Hebrews - Commentaries by Edward B. Dennett

Christian Truth: Volume 18, Hope Set Before Us, The

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Heb. 10:23

It is difficult to understand why our translators have rendered the original of this scripture, "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith." There is no question of any difference of reading, and yet the word "faith" has been substituted for "hope," and thereby the whole sense of the scripture altered. It should be then "the confession of the hope" which we are urged to hold fast. What then is "the hope" to which the writer refers? It is mentioned first in chapter 3:6: "If we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." Passing on to chapter 6, we read of those "who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us" (v. 18). And the next two verses explain that the hope, which we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil, is Jesus, who has entered there as our forerunner, made a high priest forever after the order of Melchisedec. In chapter 9, we further read that Christ will appear the second time, unto them that look for Him, without sin unto salvation (v. 28). If we now combine these scriptures, it seems evident that "the hope" of this epistle is Christ coming out of the heavenly sanctuary for the salvation-salvation final and complete-of His people. This hope, as so explained, would carry with it a peculiar force for the Hebrew saints, to whom this epistle was primarily written, accustomed as they had been, especially on the great day of atonement, to await the coming out of the high priest from the holiest, in evidence that all the rites of that day had been efficaciously accomplished.

An illustration of this is found in the Gospel of Luke. Zacharias (the priest) had gone into the temple of the Lord to burn incense, "And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense." Again, "And the people... marveled that he tarried so long in the temple" (chap. 1:10-21). So in the Epistle to the Hebrews,

Jesus, the Son of God, has, as the great High Priest, passed "through" the heavens into the heavenly sanctuary; and His people are waiting outside, down here, for His reappearing; and this constitutes their hope. Well might the Holy Ghost exhort us to hold it fast, for there is no part of the truth which believers are so liable to surrender as the hope of their Lord's return; for it is bound up with the very essence of Christianity, and with the nature of the heavenly calling.

Christian Truth: Volume 27, Scripture Note: Hebrews 4:12-13

Heb. 4:12, 13

Altogether this is a very remarkable scripture, as setting forth the all-searching character of the Word of God when it is applied to us in the power of the Holy Spirit. It is necessary to observe that it is its action on Christians which the Apostle has in view. He has been pointing out that there remaineth a rest for the people of God, that it is not therefore to be looked for here in the wilderness, and that it is future, that God's rest, in fact, into which He is bringing His people, is in heaven. Joined to this is the exhortation, "Let us labor [use diligence] therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example [as shown out in the case of the children of Israel] of unbelief." Thereupon he proceeds to speak of the provision God has made to search our hearts by the living action of His Word upon our souls, which, penetrating into all the secret recesses of our being, detects every tendency to unbelief and departure from God, and reveals everything cherished there unsuitable to Him. Nothing whatever can escape it when once it finds entrance into our hearts and consciences. It is, indeed, the light which makes everything manifest, as well as that which, sharper than any two-edged sword, cuts down between the most hidden parts of our nature, and exposes everything to view. Then it is that the words follow, "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight," etc. The reader will observe this striking connection between God Himself and the Word. We might have expected its "sight," but no, it is "His sight." The reason is, God and His Word cannot be disjoined. When He speaks, when His Word comes home to us, it is Himself we hear speaking; we are brought into His presence, and it is only as being consciously there, that we can judge everything in the thoughts and intents revealed by the Word as contrary to Him, according to His holy nature. Even God's own Word remains a dead letter until it comes to us as a revelation of Himself and of His mind. This at once explains to us why we read in verse 13, "His sight," and also that "all things are naked and opened [laid bare] unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." Truly we are, in this sense also, in the light as God is in the light; and we can, blessed be His name, be there in perfect peace and liberty, when we remember that "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin."