature growth. What is my measure of a perfect man? In one sense, Adam was a very imperfect man, and what he had in innocence he soon lost, at any rate; (imperfect, therefore, in the sense of being able to lose it;) and certainly man is not perfect now in the Adam state. Where, then, is perfection? In the man in heaven. I have it in the knowledge of my position now in Christ, not in fact there myself yet, but in Him; and we are to "bear the image of the heavenly;" in that sense perfect. The Father has set Him at His right hand. Then, suppose I have the knowledge of that, I am called to walk as such. Then why perfect? Because I have fellowship with Him, association with Him where He is.

Does any Christian say, 'I am at the foot of the cross.' Christ is not at the foot of the cross. The cross puts a man in heaven. Christ is in heaven. You have not come to Him yet. You are labouring about in the thoughts of your own heart, and have not followed Him in faith to where He is, if you are at the foot of the cross. How do I see the effect of the cross now? By being in heaven. I have come in through this rent vail. (The person is not to be despised who is there; but you have not come in by the cross through the vail, if you are at the foot of the cross.) If you were inside

the vail you would know yourself worse—not one good thing in flesh. It is precious to see a soul exercised even in that way, as the prodigal son in the far country; but he had not come to his father then: he had not found out where he was. There was a mixture of self, not knowing his father, and talking about being a hired servant. He had not had the Father on his neck, or he could not have thought of being a servant. It is not humility, as people think, to be away from God, saying, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, as Peter. Is insensibility to God's goodness humility? The prodigal could not dictate and prescribe when his Father was on his neck: he had no business to be in the house at all as a hired servant. It is not humility. It is a mixture of self with the knowledge of having got away from God. Where will you put yourself? You must take Christ's place or none. That is what is meant by perfect here. There is one way of coming in; it is by Christ who is in the glory. We have no title to any other place. How is Christ there? Not in virtue of His High Priesthood, but He is there in virtue of the offering for sin for us. "I have glorified thee on the earth." "Father, glorify thy Son." That is the reason the apostle speaks of the gospel of the glory. Christ is in heaven, the witness of the perfectness of the work that He has done. (Ver. 13, 14.) Milk is fit for a babe and strong meat for a full-grown man; that is all that is meant. Do not let us look for a place the godly Jew had, but the place Christ has. Then he

gces on warning them, if they are only on this Jewish ground.

On the cross, Christ was drinking the cup; in Gethsemane, anticipating it. Death and judgment are gone; Christ cannot die again. The victory is complete. Sins are put away and He is gone into heaven in consequence; and that victory is ours.

Nothing seemed to be a greater burden on the heart of Paul than to keep the saints up to their privileges. They saw Christ had died for them, (and this had not the power over them it ought to have had), but they were risen with Him also; they were in Christ in heavenly places, within the veil; and how were they realizing that?—"Are become such as have need of milk." There is a great deal of love in the heart when first converted. And there is another thing. When first converted, all these things are easier to understand than when more used to hearing them, and the world comes in. When there is freshness in the heart, the understanding goes with it. Great force is in that word "*become*," (chap. v. 12,) here. See the state they were in (Heb. x.) when they took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing that they had "a better and an enduring substance." Because they knew they had substance in heaven, they were willing to sacrifice what was here. When Christ had not that place in the heart, they were not willing to give up those things, and the understanding of the heavenly things would be dulled too. Freshness of affection and intelligence go together. When it is

bright sunshine, things at a distance are easily seen. If it is dark, there is more difficulty. In the day one may walk through the streets without thinking about the way—one knows it; but at night one has to look and think which way. Just so with spiritual things; there is less spring, less apprehension, less clearness when our hearts are not happy. My judgment is clear when my affections are warm. Motives that acted before, cease to be motives when my heart is right. I can count all dross and dung, when force is given to my affections. “Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”

“Strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age;” not persons who have made a great progress, but persons of full age. There were things hard to be uttered, because they were dull of hearing. The freshness of affection being lost was the secret of all this. It is serious to think that freshness of affection and intelligence we may lose; but “to him that hath shall more be given.” There are *good* and *evil* to be discerned; therefore I spoke of finding the way.

Take this in connection with the beginning of the next chapter, “Therefore, leaving the word of the beginning of Christ,” &c., instead of wasting your time with what has passed away, go on to the full revelation of Christ; be at home there, and understanding what the will of the Lord is. We cannot separate the knowledge of good and evil from the knowledge of Christ. When I come to separate between them of myself, how can I? How can I

walk as He walked, without Him? I cannot do it. "In Him." What is that? "Ye in me." Where is Christ? In heaven; then I am there too. My affections should be there too; my hope is to be thoroughly identified with Him. The portion I have is what He has—life, glory; what He has; all my associations are with Himself. There is the difference between the principles of the beginning of Christ and the full perfection "being made perfect," (chap. v. 9,) glorified. He went through the experience down here, and then went into heaven to be priest, because our blessings, associations, &c., are all above, perfect up there, not down here. He had not received that point of the counsels of God in glory when down here. Now He is there, and He has associated me with Himself in that place. I can see Christ has been through this world so as to sympathize with us in all our sorrows and difficulties. He has borne my sins; and where is He now? In heaven; and I am there too, in spirit, and He will bring me there in fact. Where He is, is His "being made perfect." The work is done, and now He is showing me the effect of that—showing me the walk belonging to the righteousness He has wrought out. He has taken my heart, and associated me with Himself; and He says that is the "perfection" for me to go on to. Where did Paul see Christ? In glory. If he had known Christ after the flesh before, he did not know Him so now; (that was the beginning when on earth;) but now he knew Him in heaven; and

this great truth was revealed to him, that all the saints on earth were as Christ. Paul had been a hater of Christ, had sought to root out His name from the earth; he had gone on in sin, been a breaker of the law, a rejecter of Christ when on earth, and, more than that, he had resisted the Holy Ghost, refused the testimony by the Holy Ghost given in mercy to those people for whom Christ interceded on the cross. They stoned Stephen who bore witness, and Saul was helping in it. He was "chief of sinners," because wasting the Church of God. He discovered the carnal mind to be enmity against God, not subject to God; he proved it in his own experience, and now he found there were saints not in that state—those quickened with Christ, and associated with Christ in glory. "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." They were not associated with the first Adam, but with the second man, in Christ; that was their position. These people whom he had been persecuting were Christ. What broke him down was seeing Christ in glory, and all these associated with Him. Now he learns that he is dead to law, dead to flesh. The Christ I want to win is a glorified Christ. To win Christ may cost me my life. Never mind. That is my object. As to the first Adam, he was "weighed in the balance, and found wanting." He is out of it; not in the flesh, but in Christ. The old thing entirely past; dead to the law, the world, &c.; dead and risen again, having another object. He is alive from the dead, because Christ is; he is "accepted in the beloved;" he has the con-

sciousness that this work of Christ put him into a new place: (not glorified yet in the body:) this was the "perfection." What was the state of his affections then? "That I may win Christ," was his desire. "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." This was his object. His mind was full of it.

The Holy Ghost has come down to bring all these things to our remembrance. Believers are united to Christ (it is never said Christ was united to man) in glory. Then the apostle was living by the power of the Holy Ghost. What a trial for him to see these people going back to their "first principles," "repentance from dead works, faith toward God eternal judgments"—all true! but if you stop there, you stop short of a glorified Christ. "Who hath bewitched you?" he says to the Galatians. He says of himself, "I know a man in Christ," and his spirit is broken to find the saints resting with things on earth about Christ. The Holy Ghost was come out to make them partakers of a heavenly calling; to associate them in heart and mind with Christ, and to show them things to separate them from the world; not only to keep them from evil, though that is true, too. They had a temple standing then, where Christ Himself had been. Why should they have left it if Christ had not judged the flesh? The middle wall had been put up: how should they dare break it down, if God had not done it? If God had not said, "I will not have to say to flesh any more," how could they dare leave the

camp and go outside? Christ glorified is the end of all the "first principles," and we have to go through the world strangers and pilgrims.

The only thing God ever owned in religion was Jewish. It had to do with the flesh. That is gone by the cross; all is crucified: your life, your home, your associations, are all in Christ. The doctrine of the beginning of Christ was not that. What do I find when Christ is on earth? He is speaking then of judgment to come, which they believe. The Pharisees believed in a resurrection from death; baptisms, which mean washings, &c. All these they had then. they formed a worldly religion, and were sanctioned by God until the cross. The Messiah coming on earth was the beginning, but now I leave that. I do not deny these things; they are all true; but I have other things. Saul might have been the brightest saint going under the old things, but not knowing Christ. But suppose persons got into the heavenly thing, being made partakers of the Holy Ghost, having "tasted the good word of God," and then gave it up, what could they do then? Suppose they had received it all in their minds, and then gave it up: what else was there for them? There might have been a going on from faith in a humbled Christ to a glorified Christ, but there is nothing beyond.

There is nothing of life signified here, in their being partakers of the Holy Ghost. It brings very strongly before us the actual presence of the Holy Ghost, and power through Him; a very different thing from life;

and what, notwithstanding, we are in want of knowing. We must have that besides life. Being born of the Spirit, there is power for us through the presence of a person, who may act in another without his having life. There may be light in the soul without the smallest trace of life. In the case of Balaam, we read the Spirit of God came upon him: he had to see the blessedness of God's people, and speak of it. He had light, but there was sleep on his soul, and he has to say, "I shall see him, but not now." That was the opposite to having life. You see a man close to life, seeing all the blessing of it, but not having it. Now, if all the heavenly blessing is seen and rejected, what else could there be?

"Tasted the good word of God"—Simon Magus is an example of this.

"Powers of the world to come" or miracles, putting down Satan's power. In the future day this power will gain the victory over all Satan's power. Simon Magus wanted this power when he saw it.

"Impossible, if they shall fall away seeing they have crucified to themselves the Son of God afresh," &c. The nation had crucified Him—they did not know what they were doing. Now these knew what they were doing. The Holy Ghost had poured forth the light, and now they did it for themselves. It was not ignorance, it was will. There are some who anon with joy receive the word—the very thing that proves there is nothing in it. They would have it in joy, and give it away in tribulation. The word of God

does not always give joy. When it comes in and reaches the conscience, and breaks up the fallow ground, and judges the thoughts and intents of the heart, that is not joy. It racks the heart when it is to profit, but it is for life and health. Here is not merely the joy of hearing about it, but having tasted of the good word about a glorified, heavenly Christ. It is not quickening that is spoken of here. Moses was quickened, but he was not baptized with the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost did not come till Pentecost. He made the house shake where they were assembled, but that was not for giving life. Power is a different thing from giving life. Those already quickened were to be the habitation of God through the Spirit. There were manifestations of God through these things, tongues, &c., anticipative of the setting up of the kingdom. It is after salvation is given, after the soul is born of God, the Holy Ghost comes to the believer as a seal, an earnest, an unction. I might get a taste of the power without being sealed; but as a believer I have the seal, am broken down in myself, not only "with joy" receiving it. I am a sinner—no good in me. It is a direct question between my soul and God; not like Simon Magus, believing the miracles that He did. Before I was converted, I believed there was Christ, as much as I do now. When Christ was on earth, there were those who saw the miracles, and went home again. But when the Spirit of God works in the heart, He shows what we are and makes us submit to God's righteousness. It ploughs up the whole soul

and being of a man—makes him submit to the righteousness of God—shows him his place in the risen Christ—shows him that all is his. That is a different thing to merely *seeing* it. If you have rejected these glorious things, there is nothing else for you. If you will not have Christ, there is nothing else. Here this warning is in connexion with the Holy Spirit in the tenth chapter. It is connected with the sacrifice. Then what follows shows no change supposed in the man. “The earth which drinketh in the rain receiveth blessing from God ; but that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected,” &c. The ground is just the same—the rain comes upon it, but it brings forth briers. So in men, there may be nothing in them to produce fruit. The result of life is seen in fruit, not power. The dumb ass might speak, but that was power, not spiritual life.

“But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation.” (Ver. 9). There is the work of love here ; then there is life. Perhaps there is only a little bit of fruit ; but the tree is not dead if there is any fruit—“things that accompany salvation,” not power merely—not joy merely : that might be without a divine nature. But “though I give all my goods to feed the poor, and though I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.” Judas could cast out devils as well as the rest, but Christ says to His disciples, Rejoice not because the devils are subject to you, but rather rejoice that “your names are written in heaven.”

The connexion of your heart with Christ, the consciousness of God having written your name in heaven, is the blessed thing. Here was fruit; love of the brethren was there—the divine nature was there, and the “full assurance of hope to the end” is the thing desired. We may look for that.

When the seed fell into stony places, it sprang up rapidly; there was no root. When the word does not reach the conscience, there is no root, no life, and therefore no fruit. You might weep over Christ, and have no life, like the women going out of Jerusalem. Flesh could go all that length without divine life. There might be working of miracles, without knowing or being known of Him. One atom of brokenness of spirit is better than filling all London with miracles.

Ver. 6. The nominal church of God is just in this state. There is to be a falling away, and they are to be broken off; prophesied of in Rom xi., to be cut off, if they did not continue in His goodness. The apostacy will come, and no renewing them again unto repentance.

Now, a little word for ourselves, what we have got in Christ. We have heavenly things—we are associated with Christ in heaven; “because I live ye shall live also.” I have all in Christ. He is my life, my righteousness, before God. Then God rests with delight on me, because in Christ. What place have I in Christ? In heaven, and He has given me the Holy Spirit to know it and enjoy it, so that my soul rests on it as the testimony of God. God cannot lie.

Abraham got a promise, and he believed in it; an oath, and he believed it. I have more than that. I believe He has performed it. I have a righteousness now in the presence of God; and we have more in hope, viz., the glory that belongs to His righteousness. I have life, righteousness, the Holy Ghost as the seal, and more, the forerunner is gone in, and the Holy Ghost gives me the consciousness of my union with Him; not merely the fact that sin is put away. We have the Spirit in virtue of the righteousness. The Holy Ghost has come to tell me I am in that Christ. What is the practical consequence? If the glory He has is mine, I am going after Him. Then all in the world is dross and dung.

“They might have had opportunity to have returned:” that is, where faith is exercised and put to the test. You who have known the Lord some time have had opportunity to have returned, how has it been with you? A stone left on the ground gradually sinks in. There is constantly a tendency in present things to press down the affections—not open sin, but duties, and nothing is a greater snare than duties. We have one duty, that is, to serve Christ. On the side of God, it is all bright.

CHAPTER VII.

THE apostle, being now on the ground of priesthood, shows the excellency of the Melchisedec priesthood of Christ, and uses it to bring back these Hebrews from that which was after the "carnal commandment to that which was "after the power of an endless life."

The order of the priesthood is according to Melchizedec, but after the analogy of Aaron—not yet come out from the holiest. Arguments are drawn from Scripture to show that this priesthood is far more excellent than that of Aaron. One point of importance is its being another—"after the similitude of Melchizedec there ariseth another priest:" that implied the setting aside of the other. Directly the Aaronic priesthood is gone, the whole system connected with it is gone; for that was the keystone. According to their own Scriptures, there was to be another, and now that is come. And wherever *Christ* is concerned the Spirit immediately bursts into all the beauty and excellency of it.

Gen. xiv. and Ps. cx. These scriptures bring us greatly into the history of Melchizedec. They are all we have about him, showing us the mystery of his person and glory. The people, when Christ was on earth, could not understand His being David's Son and David's Lord. In Ps. cx. 4, it is Jehovah, and

not in ver. 7. "He shall drink of the brook in the way"—in humbling Himself He shall have His head lifted up.

The history of Abraham is remarkably interesting in Gen. xiv.—his having entirely done with the world, while Lot, in a selfish way, liked the world, and chose the world when he was a believer. Abraham does not this: he gives up the world in the power of faith. Lot was under the world: Abraham had complete power over the world because he had given it up. He would not take from a thread to a shoe-latchet. And then God says, "I am thy shield," &c. He had God. Giving up the world, he had victory over it, and has God for his shield.

It is after this that Melchizedec comes out to meet him. In the future day this will be seen in Christ coming out to His people; it applies to ourselves in a heavenly way now. "Priest of the most High God." In that word, all the peculiar character of Melchizedec comes out. Abraham had overcome by faith. He knew God by faith. Now He is made known to him as "possessor of heaven and earth." The Gentile powers broken, God rules and does what He pleases; and Nebuchadnezzar gives Him the title of "Most High God." He takes to Himself His great power and reigns as Most High. This is not the name known to Abraham's faith; that was Shaddai. "I am the Almighty God; walk before me," &c. Abraham was called to walk before God, and he suffered no man to do him wrong in passing through the

world. Jehovah, the one true God, brought His people into relationship with Himself—all the rest were false Gods. We have the relationship of Father in contrast with these; but all these names are for faith to own. Most High is another thing; Possessor; Col. i. “to reconcile all things to Himself;” and Eph. i. “to gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth.” He will be the possessor of heaven and earth; Melchizedec-priest, in this character of priest of the Most High, He has gained the full victory over the power of the world. The Heir of Promise is the great victor. Psalm xci. He who has got the secret of who this Most High is, (never the Father’s name in Hebrews; it is the “throne of grace” spoken of) shall have the blessings of Abraham’s God. So Hezekiah (2 Kings xviii. 33) taunted by the enemy, “hath any of the gods of the nations delivered out of my hand,” Psalm xci. 2. I will have the Jehovah the God of Israel, now despised, but He will overcome amidst the gods of the nations. (ver. 9.) No secret now in His name. (Luke iv. 11, 12.) And He says, “Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.” Tempting God—trying whether He is as good as His word—to see whether it is true. Thou shalt not put God to the test. (ver. 9.) The knowledge of the Most High as Jehovah, is Israel’s God. When Christ has taken His real power, He will be Melchizedec-priest: at least He will be Priest on His throne. The counsel of peace, as regards this earth is between Jehovah and this

Priest on His throne—"righteousness and peace have kissed each other." Aaron was never a king.

Melchizedec brought bread and wine after the victory. There is no thought of a sacrifice to secure blessing while living a life of faith; but he brings forth refreshment for the victor, bread and wine, eucharistic, accompanied with thanksgiving; bread, the symbol of that which strengthens, and wine, of that which refreshes the heart of man. The people on earth are fully brought into blessing. Melchizedec blessed the Most High God on the part of Abraham, and blessed Abraham on the part of God.

The earthly priesthood takes the character of joy and gladness on the victory being obtained. Melchizedec was king of Salem, and king of righteousness. This says nothing about divine righteousness; it is righteousness established. He rules according to it—righteousness looking down from heaven—righteousness in His person, and mercy shown to those who do not deserve it. "A king shall reign in righteousness." "A man shall be as an hiding-place, and a covert from the tempest," "righteousness and peace have kissed each other;" righteousness is the character of the rule, and the effect of it, peace. We have it now in a higher way, a divine way. We have it in our souls; but it is to be on earth, in Melchizedec, king of righteousness and king of peace. In Ps. cx. Christ is sitting at God's right hand, and we connected with Him during the time He is sitting there—"until" his enemies are made His footstool. His people will be

willing in the day of His power—we, through grace, are made willing now,(ver. 3.) “Thou hast the dew of thy youth;” all the new generations of Israel when the fresh blessing comes in on the earth (a figure, of course). He will come in power, and rule over His enemies—He will judge the heathen. “He shall drink of the brook in the way,” i.e., willing to get the refreshment by the way, being perfectly dependent. “I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me;” and this is rewarded with exaltation. Looked at as His title, it is after the power of an endless life; but not exercised according to that yet. When “righteousness and peace have kissed each other,” it will be. It was necessary that the atonement should have been made. The Jews had rejected promise just the same as law, and now they must come freely, through His grace, like any poor sinner.

But there is more as to dispensation; there is the question of the new covenant. We have to see what our part is in this; the new makes the other old. That old covenant was made at Sinai: it was addressed to man in the flesh, making a claim upon him. The new covenant is on the ground of the law being put into the heart, and forgiveness given. The new covenant was made with Israel and Judah. Have we nothing to do with it? I do not say *that*. His blood has been shed. “This is my blood of the new covenant shed for many,” All that God had to do to bring the Jews in was done: their bringing in is suspended because of unbelief. Then what do we get?

He was minister of the new covenant, not of the letter, but of the spirit. We have the law in our hearts, and forgiveness. We have all the blessings of the new covenant—God's part all thoroughly laid. We have Christ in whose heart the law was hid; not the letter, that was made with Israel and Judah, though they are now outside. Then another thing: I am one with the Mediator of the new covenant. I am, as part of the Church, a member of His body, (that is not brought out here, but while He is gone in—not seen in the Aaron character) I am associated with Him. He has shed the blood on which it is all founded. He is gone to make good that part which is in heaven, and meanwhile I am connected with Him. I have the effect of the blood. He is there on the throne, a proof of its being accepted. He is the forerunner into the glory I am going into. He is a priest for ever, while I am here in infirmity. He is a priest different to those priests who died, "after the power of an endless life." While He sits waiting till His enemies are made His footstool, He has done everything for His friends, and has sent down the Holy Ghost to associate us with Him in heaven, and to maintain us in communion till He comes out. There is no figure of the temple used here: it is all the tabernacle in the wilderness. He who is High Priest after the order of Melchisedec is gone in. There was provided some better thing for us, and we get *this* heavenly association with Him.

In Heb. vii. the superiority of this priesthood is shown.

(Ver. 3.) “Continually,” that is one great thing for us, and that is insisted on much. The constancy of our position comes out in the 9th and 10th chapters. The meaning of it is, without any interruption, not only for ever. Aaron’s priesthood could be broken up—pass from one man to another, but this is an untransmissible priesthood. It has the stamp of eternity on it in its very nature ; so the value of His blood is *for ever*—continually, perpetually—that is the force. What do we find in the state of souls generally now? Is their peace continuous? or are they, when conscious of failure, wanting to be sprinkled again? The Jew wanted a sacrifice for every sin ; but with us there is one sacrifice uninterrupted in its efficacy—not broken in upon. The priesthood goes on continuously. We fail, and there is the Advocate, Jesus Christ the righteous. It is after the power of an endless life—not like Aaron’s—not in the temple—but in the “true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man.” Always there, untransmissibly, “to the uttermost,” right through. “He ever liveth to make intercession.”

Melchizedec was a man, no doubt, like any other—a mysterious personage, appearing on the scene without an origin known. Whose son was he? All kinds of suppositions without any conclusion. Why? Because Scripture leaves us in the dark. As a priest, Christ was without genealogy—not as a man. His mother is known. Again, He was not to be cast off at a certain age, as those priests were. He continueth

ever. "Made like unto the Son of God"—only as a priest. Royalty is connected with the priesthood. Abraham paying tithes to Melchizedec is another important point. God had given them Aaronic priesthood, promises, &c.; but there was something greater, something behind, which was above and beyond all this. Levi paid tithes in Abraham, showing the superiority of Melchizedec to Levi. (Ver. 12—14.) They must give it all up as applying to Aaron.

Ver. 18—20 give the secret of the whole thing. There was the disannulling of what went before, because not perfect, and the bringing in of a better hope. "Did" is better left out. What is the result of that? We draw nigh to God. (Ver. 19.) Did the Jews do this? Did the priests do it? No. "Now we see not yet all things put under him;" but we have a better thing; "we draw nigh to God." Perfect atonement has been made—the veil is rent—the High Priest in heaven; and when He comes forth, we shall come with Him.

There is a time for Melchizedec Himself when He shall come in glory. To be sitting on God's own throne is the highest thing. Now He is sitting on God's right hand in all the fulness and brightness of His glory; and while there, we get all our associations with Him—dead with him, &c. And when He appears, we shall appear with Him. We may take it as to our union and our association with Him in priesthood, He is the High Priest, and we are priests. The Holy Ghost, being sent down, associates us with

Him, while He is in heaven. We could not receive the Holy Ghost until Jesus was glorified. Then having perfect righteousness, we are seated in Him.

Ver. 25. "He is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him." We do not come to Him, (the Priest,) but He goes to God for us, and we go to God by Him. As Lord, we came to Him; but as Priest, not. He intercedes, and brings us back when we have failed. He is watching always—thinking of us when we are not thinking of Him.

Ver 26. "For such an high priest became us," &c. Why this? It became us! The Jews had worship on earth; we go higher than the heavens. Our priest is there, on the right hand of God. That stamps the character of our worship. "Higher than the heavens" is the place of our worship. In the fullest sense He sanctified Himself (John xvii.) when He went up on high. Instead of a priest joined with us in the place of sin or its consequences (which could not be, He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, but bore the sin on the cross) He is taking our hearts out of the present world to the scene where He is. The thing that fits Christ for the exercise of His priesthood is, that He can take me where sin is not. He has put it away. It was not put away under the Jewish service; but that is not the character of our relationship with God. We are dead—dead to sin; you cannot connect it with your place on earth. He is gone "higher than the heavens." We have no other connexion with God

than that in Christ, out of the flesh (not physically of course, we have the treasure in earthen vessels). Christ made "higher than the heavens," "became us." There is a great deal in the world that is undermining this. Men say we are not dead to sin, and are associating themselves, not dead, with Christ. It is all false. If not dead, I have no associations with Christ at all. The veil is rent, sin is put away—sin in the flesh is condemned—we are dead. I see more and more daily of the danger and conflict there is in connexion with this, and the effort to bring our association with Christ down to flesh. He is risen. We have association with Christ in heaven. Our citizenship is there. Most blessed comfort for us it is, that all I have to go through here, Christ has gone through. He passed through all, "tempted like as we are, without sin." "He ever liveth to make intercession for us," while our hearts are associated with Him through the power of the Holy Ghost.

There are two great foundation principles connected with our coming unto God by Christ. 1st. The place, as giving the character of His priesthood; and, 2ndly, the non-repetition of the sacrifice. "Such an high priest became us," &c. Our place of meeting with God is above the heavens, and the questions of—can I come? how can I come?—are met by His priestly work being carried on there, where we meet with God. He first came down to us in the place where we are as sinners, but in our going to God it must be in the place where He is. The place of the priest was the

holy place, under the Jewish order, but with us there is no veil between us and the holiest. God is light. We walk in the light. We must therefore be able to draw near according to the light in which He is. The presence of God is purity itself, and the power of purity.

God has first visited us as enemies. He did not wait for us to go up to heaven; but when we go to Him as worshippers, being partakers of the heavenly calling, we are higher than the heavens. Our intercourse with God is in the sanctuary, in the light where He is; and a high priest is needed for this, who is "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens."

The Jews had priests who had infirmity; but in going into the holiest, we could not go in by these. There must be One able to maintain us in the place where divine righteousness has set us. The priest must be holy, harmless, and separate from sinners, *i. e.*, the work is carried on out of the region where sin is going on; the work of Christ on the cross having brought us there. He is separate from sinners (as to His own state, morally, He was always a Nazarite, but) He has set Himself apart as a Nazarite in connexion with us. He is there, where the worship goes on.

Failures are measured by the place where we are. Of Israel it was said to the priests, "ye shall bear the iniquity of the holy things." We are all priests—there is no separate caste of priests—and all our

faults and failings are measured by the place we are in. The place to which we belong, and where our worship is carried on, and where our Priest is, is out of the reach of sin. When we are there in fact, we shall be able to let our thoughts and feelings free; we shall not want our consciences then. Now we must watch everything down here, but there is full liberty with God, there may be the freest, fullest letting forth of every thought and feeling with Him.

The other thing different in our High Priest from those high priests, is that He offered up Himself once, not for His own sins, but for His people's—for the church and Israel's. He has done it fully, finally, and once for all; it cannot be repeated. Once for ever constitutes the full character of the priesthood of Christ. This gives us a very distinct place. Brought into the light as God is in the light, where sacrifice never can be made again, a Priest is there, by virtue of an unalterable condition, in the presence of God. If Christ has not put away sins, they never will be put away. His blood was shed, not sprinkled only. If once you have been sprinkled by the blood of Christ, has anything taken it off? Has the blood ever lost its value? I cannot talk of being sprinkled again, if the blood has not lost its value. I may have my feet washed with water, for renewal of communion; but as to the person, that is never even washed with water again, though the feet may need cleansing.

There were three cases of blood-sprinkling in Israel: the covenant, the leper, and the priest. The covenant was sprinkled once for all: it was never renewed, but is set aside by a better. The leper was sprinkled once, not again, and the priest. There was no replacing of the power of that blood. "We walk in the light, as God is in the light; and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." That does not change at all: is heavenly in its character, cleanses and fits for God in light; and it is everlasting in its efficacy. It is a new place where we are set, and set for ever.

Let me stop a moment to ask you how far you have forgotten this? how far you are on Jewish ground? It is connected with "the full assurance of faith." We must be clean before we are there, as God is in the light. It is a different place altogether from that in which the question would arise as to what my state is. How do I get there? By the cross. But if I come by the cross, am I defiled or undefiled? I am brought into God's presence, and cannot be there without having been cleansed. Christ came to us in our sins, or else there would be no hope; but it is by virtue of His blood we go to God. How do you go—cleansed or uncleansed? Do we not know whether we are cleansed or not? We may be ignorant of ourselves, but we know whether we are cleansed or not. The way we get into His presence is by being cleansed. That is quite different from the standing of those whose walk was on earth—finding a sin and

getting it cleansed—finding a sin and getting it cleansed. The fruits of the light are such and such things. If we are made children of light, it is not to diminish the light, but to judge everything by it. That is the effect of our being there.

CHAPTER VIII.

“SET on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens.” Why so? Because if we have nothing more to be done, Christ has nothing more to do. (I speak not of the priestly work, but of putting away sin.) He has set down—He is resting, having nothing more to do. (Chap x.) The offering has been made, and cannot be repeated. (Chap. viii. 2, 3.) The whole of the priesthood is carried on in heaven itself. The offering was another thing. The offerer brought the victim, the priest received the blood and carried it in. On the day of atonement there was another thing: the priest had to go through the whole thing by himself—not carrying on the work of intercession, but that of representing the people. Christ took this place. He could say, “mine iniquities,” &c.; for He bore our sins. We can never speak of bearing our sins; He, the sinless One, bore them for us. He was the victim, and at the same time the confessor, owning all the sins. Then, as priestly work, He carries in the blood, having offered Himself without spot to God (the burnt offering in that sense). He was “made sin.” He offered Himself freely up, and the sins were laid on Him, and He takes that dreadful cup, then goes and sprinkles that place. His priesthood is entirely in

heaven.* The tabernacle was upon earth; there was the court of the tabernacle, and inside the court was out of the world, and not inside heaven. He was lifted up (John xii.) to draw all men unto him.

Rejected by the Jews, He was held up by God—the dead Christ, to be the attractive centre for the whole world. As coming in His service and mission on earth, He was coming among the lost sheep of the house of Israel; but when I see the crucified Christ, this is for the *sinner*, and then I get perfect love for the sinner and atonement for the sin—*perfect grace*. Then He goes by virtue of that blood through the rent veil into the holy place; and I come there in spirit into the very presence of God—*not on earth*. Those things were the example and shadow of heavenly things, and our place now is in the holiest of all.

No place is found for the first covenant. Be it remarked, that there is often great confusion about the covenant of grace and law. The law was given at Sinai. All the promises were given without condition—unqualified. When the people came out of Egypt, it was

* There was then on earth, while the Spirit was unfolding the heavenly priesthood to the Hebrews, another priesthood, no longer recognized of God, but going on. Its movement was one of transition; the object was not only to show the actual heavenly privileges of the saints, but to invite them to go forth without the camp. Afterwards came the fall of Jerusalem, when the events themselves spoke to the same effect. Only we can see that the Hebrew believers are treated with great address in this epistle; for the sole conclusion which yet appears is that the promise of a new covenant declares the first antiquated and ready to be done away. We know, from elsewhere, that the cross had, in principle, abolished the old covenant, and that the blood of Jesus laid the basis of the new covenant.

different. The accomplishment of the promise then depended on their obedience; and there was an end of the whole thing, because they could not keep it. Why did God bring in such a principle as this? With the promise, no question was raised of righteousness; but when law was given, there was something required of man: and the effect of this question being raised was to bring out sin directly. Why did the law come in? Because we are excessively proud creatures, we think we can do a great deal.

The law was not a transcript of God, but of what man ought to be; and when applied as a test to man, it brought out the evil there. Given to a sinner to tell him what he ought to be, it was too late—he had failed already: the golden calf was made before they received the words of the law. Christ, instead of requiring righteousness from man, bears the sins and works out the righteousness. It is much more than what the law requires that we have in Christ. The law never required a man to lay down His life—much less the Son of God to lay down His life. He glorified God in the place where He had been dishonoured, not only in a righteous walk upon earth, but God was glorified in Him.

Suppose God had swept away man for sin, in righteousness, where would have been the love? If He had only passed over the sins, without judging them, where would have been righteousness? There was infinite and unspeakable love to poor sinners, and infinite righteousness towards God. The whole

ground of the Sinai covenant is gone—we are dead under it: it can go no further. Law puts man under responsibility. Are you standing on your responsibility? You are lost if you are.

It is the whole question of the two trees in the garden of Edom—life and responsibility. Christ, as a man, takes that of good and evil, and dies under it. He puts Himself under the one and gives us the other, for He is life.

Thus, in Chapter viii., there is an entirely new covenant, and the new makes the first old. In the letter, it is made with the house of Israel. But, besides, there is grace. Not I do not remember them, “but their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.” I will never remember them any more. That is our place. A covenant made with man, as man, is certain ruin, because his righteousness is required, his keeping it is called in question. But here he says, “I will put my laws into their mind,” &c. If man is under the old covenant, he is under an “if.” If under the new, there is no “if.” This covenant of the letter is made with Israel, not with us, but we get the benefit of it. “This is my blood of the new covenant which is shed for many.” This was putting away the breach of all obligation by death. Israel, not accepting the blessing, God brought out the church, and the Mediator of the covenant went on high. We are associated with the Mediator. It will be made good to Israel by and by. Paul was the minister of it in the Spirit, but he could not be as to the letter. They

will need no minister of it, because every one will know it, when God writes it on their hearts; the thing is done—God is their minister, (reverently,) when writing it on their hearts. We have it not in the letter, but in the spirit of it, and so have all the value of it, because the way we get it is that the Mediator of it becomes our life—we are forgiven our sins—we are associated with the Mediator. He is our life, and we have all the blessings of the new covenant within the vail. We have all the blessings, for the very reason that it is not executed with the people for whom it was made.

Now the question arises, how far are we standing on this ground? has your faith got hold of this fact that Christ has settled every question against us, and gone in because our sin is put away? The true light now shines: that could not be said while there was a vail and an earthly priesthood.

Can you stand in God's presence without a vail, and knowing that the more the light shines upon you, the more evident that you are without a spot upon you?

CHAPTER IX.

IN the preceding chapter, the apostle has touched on a very important point, which, as regarded the Hebrews, (and, indeed, any of us,) was a most absorbing one: I allude to the two covenants. The first covenant made at Sinai had a very distinct character, viz., requiring man's righteousness, and therefore it gendered "to bondage." What distinguished the law as a covenant was, that, instead of promise, it was blessing held out on the ground of obedience. The distinctive character of the ten commandments was, that they required obedience. All the prophets, indeed, spoke of failure in it; but all was connected with the old thing, and went on the ground of their obedience. That must be or not be; there is no question of a new nature. Now, we are told, "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." It is not a question of how he gets holiness: the holy nature will desire to obey, but it is a different thing to the righteousness of obedience. God's nature is holy. I do not speak of God's obedience—it is His nature, and we must have the new nature to be holy. The law showed God holy, but the condition of the law was, "If ye shall obey my voice." The promises of God are connected under the law with the obedience of man. That covenant is now altogether put away.

We are called to obedience, and we are sanctified unto obedience, but that is different to being put under conditions. The new covenant has made the former old. God brings in a new one, not according to the covenant He made with them when He brought them out of Egypt. In chap. ix. the apostle is pressing what the conditions of the new covenant are. If the old had been perfect, God would not have brought in a new one. God will not let man have blessing on that ground, and why? The reason is that He has tried man and found him unable to bring forth any thing good. If it is to be on the ground of my righteousness, I cannot have the blessing at all. Man must be convinced there is no good in himself. Man could never place himself on that ground but as maintaining the pride of the human heart that pretends to be able to gain it. The principle of requiring something from man is entirely set aside, and those who know God's principle, know that it is only in the pride of the natural heart that man could take blessing in that way.

Unless grace, and simply grace, lays new ground, there is no hope whatever. God has brought in a new thing. He had marked out in the provision of bulls and goats, &c., another way of getting blessing. There must be coming to God by cleansing from sin, instead of on the ground of being clean. It was impossible for those things to take away sin. There was no relieving the conscience by these ceremonial observances, which were but shadows, and not the very

image of the things to come. Besides the day of atonement, there were continual sacrifices needed to keep them clean; but there was no coming to God (saving in the sense in which He says, "I bare you on eagle's wings and brought you unto myself.") Christ died, the just for the unjust, to "bring us to God." In the tabernacle service there was no coming near by the people or even by the priests. Nadab and Abihu took strange fire and offered that not taken from the burnt offering; and God says, Ye shall not come at all times, &c.; but there was the great day of atonement, and the high priest even could only go in on that day with clouds of incense. There was no revelation of God whatever at that time: there was revelation from God, but not *of* God. He said, "I dwell in the thick darkness." Moses could go into God's presence without a veil. When he came out, he put a veil on his face, but when he went in, he took the veil off. Moses, as mediator, —type of Christ—represented the nation before God, but then the figure dropped; and we find Aaron could only go in once a year. His work was done behind the veil. God could give revelations of Himself to them, but never were their consciences in the presence of God. There was an unrent veil between God and the people and the priests also. This is very important to notice, because of the principle brought out in the contrast of our portion and the Jews'. We are in the presence of God, and we are always there; that is the Christian ground: they never were. Daily cleansing is needed with us, too; but still, we are always in the

presence of God. This is very little realized by the people of God now. "If we walk in the light as he is in the light," &c. The work is done once for all, and we are brought nigh by virtue of that work; and if we are not there through that work, we never can get there. I am speaking of God looking for atonement, and our standing in the presence of God, not the children with the Father. Our feelings may be varying from day to day, but our standing before God never changes in Christ. And if we reject this one sacrifice for sin, there is no other.

Verse 3, &c. Within the second veil none could enter. God's reason for it is, "The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest." The object of the veil was to show that the people could not come to God. He could give them laws, punish them if they broke them, enable them to look to Him; but they could not come near. If it is a question of being in His presence, I must come where He is. In His presence sin is not measured by transgression, but by what God is—"in the light as He is in the light." "Ye were darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord." God's people are now brought into His presence in the light, and always there; it is where God has placed them by faith—not a question of their feeling. As long as the first tabernacle was yet standing, this was not made manifest at all: God was hiding Himself. Directly the veil was gone, He must have let in the Gentiles as well as the Jews; but the very nature of the sacrifices shut out

the thought of one eternal redemption. The repetition of them showed that sin was there, or they would not have been repeated. The one sacrifice for sin having been made, shows the sin to be entirely put away. The nature of those sacrifices was never to reveal God, and never to have the conscience perfect.

There is another practical thing to be noticed here. He does not merely say sin is put away, but the conscience is perfect; no more conscience of *sins* (not sinning); that is the same as a perfect conscience. We all have a conscience of *sinning*, but if I have a conscience of *sin* I cannot come to God, but am like Adam hiding from Him. What we have here is not only sin put away in the presence of God, but put away from the conscience, too. Many own the former, but think they need repeated forgiveness, repeated cleansing with blood. How could sin be put away? It could not be but by the suffering of Christ. Must Christ, then, suffer again?

There was piety in the Old Testament, and piety is a blessed thing, but there was never a purged conscience. We never find in the most pious persons under the law the sense of being in the presence of God. The high priest must go once a year within the veil with clouds of incense; but now the holiest is made manifest, the veil being rent from top to bottom, and the conscience as perfect as the light in which we stand.

Verse 10. Certain things were imposed on them until the time of reformation. Christ came "an High

Priest of good things to come." What does that refer to? Some may find a difficulty as to whether "to come" refers to what was future for the Jews, while that tabernacle was standing, or to what is now future. I believe *both*. All was *new* in Christ. It was to come on a new foundation. The basis is laid for the entire and perfect reconciliation of man with God.

Verse 7. Under the old covenant, it was only "the errors of the people" that were forgiven. *Now* God takes up the spring of a man altogether. The old covenant dealt with man on the ground of obedience; now God is bringing the sinner himself into a new condition before Him. The old covenant was a partial remedy with the declaration that they could not come into God's presence. While this kept up a testimony for God, now a new thing is brought out, not to patch up the old thing—that was the old even in its remedial character; but now it is the bringing in a new thing entirely—giving a new nature in Christ. The Jewish system provided no remedy for great sins ("keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins"); it was a provision for the old man without seeing God, instead of bringing man perfect, in a new nature, into the presence of God.

Rom. iii. God declares His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, &c. Righteousness was never revealed under the law—God bore with things, but there was no declaration of righteousness. Now it is "to declare his righteousness." Righteousness was revealed when the atonement was made. Directly

it is other ground than promise given to those walking by faith, as Abraham, there is no coming into the presence of God. The old covenant goes on the old ground; the new covenant goes on new ground. The work of Christ and the blood of Christ are not provision for the sins of the old man, but for the perfecting of the conscience of the new man, to set him in the presence of God. We could not be in the presence of God with one spot upon us; we are brought into heaven itself. He is gone in once into the holy place, not gone in to come out again and go in; but by virtue of His own blood He is gone in once. God looking upon the blood cannot see sin. It is not a question of my value of that blood, but the conscience rests on the value God finds in it. "When I see the blood I will pass over." My heart wants to value it more, but the question is, how could I be in the presence of God with a spot upon me? God looks on that blood, and if He looks on the blood, He cannot look on the sin; if He did, it would not value the blood. Where is the blood? It has been presented to God, not to man, and God has accepted it. Impossible that God can impute sin to a believer, it would be slighting the blood of Christ.

Another thing is, it is for ever and ever done. What is faith? It is thinking as God thinks. If I say Christ is gone in once with His own blood, does that ever cease to be there? Then I cannot cease to be perfect; Christ has either done the work for ever or not at all. Another word gives it such power, too, "having ob-

tained eternal redemption," and it is "once for all." How long is it to last? For ever. There is not only cleansing, but redemption. He has taken me up out of where I was, into the presence of God—appropriated me in the presence of God for ever. Has He taken me up in an unclean state? While the veil was there, I could not be taken into God's presence; but now it is a question of the work of Christ bringing me there. Has He brought me there in an unfit state? Impossible! He has "obtained eternal redemption for us," "who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God." We get here, first, His own perfect will in it. He offered Himself; not only, "Lo I come;" but, here filled with the Spirit, He offers Himself up. Christ having become a man, He was obedient in all things; but another thing was, He came to offer sacrifice. As a victim, He was man, spotless man, and the giving Himself up as a sacrifice was His own act; through the eternal Spirit He did it. It is not here the point of sins being laid upon Him, but the giving Himself up, for the whole question of good and evil to be settled on Him in God's presence. He gave Himself up for God to do what He would with Him, to make Him a curse if He would; and He was made a curse; yet it was His own will to come into that place.

It was redemption man needed, not only a little cleansing. Redemption was being taken out of the condition in which we were. God's glory needed to be vindicated where God had been dishonoured. Here was

man in rebellion, and in ruin as well as rebellion, under Satan, and He (Christ) must suffer, for God to be glorified—He offered Himself up. Here it was by the power of the Eternal Spirit. There was divine energy in the man, not mere feeling, &c., and it was “without spot,” when He was tried even unto death. He became a burnt offering, and that was a sweet savour to God. Every movement of His will was pure, purity in all His thoughts and acts, and there was the unhesitating giving up of Himself to be made even that hateful thing, sin. He would be made sin, made a curse, even unto death; He offered Himself up without reserve; “He was made sin for us;” but He gave Himself up for it: therefore it was a sweet savour. None of the sin offerings were a sweet savour to God: the word used for consuming them is not the same as the burnt offering. For the sin offering, it was merely a word signifying burning, used; in the other it means a sweet savour. It not being imposed upon Him, but His offering Himself up, made it this. All through His life He knew no sin, but on the cross the sin was laid upon Him, and He went through death for it. It led to death—its wages. Therefore we read of the blood, “How much more shall the blood of Christ,” &c. Two things there are, the person offering Himself, and the proof of His death for sin; blood being the proof of death. There is a cleansing, purging, daily; but that is with water, and not for forgiveness; and the Father forgiving is another thing. “Without shedding of blood is no remission.” How clearly this shows that

if it is not done by this, it never can be ; the blood never can be shed again. "Purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God." Here, again, we come back to the conscience. "How much more shall the blood of Christ so eternal inheritance ;" (14, 15,) there is perpetuity spoken of again, too.

Ver. 13. Two things are here alluded to, and not indiscriminately: the great day of atonement, when bulls and goats were offered, and the red heifer, which was for daily cleansing for communion. This was one thing; the other was done once a year, for then it was repeated year by year continually. The blood of the victim was taken into the holy place, and the body burnt outside. This was significant of Judaism done with. Israel was the camp. They had a fleshly religion—flesh in connexion with God; and it could never answer. It was appointed to prove man. Here the blood was carried in. The scape-goat took away the sins confessed over it into the wilderness. Thus the sins were gone. Now our position is having a place inside the veil by the blood, and sin gone. That is our place, shown thus in the type. The "heifer" was for sprinkling the unclean—not with *blood*, but with water and something connected with it, viz., the ashes of the heifer. A heifer was to be taken that had never borne the yoke ; and a clean man was to slay the heifer, and sprinkle the blood seven times, always in the presence of God. Its value always is in the presence of God. But a defiled person, even through touching death, could not go there. The ashes were to be taken

with the running water, showing the sin all consumed in the sacrifice offered long ago. The things we have failed about are the very things Christ died for; and the Spirit brings to the conscience the sense of that defilement for which Christ died, and which He put away. This makes me feel the sin much more, while it makes me see it has all been put away. It is not so much the question of *guilt*, but of the terrible nature of sin that occupies me. It is the re-sprinkling with water, not blood; because the re-sprinkling with the blood would call in question its permanent value. The Spirit brings to my conscience and heart the value of Christ's death, and so communion is restored, which is hindered by a sinful thought, &c.

Two instances we have of sprinkling with blood once for all—in the priest and the leper; the whole walk and thoughts consecrated to God according to the value of Christ's blood. But that *never* loses its value. If I do not walk according to the value of it, the Spirit of God brings to my remembrance that my sin brought Christ to ashes. This gives a much deeper sense of the sin. We find out that we have allowed ourselves to be carried away by that which brought God's wrath out, and for which Christ agonized.

“To serve the living God.” Under the old covenant, obedience was required from man in his Adam-nature; a veil was before God, and man outside—and he must stay outside. The sacrifices made a temporary provision for intercourse with God, but there was no coming *to God*. Christ, as High Priest of good things to come, brings

the new man into the presence of God for ever. The veil is rent, and there is a risen person with cleansing power in the presence of God. Such is the perfectness of the place in which we are set, and every inconsistency is judged according to it.

Verses 16, 17. The word "testament" is rightly used in these two verses. It facilitates the understanding of the passage to see this. Excepting these two verses, read always "covenant."

Thus we find a common event brought in as an illustration of Christ's death. He left us all the blessing in *dying*—it came into complete force directly. We are freed once for all through His death. There is no alteration of it. The blessings of the new covenant became available, valid after His death.

The first must become old if there is to be a new one: the bringing in of the new one involves dying. In this Epistle we get very little of the humiliation part of Christ's work. In the first chapter it is brought in in connexion with His divine person, "when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high." The purging of our sins is spoken of by the way, and then we hear of His glory on high. The blessedness of Christ's sacrifice, Christ exalted, and having honour put upon Him, are more the subjects in Hebrews. There are three aspects in which the value of Christ's blood is here seen. First, it was the seal of the covenant, connected with its dedication to God. That was also done in connexion with the covenant with Abraham. (Gen. xv.) A

person, binding himself to death in the most solemn way, passes through the pieces of the sacrifice. It was the seal of the covenant. Second, it is purifying. Third, the blood is for remission.

First, the enjoining or sanction to it given by the blood. Another thing closely connected with that was consecration by blood. Blood was sprinkled on the leper for cleansing, and on the priest for consecration. The covenant sealed, and the people bound to it by blood; and the leper and the priest are the three cases in which persons are sprinkled. There must be blood, the power of death brought in, or there was entire separation from God. The wonderful efficacy of the blood of Christ is that it brought in death; those separated from God are brought back by His death. "You who were far off are brought nigh by the blood of Christ." The blood was the figure of the life taken. When blood was taken the whole being of man was given up, and the agony of His soul on the cross was the separation from God. "My God, my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" The consequences of it are most important to us. Man with all his perverse will, all his sin, where is it all, if he is dead? It is all gone, if he is dead. "He that is dead, is freed from sin." There is an absolute cessation of the whole will and being in which he was, as a sinner. Christ has taken that place for me. Cain and Abel, as far as appearance went, were equally likely to get the blessing, but in the one was no faith. He did not own that death had come in

between man and God. As long as man is seeking good from himself, he does not see himself dead. Are you seeking a dead man or a living man? You are seeking fruit from a living man, and not owning you are dead, if you are seeking fruit from yourself. I cannot search to see whether dead or not, if dead. Abel came by slain beasts to God. He had faith. We do not know how he learnt it, but death came in, and man was clothed in skins of animals. That is, in figure, what makes our peace. "He that is dead is freed from sin." There was nothing done for man while Christ was alive, as to the putting away of sin. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone." All that was proved by it was, that man in his natural state could not be reconciled to God.

The first covenant was not made without the sprinkling of blood, but it threw back the man behind death. If you do not obey, all is lost. (Jer. xxxiv. 16, 20.) If they did not obey, they must die; because they promised obedience and sealed the promise by being sprinkled with the blood. In the case of Abraham, God made a promise to him, and sealed it by passing between the pieces, by death. The question was raised by the law of righteousness among living men. There were various figures which intimated the necessity of death coming in, but obedience was the rule and consequently all was failure. Yet all through the principle was brought out—there must be blood. Now, under grace we see the whole putting away of sin. If we had died,

judgment must have come on us. Christ coming into it, and bearing the judgment for us, we are free from the whole thing.

When God gave the covenant, He gave it this sanction—the sprinkling of blood. Aaron himself was not sprinkled with blood, typical of Christ, who needed not to be consecrated with blood Himself, but brought blood in for others.

Then you get the sprinkling of vessels—not for forgiveness, but for cleansing. “Almost all things under the law are purged with blood,” (not all things are purified with blood,) because there is a purifying with water not connected with blood-shedding. Out of His side came blood and water, representing the effectual grace of expiation and purifying. You could not have man morally purified without death; you must have death. Out of a dead Christ the water flows. Water signifies cleansing by the Spirit with the word. But there must be death—not the cleansing of the living old man; the old man is put to death—I do not own him alive, but there is something belonging to you (your members on the earth) to be mortified and kept in death. The ground is laid for purifying by the blood of the heifer, which was sprinkled seven times before the door of the tabernacle; but water is the figure used for cleansing, viz., “washing of water by the word.” “Ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.” Reckon yourselves to be dead and to have the power of life in Christ. I have neither life nor righteousness out of Christ. I have nothing

out of Him. If I look for water to purify, or anything, it must be by death I get it; then there must be faith. If I look at myself as a living man in the world, I find my will working; then I am not really dead. If I set myself to enquire, I am not walking in faith. I am told to reckon myself dead—that is faith. You cannot mortify your members till you can say, I am dead. If the old man is not dead, it is *sin*. There was no putting away of sin but by death itself—taking life. “Without shedding of blood is no remission”—not sprinkling here; you must have the applying the punishment to the One who takes the sin. In the remission of sin is involved the whole of God’s character, majesty, glory. If God does not deal with sin as sin, there is no righteousness—it is indifference. There must be suffering for the sin; then as to death, I am clear of it.

Remission is not connected with sprinkling. This is important in a twofold way. First, there was actual suffering under the consequences of sin; and second, this could be but once. It was done once for all, and if the forgiveness of my sins is not perfect thereby, it never can be accomplished. It will never be done again. We learn more and more the value of the blood; but the work of Christ on the cross has a perfect value, into which the angels desire to look. The thing by which I have remission never can be done again. When I speak of water, it has its importance only so far as it washes; (there is washing and sprinkling spoken of); but not so with the blood; that had to be presented to

God, the offended Judge. The efficacy of the blood is outside ourselves. As regards the man, he is cleansed once for all, but still that is connected with the man. That is not all; the blood has an efficacy in itself, as being the judgment for sin, and tells the tale to God that the judgment is passed over, the sin gone. God says, "When I see the blood I will pass over." That makes the entire full distinction from personal application in cleansing. There is a special value in it for man, because a man when cleansed does not like to get dirty, while one not cleansed does not mind it. True, that as to the *water* when once regenerated by the word, it is done for ever—once for all; but there is besides the constant cleansing of the feet needed. There is no presenting of blood afresh to God—no fresh "shedding of blood." There is increase of spiritual search needed by us to know more of the value of the blood, but there is no fresh searching needed by God for Him to know its value.

Ver. 21, &c. Three things were done on the day of atonement. Blood was put on the mercy-seat, representing Christ gone into heaven, the ground on which we can preach peace to all the world. That was connected with the Lord's lot. His death glorified God, whether one or a thousand are saved.

All was in utter confusion by sin. What kind of world is this? Where is righteousness? Where is love? What folly there is in infidelity! How can men solve the riddle of all the misery we see around, without God? Where is the goodness of God to be seen? How

can it be attempted to be explained without Christ? Indifference to sin is not love. Men try to persuade themselves God will be indifferent to sin. When I see God's judgment for sin on Christ, I get at the centre of God's heart—righteousness is satisfied, and what is more, God can rest in His love. And if you come [as a sinner to God, and rest in Christ, it is a matter of the glory of God to see you there because of the blood.

“The heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices.” Satan and his angels are there and cleansing is needed. This purging is not remission. God must have His house cleansed as well as His people made righteous. (Comp. Col. i.)

On the people's lot, the scapegoat, the particular sins of the people were confessed. This was substitution. (Ver. 26.) And there is perpetual value in the sacrifice. He once suffered. This suffering was not the mere fact of death. The agony of His soul when he cried, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me,” was far deeper than the suffering of the separation of soul and body. Death was looked at as the wages of sin; God's wrath was poured out on Him against the sin. (Death to Christ was not merely going out of the body into Paradise.) That never can be done again. He has gone in once into the holy place. If he went in often, He must have suffered often. “But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down.” This does not mean for ever and ever, but unremittingly He is sitting at the right hand of God. I never can

stand in the presence of God, but in the sacrifice of Christ, and that is never remitted. He has put sin away; why should He suffer again? He has put it away according to the glory of God. "Once in the end of the world hath he appeared." That may appear strange, seeing nearly as much of the world's history has gone on since as before Christ's coming; but it does not mean chronologically, but the closing in of the ages. Up to that time God had been trying men as living men in the world. That is ended—man is not alive now (I speak of man morally, as judged by God); therefore it is said to the Colossians, "Why as though alive in the world?" Man has been tried as to life, and now the fig tree is cut down. Did it bear fruit? No! and it was cut down. The fig tree represented the Jewish nation, in whom God made trial of men under the best circumstances. "What have I not done to my vineyard?" Christ came looking for fruit from the fig tree, and finding none, He said, Cut it down; let no fruit grow on thee for ever. The "time for figs was not yet;" the fruit-bearing time not come. God, as it were, said, "they will reverence my Son." No! then there is no fruit from man for ever. Man, looked at as in flesh, is under the sentence of death. "When we were yet without strength Christ died for the ungodly." Man is not only ungodly, but without power to get out of that state. Christ must close the history of the old man, by bearing the sin, and must bring in a new thing. Then God makes a feast and invites to the supper; when they not only refuse the Son, but they

refuse the supper. Man has been fully tried, and now, if there is to be blessing, it must be not on the ground of responsibility, but wholly of grace, by the second Adam. (Rom. v.) If I believe this, I find out the truth about the old man by little and little. At first we only see gross sins perhaps. 'But what is to be done when I find I can do nothing,' you say. Own you are undone. "In me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing." "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Death is like the policeman to bring us up to the judgment. Then (ver. 28) we have the counterpart of this *in grace*. "*So Christ* was once offered to bear the sins of many," "and to them that look for him," all believers, "will He appear . . . without sin." What does that mean? As to his own person, He was without sin the first time; but now the same One comes back—what for? To deal about the sins? No! That He has done the first time: and now, apart from that entirely, He comes to receive them to Himself. For those who trust in His first coming, and look for His second, there is nothing but blessing. There is a work done *in* us to make us sharers in that which has been done outside us, but this is the question of the work done for us, outside of ourselves altogether. What had I to do with the cross of Christ? The hatred that killed Him and the sins that He bore are all that sinners had to do in it; therefore there can never come a shade upon the love of God in the cross of Christ. It is perfect.

CHAPTER X.

THE practical conclusion is drawn in this chapter of what is brought out in chapter ix.—the unity of the sacrifice; one offering by which the foundation is laid for the new covenant.

Instead of finding a man turned out of the paradise on earth because of sin, it is now a new man gone into the paradise of God in divine righteousness; gone in by virtue of a new title, which man never had before. The consequence is, when He comes again in glory, He has nothing to do with sin. He came once for sin; but when He comes the second time, it will be without any question of sin, to complete the salvation wrought out already. When He returns, it is to bring man into the full blessedness He is in Himself. “To them that look for Him, shall He appear,” &c.; not only for the church, but it is open for the remnant when He appears to the earth.*

The effect on the conscience of His offering for sin is shown in chapter x. It is not only a statement of facts there. My sin might be put away and I not know it; but Christianity shows us how the conscience

* The words do not express the fulness of the Church's hope, which is, the being with Him. This alludes more to the appearing, but it expresses the hope of both, as pilgrims down here

is purged, not only the sins put away. If the conscience is purged, there is nothing between me and God. I have the full deliverance from all consequences of sin, and a title to glory, by virtue of the new thing. But what is my present state? My conscience perfectly purged. That the *law* could not tell us. It could never make the comers thereunto perfect. That was reserved as a witness for the gospel when the work was done. When a man is in the presence of God, the full effect on the conscience is known. There must be a repetition of sacrifice while the sin was outstanding. There was always a question of sin between God and His people under the law. Israel in the last day will get salvation by virtue of the sacrifice; they will be blessed by Him from Heaven; their thoughts will rest on Christ coming on earth to them. He will bring them blessing where they are, but not take them to heaven. That is not our case at all. We are with Him while He is in heaven. The Holy Ghost has come out in consequence of His being gone in. There was no blood taken within the veil, and the sacrifice not taken without the camp, until after the sin of Nadab and Abihu. After that Aaron was not to go at all times into the holiest, but once a-year, to sprinkle the blood on the mercy-seat. The veil was not rent then; but sin being brought out, the blood must be taken in. The witness of acceptance for Israel is when He comes out. They cannot have it while He is within. We are associated with Him in heaven by the Holy

Ghost coming out and making us know the value of His sacrifice. He will come and receive us unto Himself, that where He is we may be. We are to be associated with Him there.

Up to His death it could not be : God would have put aside the law if the fulness of blessing had been brought in ; and the law was given to His own people, not to the Gentiles. The result of Christ's work is, that my constant state in the presence of God is the conscience purged. There is not a revelation, a prophet needed for that. The worshippers, once purged, have "no more conscience of sins." How many Christians there are who do not know they have no more conscience of sins ! If you do not, you do not know the virtue of Christ's sacrifice. Are you going to be in heaven with sin upon you ? You cannot be there in sins. The old state was that of men living on earth—falling, getting cleansed, and falling again. That is your condition, unless you are in heaven by virtue of that one sacrifice, without sin. The believer is introduced there in Christ—into these heavenly places, cleansed from sin (I am not speaking of what he is as a man on earth, but in Christ). Are you there ? That is the question. Are you in the holiest as to your conscience, heart, and spirit, with "no more conscience of sins ;" "in the light as He is in the light ;" with no remembrance of sin before God ? There is remembrance of sins under the law ; but here "no more conscience of sins." Christ has not only entered within the veil,

because there is no veil now, but I am in heaven by the veil being rent. What is the rending of the veil? The death of Christ. I get there by His death; then I get in without my sins. I get in through that which takes them away. I am there without them. Remark how God takes up all this as His matter. The whole thing is done without us, by God. The thing is done by Him, and the revelation of what is done is by Him too. It is God's work, and it is according to the truth of God.

There were three things needed. If I was full of sin, some one was needed to think about me; some one was needed to do the thing required, and then to tell me the effect. "By the which will we are sanctified." The work of the Spirit in applying the work of Christ, is not spoken of here. But there is, 1st, The will of God—"By which will," &c. 2nd, The work whereby it is done—"By the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all." Before I was born, it was once for all done. Did I do it? No! "By the obedience of one many were made righteous." It was by the offering of the body of Christ once for all. 3rd, There is the knowledge of it given to me. Without this my conscience is not purged. I must be justified by faith: that is, my knowing it, not God's knowing it. Here he says, "the Holy Ghost is a witness to us." That is the ground of the conscience being purged; it is not the quickening here: we have pardon when we are quickened. Peter speaks of being "sanctified unto obedience," &c.; renewed to

obedience. It is His (God's) work to quicken my conscience, but besides that, there is the testimony by the Holy Ghost. The thing is settled, and it is not a light thing. We adore Him for it. He says, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." But you say, I sin to-day, to-morrow, &c. God says, "I remember" no more. If there is sin, what can put it away? There is no more offering for sin. If it is not put away, how can it ever be done? If He does remember them, there is no hope for me, because Christ will not die again, and "without shedding of blood is no remission." It is very important for the conscience to get into the presence of God, and know our whole condition as to sin there. Looked at as a Christian, there is no sin, for this one reason, that Christ has been in the condition in which I was. By virtue of His being in it, the condition has ceased to exist, and He is gone a man into Heaven, by virtue of the condition having ceased. God has said to Him, "Sit on my right hand until I make thy foes thy footstool." For the sacrifices provided for men in the flesh, there is substituted this one sacrifice of Christ.

Verse 5. "A body hast thou prepared me." Christ came once for all into the place of obedience to put aside all the other appointments. He took ears as a servant. Whatever man did, in offering sacrifices, he could not get out of the condition in which he was. Another comes in. He takes away the first that He may establish the second. They brought of their voluntary will, under the first: that was man. But

in the second, all is of God's will, and it is obedience to that. As soon as He has the body prepared, it is not His will at all. It was in the counsels of God long before. "In the volume of the book it is written of me," &c. There was the free-willing of Christ in heaven, to give Himself. He undertakes the whole thing. Then when in it, He goes through all in obedience. "As the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence." There is perfect love to His Father, and perfect obedience at the same time. There is God's will in all its perfection—Christ offering Himself to be the obedient One, and I get not only the fact in purpose, but all the value of a Divine Being giving Himself up. "Lo, I come to do thy will." He is in the place of obedience. "Above, when He said, Sacrifice and offering, and burnt-offerings, and offering for sin thou wouldest not. . . . Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." Here I find the will of man altogether set aside. The will of man is wickedness, the principle of sin. A will independent of God is the very principle of sin. At the first, the will of man was disobedience to God. Christ had a free will, because He was God; but when in the servant's place, He had no will. The horrid pride of man forgets that his independence of God, his will not being moved by the will of God, is rebellion against Him, and that is our natural state. All but obedience to the will of another is sin. We forget we are creatures. Christ came to do God's will, never His own. This would-be inde-

pendence of man (for, after all, men are the slaves of Satan) is entirely set aside by another Man coming in. He has to learn obedience by the things that He suffered. Every will of His was crossed. There was not a single thing to which He could turn in which obedience was not suffering. He suffered from God, too, for the sins of man. He offered Himself by the eternal Spirit. When tested by Satan's showing Him good and evil, He gave Himself up (becoming specially the burnt-offering from the time of the conflict in Gethsemane.) The first order of things is gone entirely. If I could have righteousness by the law, I would not have it, Paul says, because I have a better—the righteousness of God. If there could have been any righteousness by the law, there was an end to it now. A new thing is brought in.

Verse 11. "Every priest standeth daily," &c. They were always standing, because there was always sin there to be put away. What they did to put it away never accomplished anything. They were dealing with offerings for men in the flesh, and they never did anything. But He has sat down. There was a righteousness fit to sit down on the throne of God, and that is where we are. It is on the throne Christ is, for ever. He is not rising up, like the other priests. The sacrifice was completed and He sits for ever. It does not mean eternally but continuously. The other sacrifices could not have that effect; but now, His being there is the proof there is no interruption. The stopping, in some of the Bibles, makes no sense of it.

as for us. The anointing is not in question here, but the sprinkling of blood and the washing of water. So, in substance, it will be for Israel by and by.

Verse 22. "Let us draw near," &c. The next thing, verse 23, is, "let us hold fast the profession of our faith," &c. The exhortation is to be in communion within, and not to be attracted by the world without, ordinances, &c., to which they were in danger of going back. Then, (verse 24,) I am to think of others, walk in the power of the fruits of the Spirit; and (verse 25) not only to have love to individuals, but to remember the assembly. Christ would praise in the midst of the congregation. A person may say, I am very happy in staying at home; but that will not do. To go to the assembly often brings persecution.

The "day" spoken of here is not the catching up of the church, but the appearing. The more the day approaches, the greater the difficulty of assembling ourselves; but the exhortation is to be found assembling as plain evident Christians. It is not said to hear a sermon, but assembling *ourselves*. The way of God's working is not only to make Christians, but to gather together in one the children of God scattered abroad. This is not to be fulfilled in the millennium. There will be different nations then, though they will come up to worship; and in the Old Testament times there was one particular nation, but no gathering together in one—it applies now. Church authority is not what is meant. That is not faith, but assembling ourselves

together is faith. Not of man's will, but Christ's; who, through His death, has a church or assembly that is not of the world, and that is manifested by our assembling together.

Verse 26. If you say, 'I give up this assembling to Christ'—there is none other sacrifice for sin but that He has made. If you trample under foot the blood of that sacrifice, knowing what it is, (I do not say being regenerated,) but giving it up wilfully, your portion is the same as adversaries. A person who sees truth and gives it up, is always more bitter than any—he is an adversary. If they chose sin instead of Christ, there was no more sacrifice. It is a case of openly abandoning the Lord for one's own will in sin; not failure nor disobedience, but apostacy.

We see throughout this epistle the importance of the place in which we are set, and the responsibility of walk according to it. Christ is ever in the presence of God for us. Consequently, our title is to enter there boldly; our place never changes, though sin, of course, hinders fellowship till it is confessed.

CHAPTER XI.

WE have already seen in this epistle that the Hebrews, instead of walking by faith, were in danger of turning back to the things they could see—things suited to them as men in the flesh, such as ordinances and objects of outward importance, of which the Jewish system was full. But Christians were called *out* of these; God was leading away from them. The constant tendency of all our hearts is to go back. It is a shame for Gentiles to take up with those shadows, in a measure, it was natural for the Jews, because they had had the beggarly elements appointed for them to observe. *Now* there was something better. They were waiting for Christ to come again, and it is said to them, “He that shall come, will come, and will not tarry.” In this epistle we do not have the place of the Church, the body of Christ, brought out at all; in that connexion the Lord comes and takes her to Himself. “I go to prepare a place for you,” &c. Here, as pilgrims, there is responsibility before us, and we look for His appearing. In church-character the hope is to be with Him. Here it is the heavenly calling and priesthood between us and God. The apostle goes on to show the power of faith. It is not a definition, but a description of its effects. It is

“the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” Perfect certainty of realization is the effect of faith. The definition of faith is that it “sets to its seal that God is true.” It remains that, what we hope for, we with patience wait for. The promise is just as certain as if we had the fulfilment of it. We do not see it. If we saw it we should not hope for it, but we realize things not seen. This is the power of faith in the soul.

In this chapter we have faith in its active character—the working of faith when it is there. The thing that produces faith is the spirit of God bringing home the word with power, and when the soul sees anything of Christ it cannot rest satisfied without more. “Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth,” is the reception of truth in the soul. Then there follows the practical effect in the walk of the believer. There is a great deal of method in this chapter, more than appears at first sight, for it is not man’s method, but God’s. The divine mind is always at work according to the measure of divine love. Directly you get the clue to the divine mind, you get beauty and order. Thus, in Exodus, we have the account of the things for the tabernacle, and then the priests, and then again the utensils. The human mind sees nothing but disorder in all this; but when the object of the shadow is known, the most perfect order comes out.

Faith here is spoken of in connexion with creation. That nothing could come out of nothing, is man’s wisdom! The philosopher could never of himself have found out how “the worlds were framed,” &c

Creation is absolutely unknown by reason. "*By faith* we understand," but man's way of accounting for it led to pantheism, &c. *Now* men have got some knowledge of it from the Bible ; but without scripture it never could be known simply or certainly.

On the next exemplar of faith we see the ground on which man could be in relationship with God. In Abel, the faith that brought a sacrifice : in Enoch, that which led to walking with God, and the power of life in his translation. In the seventh verse, it is faith connected with God in government, and the consequent judgment of the world. In the next example we have that kind of faith that reckons on promise. It takes the promise of God, is satisfied with it, gives up everything, and gets nothing. All that flesh clings to is to be given up. These Jews had to do that. If I have nothing to do with earth I am a heavenly man. If I have nothing on earth, I am not an earthly man. God is not ashamed to be called the God of one whose heart and portion are in heaven ; but He would be of one whose heart is on earth. This is the faith that gives character, heavenly character. (Ver. 8-22.) Then you have faith that counts on God, the active energy of life—not merely character, but *energy* ; not so much the giving up as the active energy of the new principle in the soul. This is from verse 23 to 31. Then the getting into the land is passed over, the rest promised in heaven. They have possession of the land. It is different to passing the Red Sea and the wilderness.

From verse 32 come out all the various difficulties

and traits of faith in which individuals had to stand against the professing people of God. This is a more difficult thing than any. If you want to live a life of faith, you must often live without Christians. People have to go alone with God and no one else, and if not, they must bring in unbelief to hinder them. Communion of saints is a happy thing, but there are times when you must act alone. Jonathan acted in faith, but Saul's folly spoiled the whole thing. We need the faith that reckons on God, let the people do what they like. This is not so brilliant an action of faith, but it is very valuable. A person who goes to preach in a heathen place knows what he has to do. His difficulty is not nearly so great as that of a Christian with the world, who profess to be Christians.

If not very near to Christ, a man cannot discern what is the world and what is of Christ.

Ver. 37, 38. They had to take what portion they could get here, and they died without receiving the promises, "God having provided some better thing for us," &c. The beginning of chapter xii. is founded on this. The chastening there is connected with the trials of faith: the chastening is against the flesh. (Ver. 2). Our attention is taken off all the other examples of faith in chapter xi., and the eye is to be fixed on Him who has gone through all. "Looking unto Jesus." 'Looking away' is the force of the expression. "He is set down on the right hand," &c. Of the Abrahams, Isaacs, Josephs, Moses, &c., we read, they "received not the promises," but of Christ

it is not said, He has not. *He has.* He "is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." He has the reward; and another thing, He has run all the way, bearing mockery, scourging, &c. He has trodden every bit of the path of faith. The others all had their trial in a particular way, but the encouragement for faith now is that He has sat down, having run it all. David has not his reward yet. All these are not made perfect yet, but He is. Christianity was not brought in then. They were not brought into resurrection-glory. There were others to be brought into a better thing. He was the beginner and finisher of faith, and He has the reward.

It is well that we should see what the character of the reward is. Reward is never the motive for conduct: there would be no room for love in that; but it acts as an encouragement, when we are in the path which love has brought into, and encompassed with difficulties and trials.

These Hebrews were going back to the expectation of a Messiah they could see. They are reminded that none of those in whom they boasted did see what they waited for. "These all died in faith, not having received," &c. You want a visible Messiah, but none of these you glory in got what they waited for. With a Jew this was an unanswerable argument. They got nothing but by faith. So with us. What have we but what we have by faith?

Without going into the details of chap. xi. we have, first, the creation—then, respecting sacrifice, "Abel

offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain." One thing to remark here is, how faith meets all cases since sin came in. It has nothing to do with innocence. Innocence does not need faith. When there was enjoyment all around, there was no need of faith. It was when sin came in that faith is known—a most blessed ordering of God; for it brings to us all that is required—righteousness, life, shelter in the judgment of the world. It can wander in a strange country, and bring in a living energy to overcome. It brings in God for enjoyment—communion—want of communion giving the sense of sin, and bringing back. It is the positive bringing in of God when sin had turned out of His presence. It takes out of flesh to God. It brings God in; or, rather, God brings Himself in His word and Spirit. There is no condition in which you cannot have it. The first thing we have it for is for righteousness.

Abel was a sinner: faith brings into a better place than innocency. I can enjoy nothing rightly according to flesh; but the moment I get hold of God, I am out of those things, and am connected with Him. When they were in the land, the occasion for faith dropped through, except where special need brought it out.

When sin had shut us out from God, righteousness is possessed by faith. "He obtained witness that he was righteous." Cain, before his heart was laid bare, was a very decent man: he was labouring in the sweat of his brow, and then went to worship God. What would you have better? It was this very thing that

showed he had not one single right thought about God. He thought he could worship God as comfortably as ever. Cain really carried to God the proof of the curse—just what the natural man does. What we find in Abel was entirely different: he brings in *death*; he takes a firstling of the flock, a slain beast, by which he acknowledges he is under the effect of sin, not merely outwardly. He brings *blood* to God—a sacrifice—a slain sacrifice—the only way. He acknowledges by it, he is a *sinner*, and lost unless the death of another comes in. He comes to God with a sacrifice, and that declares, I am lost without. This passage is so clear as to righteousness—“he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts.” This is not only that righteousness is in Christ: *He is my righteousness—I am* “made the righteousness of God in Him.” Abel obtained a witness that *he* was righteous, not that *God* was righteous. Not merely that God had given the sacrifice, but there are the actings of God in the man. God provided the sacrifice, but faith acts in bringing it to God. “God testifying of his gifts.” It is full of blessing. I have the witness that I am righteous. This is not experience. I do not want a testimony for what I experience. I want a testimony that delivers me from the things I am occupied about in myself, when I am suffering from them. I get it from God’s gift that is perfect. I am “accepted in the Beloved.” You say, There is something about myself I cannot get over. Remember, the testimony of the Holy Ghost

in us is the contrary of the testimony of the Holy Ghost *to* us. *In me*, He takes notice of every fault, that is not righteousness; but the testimony *to* us is, "their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." If a person brings a note to me, he does not ask what I am. In bringing Christ to God, I bring perfection. This is a peculiar figure of Christ, the sacrifice of Abel. Christ made Himself our neighbour: Israel slew Him. They have the mark on them, having cast off Christ. But He is the sacrifice through which they will be restored. Faith says, I go to God by the sacrifice.

In Enoch, life has come in, as well as righteousness. Christ is "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." Enoch, before his translation, had this testimony that he pleased God. In the Old Testament it is said he walked with God. If we are reconciled to God, we can walk with Him. Then the life is manifested in walk, and the power of that life is, that he does not die at all. Christ said, "He that liveth and believeth in me shall never die." So, those who are alive when He comes will not die. We may not die. The "wages of sin" for faith are entirely done away. Enoch is not found, for God took him—he is not touched by death at all. That which is the power of death is done away.

Another thing accompanying this is, that "before his translation, he had this testimony that he pleased God." Here I get life before death. That we have as

a present thing, and if the Lord comes, we shall not die. His long-suffering is the reason of His not coming. Walking with God, we have the testimony that we please God. It is peace, comfort—joy of the favour in which we stand. The Spirit of God, instead of reproving us, brings the light of God's favour streaming in upon our souls. Glory we now see, through a glass darkly; but it is a real truth that the Holy Ghost is in us, and if we are walking with God, He makes us happy in His favour; not merely I have done right in this or that; I do not think of myself at all, but of God. If I care only for what natural conscience says, I do not get God's mind at all. That does not touch what God is at all, but what man is. It is saying that man may exalt himself—has responsibility to himself; but believing God is a great deal more—it acknowledges responsibility to God. “He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder,” &c. It is coming to another that is spoken of. Do I come to a person I am with? In coming, I think of what He is—what God thinks of a thing. We have to do with Him in a living way, by faith. He is one who takes notice of everything. If you apply this practically at any moment, what a difference it will make! We are called to judge everything in the light. What do I mind about difficulties, if I know I am pleasing God? Such an one does not despise any, because thinking about God, he goes from strength to strength. Intercourse with God shows him more of God's mind—

he sees what God is doing. "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light."

If he fail, there will be distress, thus walking with Him, because he has lost the thing he delights in. If accustomed to walk carelessly, he does not notice it. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." If there is diligence in seeking Him, there is the reward.

Ver. 7. If Enoch's case is that of exceptional translation, like the Church, Noah, like the Jewish remnant of the last days, is found in the place on which judgment was coming, and warned of things not seen as yet, (besides being a preacher of righteousness, as we hear elsewhere,) is moved with fear, and prepares an ark. His is the prophetic spirit; the world is condemned, and himself becomes heir of the righteousness which is by faith. He accepted God's testimony with the provided means of escape, and thus inherited that righteousness on which the new world is founded. Thus we have had faith in creation, faith in sacrifice, walking with God, and testimony.

From verse 8—16 we have, not the great principles of human relationship with God from first to last, as in the preceding verses, but the faith which goes and keeps out as a pilgrim, with all the strength given for fulfilling the promises. And as these realized strangership on earth through faith, lived and died in faith, not in the possession of what was promised, so God regarded them with special favour, is not ashamed to be called their God, and will exceed their hopes of heavenly things. Further, we come (17—22) to the

faith that sacrifices the things which apparently accomplish the promise, to receive it from God alone, or confides, spite of all that tends to destroy confidence. This is rather faith's patience, as what follows is its energy. Thus faith in the history of Moses (23—27) abides firm in the face of the utmost difficulties. Moreover, not providence, but faith, should regulate the believer. Again, we may observe in the next verses (28—31) that faith uses the means God appoints; which nature either refuses, or can only meddle with to its own ruin. But if the Egyptians were swallowed up—the type of those who, of themselves, think to pass through death and judgment, the harlot Rahab identifies herself by faith with the spies and people of God, before a blow was struck on this side Jordan, and thus escaped the destruction which fell on self-confident Jericho.

Then follow statements of the actings and sufferings of faith all through the history of Israel after the conquest of Canaan, not detailed as before, but general; but all, like the patriarchs, without receiving the fulfilment of the promise. This was one grand lesson for the Hebrew Christians. Besides, they were to bear in mind that God has provided some better thing for us. *They* are to be perfected, as well as we, in resurrection-glory; but there are special privileges for the saints who are now being called—"for us."

CHAPTER XII.

TWO things are the effect of being in the presence of God—alarm of conscience, and encouragement. The presence of God keeps the conscience thoroughly alive, but it strengthens it to look above the evil while seeing the character of it.

He brings us into His presence to judge all that is contrary to Him and to strengthen us against it, and that is encouraging. He delights in us, and He delights in conforming us to Himself; thus grace comes in so blessedly, making us partake of His nature. It is of what He is He would have us partakers, not merely partakers of holiness, but of His holiness. He does not say, You must be holy, *i.e.*, it does not come out in that form: but He communicates the holiness—His own nature. See the contrast of grace and law. Does not God require holiness in His presence? That is true, but it is law. Grace is, that He delights to give it.

Separation from evil and power of good is the character stamped on all God's dealings down here—chastenings, &c. We have the secret of His ways and dealings, if we are near enough to Him to see. The Hebrews were declining in spirituality; therefore they had not the key to understand His ways. The hairs of our head are all numbered. When once the

heart has hold of that, it must apprehend that it is of God's *grace* that He is so occupied with us. It is a wonderful check on will to know that He is so occupied. As in Job it is said "He openeth the ears of men and sealeth their instruction that he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man."

We have seen the Apostle had named all the worthies in chapter xi.; but then he says "looking unto Jesus." Christ had run the whole course through, the others only a little bit of it. He despised the shame and has sat down; He has reached the end, having gone through the whole course of trouble and difficulty.

Ver. 3, 4,—Addressing them, he says, You are set here in God's behalf in the place where sin is, to get the better of it. We are all set here a witness of divine good in the midst of evil in this world, and that with a power greater than the power of this world. Greater is he that is for us than he that is against us. We are called to be the epistle of Christ—to glorify God in all circumstances;—not to be apostles.

We fail here and we fail there; but we are set according to His will here or there in this world to manifest Christ in it, and not merely to do the work.

In saying this, one immense truth is supposed, viz., that we have this life. Another is, that all questions between us and God are settled; then, whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. To use His name I must be authorized by Him.

All questions connected with us as sons of Adam are entirely done with. "Wherefore, if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though alive?" &c. (Col. ii.) You are not alive in the world at all; "reckon yourselves dead." That is the reason we are freed from the law. We are dead; and the law cannot have authority over our dead man. This position in which we are set as bearing witness, and all God's dealings with us, go on this ground—we are born of God. This is more than receiving life in nature. We do not read of being born of God as creatures, but as a Christian I am born of God. The effect of the communication of this life as having done with all the old life; we have a life "hid with Christ in God." All is settled; not only we have the nature, but perfect peace. "My peace I leave with you." Christ's peace. No cloud of any sorrow was on Him. He has cleansed us to be without spot, and His righteousness is ours.

Having this nature, born of God, which has to be manifested, (and alas! we find in nature many hindrances—temper, &c.) God sets about to do it for us, when we fail to resist "striving against sin," by chastenings, &c. We are set in the place of children and we must look to what God's thoughts are about us. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth," &c. I get the discipline, chastenings, &c., that God sends to those He loves. There is my will to be broken perhaps, and tendencies to be found out in myself that I did not know of before, to humble me. I get exer-

cised about the good and evil. He hates the evil and loves the good, and is breaking us down, subduing the evil, wearing it out, &c. He is bringing us nearer to Himself. God is educating us as children. Sometimes when we do not see what He is doing, we get the blessing. Will works in us; He comes in to smash the will; and we see afterwards that we have got the blessing through it.

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

There are various ways in which as saints we get tried, (though we live in great quietness, there might be more persecution if there was more faithfulness) but through all circumstances God is threading our way, occupying Himself with us, our particular characters, &c., to break us down and instruct us. What we want is to realize that God loves us so much—we are of such value to God (more surely than many sparrows) as that He should take such pains to make us "partakers of His holiness." We are apt not to believe the activity of His love. Some trouble comes on us; God has been watching us individually for years, weeks, &c., watching us to bring this trouble which He sees needed.

It is of the greatest importance that there should be the consciousness of God's constant dealing with

us in love. We are of that family, belonging to Him, God's family, and not of the world; therefore He deals with us as sons. "No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterwards," &c. This is all to encourage. Encouragement is given, founded on the bond of grace between us and God. Then He gives us this blessed privilege of being the witness for God in this world. Everything that makes the condition of the heart better is good, and all is grounded on grace. Therefore it is said "looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God,"—lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, &c. (ver. 15, 16.) Why does He press this? No profane or impure person! Oh, because we are come to God. Grace puts us in His presence, makes us partakers of His holiness; then He says, "looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace," &c., *i. e.*, do not lose this entire confidence in God's love. This is the present practical enjoyment of what God is for you. If you lose that, you fail. There is nothing that links up the heart with God but grace. "Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under law, but under grace."

Walk in the sanctuary of His presence. You are not come to the terrible mountain Sinai; but having come to the perfect grace of God in the Lord Jesus Christ, take care how you walk. Grace must be the character of our walk. (ver. 22.) This is true blessedness. There is no hindrance of evil by terror. The effect of the fire from Sinai was that they "entreated

the word should not be spoken to them any more.” Was that getting on with God? We are not to terrify people by our lives. We may warn them if needful and use the law to hammer at people’s hard consciences—all is well in its place; but we cannot be a witness in our walk of this. We are come to a different thing. We may speak of the law, but that is not where we are. Now we must be living witnesses of what we are, and where we are. We are come unto Mount Zion, which represents grace. This is the result, speaking of the place we are brought to. It is to God. He speaks of what will be on this earth, and that is as it were looking down. Zion came at the end of the whole course of responsibility. As to the law, the result was, “*Icha-bod*,” for the ark was in the enemies’ hand. The only link with God was broken. Then God came in and chose David, of the tribe of Judah—not Joseph (which was significant of a full tide of blessing in nature). The Jebusites conquered and gone, David founded the temple on Mount Zion. This was a new link with God in grace when responsibility was ended. The whole of the heavenly, and of the earthly part is spoken of here. Now we have something more—that which was in the purposes of God, which man never had before in any way. God is glorifying Himself in a way angels never thought of. We are come to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem—to heaven. Then, when there, we find ourselves in the whole company of angels—the universal company of heaven; then “the church of the first-born”—a special as-

sembly registered in heaven. We are that—not merely creatures as the angels are, but those registered in heaven, as having this special privilege—an assembly whom God has identified with Christ, the First-born. It is remarkable how they are singled out here. In the general muster, He cannot let them pass without distinguishing the “church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven.” We are come to that; it is all the grand result. These are all sitting around Him. Then there is another characteristic of the scene, “to God the Judge of all.” There is Zion on earth, the heavenly Jerusalem above, the general company of angels, and the church of the first-born. Then God Himself, and in the way of government, “the judge of all;” then the “spirits of just men made perfect,” saints of the Old Testament in the character grace had given them, “or just men.” They had run their course and they are there. Then begins what is connected with the earthly part—looking at the effect. We are come “to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant.” We are not come to the new covenant, but to Jesus the Mediator of it. I am associated with Him who is the Mediator; that is a higher thing than if merely come to the covenant. He will make this new covenant with Israel on earth.

“And to the blood of sprinkling.” The earth will be benefitted by the shedding of the blood of Christ: it cries peace instead of vengeance, as Abel’s did.

Having come to the Mediator, I am come to the prospect of all the blessedness for earth. It is sweet

to know earth will have it, but ours is the better part. We are to be a witness of whence we are. We come from heaven. In spirit it is true now. What is true in spirit is more real and palpable than what we see. What is passing in our hearts and minds is more what we are really, than what our bodies are occupied in. Christ was a carpenter (as really as any other carpenter,) but that was not what He was. So with us, we are brought into all these things with God. Then the thing is to be always a witness of the place to which He has called us in grace. We are come; then we have God dealing with us in respect of this place to which He has brought us.

Do you say, This trial or that is enough to discourage me? But no; it is God who is bringing you into it, and God is with you in the place, dealing with you in grace, according to the place He has brought you into.

In the midst of the company of heaven, one company is singled out—that is, ourselves. Surely this is enough to make us humble!

CHAPTER XIII.

THE closing exhortations—i.e., of our chapter—are full of importance, and are, as might be expected from all previously seen, in view of the path in this world proper to the saints, who have Christ appearing in the presence of God for them. They do not, consequently, rise to the height of the communications in Ephesians; for the subject throughout has been the heavenly calling, rather than the mystery of Christ and the Church. Brotherly love is to continue spite of obstacles. Hospitality is not to be forgotten, if we would fare like Abraham. Prisoners and the ill-used are to be borne in mind, considering ourselves and our own circumstances. Marriage is to be honoured and purity sought in or out of that state. Our conduct is to be without avarice, contented with what we have; for God will be true to His word of unfailing care, even as to these things; so that we say boldly, “The Lord is my helper and I will not fear. What shall man do to me?”

The Holy Ghost then tells the saints (ver. 7) to remember their leaders who had spoken God’s word to them, the issue of whose conversation was worthy of all consideration and their faith to be imitated. They were gone; but Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. Let them not, then,

be carried away by various and strange doctrines. Grace is that which establishes the heart, not meats by which those who walked in them were not profited. It is a mistake that Christians have no altar : they have one, whereof those who serve the tabernacle have no authority to eat. That is, the Jews have lost their place of privilege, which now belongs in an infinitely more blessed way to such as have Jesus. As in Him, so in us the extremes of shame here and glory above are found to meet. It was not so with Israel. They had the camp, and they could not draw within the veil. And yet even they had the most striking type of another state of things. "For the bodies of those beasts whose blood is brought into the sanctuary for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore *Jesus* also, that He might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let *us* go forth therefore *unto him* without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek the one to come." Christians now must bear the cross, waiting for heaven with Christ. All middle ground is gone with the old covenant. But if we wait for glory not the less but the rather should we praise continually, offering by Jesus to God the fruit of the lips which confess His name, and not forgetting sacrifices of doing good and communication.

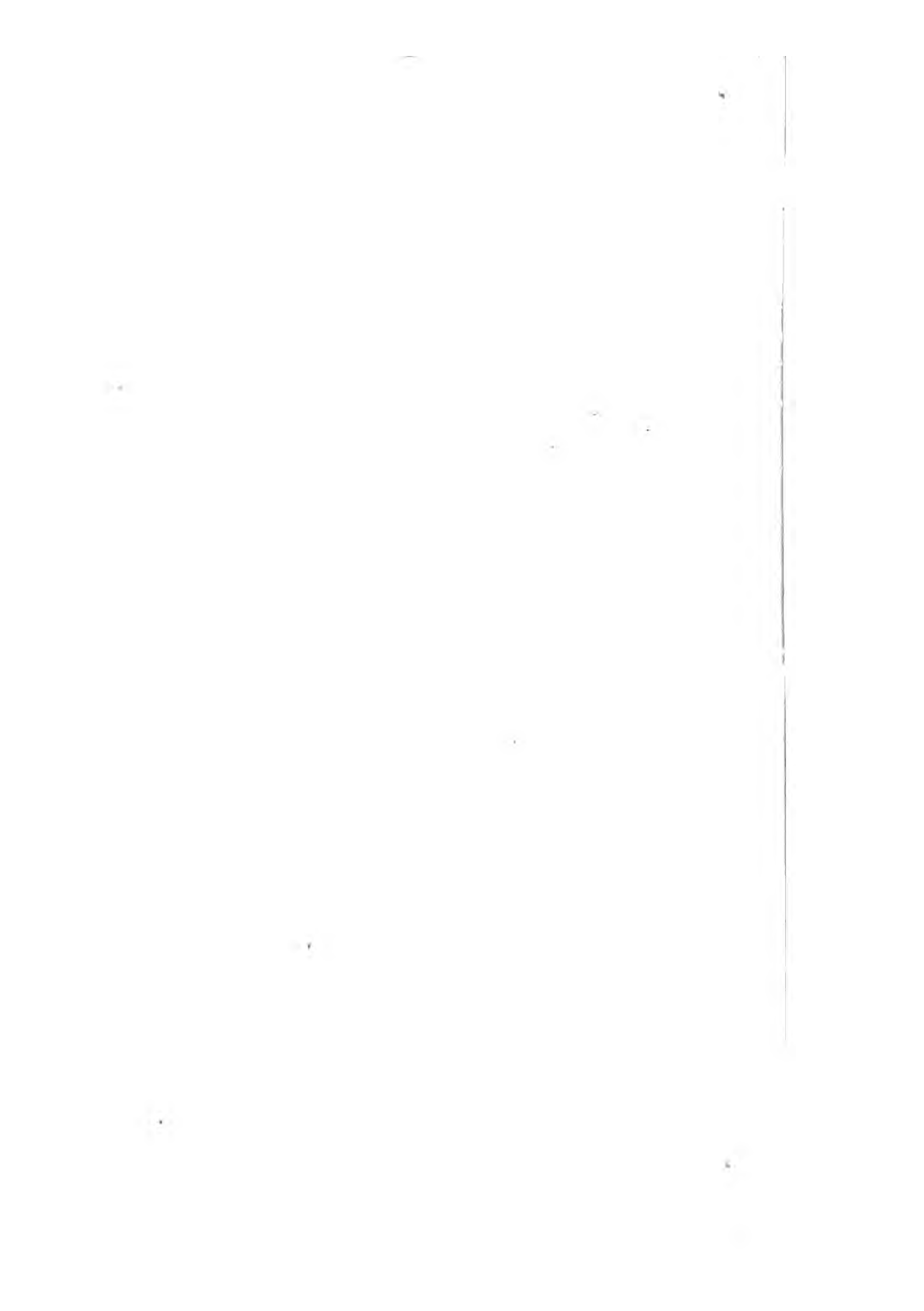
Further, we are called to obey our leaders and to submit ourselves ; for "they watch over your souls as those that shall give account." It is not that they are to give account of the souls of others, but of their

own conduct in respects of others. Obedience on the part of those watched over would be much for these guides, that they might do their work with joy, and not groaning, for this would be unprofitable for the saints.

The apostle asks their prayers, which he could with a good conscience, occupied with the work of grace, and not the weakness and failure of a careless walk. Moreover, he besought it of them, that he might be the sooner restored to them.

And how blessed and suited to their need and comfort is his concluding prayer! "The God of peace that brought again from among the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, in [virtue of] the blood of the everlasting covenant, perfect you in every good work to do his will, doing in you that which is pleasing before him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

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



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