Hebrews - Commentaries by Hugh Henry Snell

The Evangelist: Volume 4 (1870), Abraham Believed God

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Heb. 11:9-18

FROM the 9th verse we see that the pilgrim and stranger character was kept up—dwelling in tents: houses are for Canaan, tents for the wilderness. God's dwelling in the wilderness was a Tabernacle or Tent, in Canaan a Temple. Abram kept true to the pilgrim character, Lot did not. He pitched his tent first toward Sodom; afterwards he had a house in it, and sat at the gate. What a place for a child of God to settle in and receive honor!

Abram had his eye on a far different city, "whose builder and maker was God." Meanwhile he was satisfied to live in a tent, with God for his portion.

When tested, Abram refused to take anything from the king of Sodom, from a thread even to a shoelatchet, lest he should say, I have made Abram rich. The very next thing we find is God saying to him, "I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." Whenever we are enabled to surrender what nature clings to for Christ's sake there is blessing, in a clearer revelation of himself to the soul; as it were, room is made for the Lord by the displacing of lower objects, and the promise of John 14:23 is made good in our experience—"If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

What a wall of fire the Lord is round the soul that is separated to Himself I He plants the blood of Christ right behind us. Has He spoken to us of His glory, and told us of the glories awaiting us as fellow-heirs with Christ, and shall we turn back and mind earthly things? Shall not His country be our country, His associates our associates, while we are waiting in strangership down here, confessing ourselves pilgrims by our walk and ways, shewing by our blessed independency of all the good things which nature esteems so highly, and our indifference to the attractions by which so many are dazzled and blinded, that we are passing through this scene in haste to a better country, choosing nothing for ourselves, but receiving all as God's gift.

Does anything bright offer itself? Our first question should be, Does my Father give me this? if not, I don't want it. If I am a true pilgrim, I won't be thinking of settling down in a world like this; I will say, that can't be God's gift for me, it is not good enough; He has prepared for me a city; I am going home: meanwhile I want to keep my mind and heart free for Him, who gave Himself for me.

We never read of God being the God of Lot, not but that He was Lot's God quite as much as Abraham's, but He could not associate His Holy Name with Sodom, of which Lot was a citizen. He is not ashamed to be called the God of pilgrims and strangers, and to associate His Name with theirs.

The trial to which God put Abraham in offering up Isaac was very remarkable. He wanted to see whether he was hanging all his weight on the promise or not. He tries us often in the same way. How blessed when the faith He has given, when tried, is not found wanting.

Crumbs for the Lord's Little Ones: Volume 2 (1854), Subjection to God.

Heb. 12:9.

Amy from busy care and strife,	Ps. 37.
Let me pursue my simple life,	Ps. 52:2.
Thy holy will, O God, be mine,	Song of Solomon 1:7, 8.
Perfect alone, because divine!	Ps. 40; Heb. &c.
Then all shell be my gain.	Matthew 4:10. &c.
	Rom 8:98.
Murmur and discontent, away,	Philippians 2:14; 4:5.[1]
I would begin a brighter day;	1 Cor. 10:10.
No more my path I wish to choose,	Song of Solomon 2:10-13.
What to desire or to refuse,	Ps. 47:4.
But self in Thee to lose.	Isaiah 26:13.
	Isaiah 30:21.
	Isaiah 56:10.
	Isaiah 58:16,19.
	Romans 6:16.
	Ps. 32:8.
Like pliant clay I would to Thee	Jer. 18; Is. 64:8
In thought and every action be:	Matt. 6:10.

“Thy will be done,” my heart doth say,	Deu. 32:10
As on I journey, day by day,	
Across the desert way.	
To live for others, O my God	Acts 10:38, &c.
Yes, ‘twas the path that Jesus trod;	John 4:34; 8:36.
But best of all to live for Thee!	John 15:8.
May this my highest honor be,	Rom. 1:14.
This service sweet and free.	Rom. 6:22
	1 Cor. 7:22.
	1 Cor. 9:19
	Galatians 5:13.
The spirit quiet, gentle, meek,	Ps. 149:4.
My longing soul doth daily seek,	Proverbs 16:19; Is. 53:7.
And always in Thy sight to live;	Matt. 5:5: 2 Timothy 2:34
‘Tis this my Father loves to give,	1 Peter 3:4
‘Tis this I now would crave.	Gen. 5:22, 24; 17:1.
	Gen. 48:15.
	1 Kings 2:4 &c.
	Ps. 18:31, &c.
	Ps. 5.
Though sin and nature will oppose,	Galatians 5:17.
Though many be my mighty foes;	Eph. 6:12, Rom. 8:38.
The broken, contrite heart, O Lord,	Ps. 51:10, 17; Is. 66:2.
To fear Thy name, to love Thy word,	Heb. 12:28; 1 Peter 1:17.
Thou wilt to me afford.	&c.
	Rom. 15:4; 2 Tim. 3:15. Ps. 119.
	Ps. 149:4.
Then praise or blame shall equal be,	Ps. 119. 165, margin
No tongue of slander troubles me,	Pro. 3:23-26.
If God and Christ my ways approve:	Pro. 22:4.
My life is in that perfect love,	1 Peter 2:21-23
Which comes from Heaven above!	1 Peter 3:13-17.
	Pro. 16:7.
	Pro. 29:23, 25.
	Rom. 8:31.

[1] Yieldingness

The references (though only a few bearing upon the subject are given) should be read.

Crumbs for the Lord's Little Ones: Volume 2 (1854), Jesus Christ, the Same Yesterday, and Today, and Forever.

Heb. 13:8.

Is one view of it, the Epistle to the Hebrews may be said to be, a divine testimony to the truth of this short verse: “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever.” For the thought of the Lord’s stability pervades the epistle, the stability of all that He deals with, and of all who trust in Him; in other words, His perfection.1

Over this epistle, read in this light, the believing soul might breathe out the words of the 90th Psalm: “Lord thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations!” For it is a Psalm which recognizes the vanity or perishableness of everything, by reason of sin, and that through Christ alone is anything to be “established.” He imparts “glory” and “beauty,” according to that Psalm, but stability also.

It is like the Apostle’s thought in 1St chapter of 2nd Corinthians. However uncertain other things may have been (even, if the Corinthians pleased, his purposes concerning them), yet the gospel was firm; the promises of God to the believer, yea, and Amen; and the believer himself, an established, anointed, and sealed one forever.

“Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever.”

His person is thus fixed and stable for eternity. The anointed Jesus is still “the same.” But so is all that He deals with or handles, as this epistle, in the progress of it, also discloses; whether it be His blood, His priesthood, His covenant, or His kingdom. There is no principle of decay, no blemish or cause of death, anywhere. No taint or uncertainty is found here, but stability is attached to each and all— “the same yesterday, today, and forever.”

His blood or sacrifice, as the Lamb of God, “is established” on the inadequacy of every other. It has been offered “through the eternal Spirit” (9:14). In token of which, Jesus has sat down in the heavens, with a thought about an entirely different thing. God has promised Him that His enemies shall be made His footstool, and He is expecting that event. That is—so fully has His sacrifice discharged His business, and secured the way of the grace of God, that the mind in heaven can now be occupied with glory and the kingdom, or the judgments that lead to it. There is “no more offering for sin.”

And, accordingly, the sinner that pleads this blood is “perfected forever.” His sins are purged, and he is sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all (see chap. 10).

His priesthood is “untransferable” and “continual.” He is “a priest forever,” and made “after the power of an endless life.” And this is witnessed by His being ordained by the oath of God, the expression or language of an unrepentable purpose. He “ever liveth to make intercession.”

And, accordingly, the believer who looks to such a priest is saved to the uttermost. He can never fail him. Years and generations find Him the same, as the beginning had made Him and left Him (see chap. 12).

The covenant which He ministers, in like character, is stable; it is never “old.” God never finds fault with it, so as to call forth another to succeed it, and thus make it old, and “ready to vanish away.” It abides always “new.” It is called “the everlasting covenant.”

And, accordingly, the blessings conferred by it are eternal; the sins and iniquities it remits are remembered “no more” (see chap. 8).

The throne which He takes is “forever and ever.” It is untransferable and eternal. And, accordingly, the kingdom which, by-and-bye, the saints receive, is a kingdom that “cannot be moved.” The earth has already been shaken—heaven and earth will by-and-bye be shaken—but the kingdom which the saints receive “cannot be moved.” The consuming fire can never reach it, though it may burn up all beside. The saints are heirs of such a kingdom: they have in subjection to them “the world to come”—a world not destined to pass, but still to come, and to abide (see 1:8, 2:5; 12:28).

Such is the illustration of this short verse afforded by the epistle. The practical word for us is this—not to change our confidence, or transfer it from Him, seeing that He changes not, nor transfers His things to any other. In the sight of all this glorious stability, in Christ our faith is to be stable. This is the characteristic exhortation of this epistle, as the other is the characteristic doctrine. This is the exhortation suited to the doctrine; and, therefore, the Apostle is seen throughout the epistle to be in dread of the Hebrew believers changing the ground of their confidence, and surrendering their souls to the keeping of some religious provisions, in departure from the perfection and sufficiency of Christ. This is the fear which pervades the epistle, as the stability of Christ and all that he touches is the doctrine that pervades it. He sounds an alarm. He blows one of the silver trumpets of the house of God; and, in a different spirit from that in which it was uttered of old, He says, “Let the Hebrews hear.” For He says, “Whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.” And, again: “We are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.” And, again, speaking as in the person of God himself, “If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.” And the solemn words, in chapter 6 and 10, are all upon the giving up of Christ, the “falling away” from the confession of His sufficiency, or the doing “despite to the spirit of grace.”

Thus, then, the Lord Jesus stands strong, and all that he deals with. But He alone. “The earth and its inhabitants are dissolved. I bear up the pillars thereof.” His blood, His priesthood, His covenant, His kingdom, never wax old. And, blessed (had we but hearts softened to receive the form of such a truth) He communicates all this stability to us, as we have seen. Faith appreciates and appropriates it.

Thus, what Abigail said to David, that his life was bound up in the bundle of life with the Lord his God, this epistle says to us all—we are interested in Christ’s stability. He shares His eternity with us.

It is our blessing, as it is to His praise, that the admiring Apostle says, “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever.”

Things New and Old: Volume 25, Sins Purged, Conscience Purged and Worshippers Purged

“When he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.” “The worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.” (Heb. 1:3; 10:2.)

It is a marvelous fact that the Son of God has purged our sins. In this work He was perfectly alone. He did it by Himself. No one else could have done it; no one throughout God’s universe was either competent to do it, or willing to do it. But, blessed be His name, He willingly and lovingly came to seek and to save that which was lost. It was the divine will that sins should be purged, that sinners should be saved; and Jesus said, “Lo I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, God.” This necessitated the cross on Calvary. Not a sinner could be in the glory, unless his sins were righteously judged, and divine justice was perfectly satisfied about them. This is why God sent forth His Son. This is why He was made a little lower than the angels. This is why He, by whom the worlds were made, became flesh, and dwelt among us. He was made of a woman, and born of a woman, that, by the suffering of death for our sins, He might glorify God and redeem us.

It was necessary then that He should be the Sin-bearer, and suffer that judgment; of God which we deserved in order that our sins should be purged. It was the most solemn hour in the whole period of time within the compass of God’s universe. The Son of God was found here in the likeness of sinful flesh. Man verily, perfect man, as well as most truly God; this sent One was in due time delivered up for us all, so that we are instructed in the scriptures that He was delivered for our offenses, that He actually bore our sins, suffered for sins, died for sins, and in this way purged our sins. Thus our sins were so righteously judged, so fully dealt with according to unsparing holiness, that when He bowed His head in death upon the cross, He said “ It is finished.” He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities; yea, it pleased

Jehovah to bruise Him, and so to put Him to grief and to forsake Him as bearing our sins, that in unutterable agony He cried out “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” It is then the astounding fact of the Son of God having had our iniquity laid upon Him, and suffering in consequence all the righteous vengeance of God due to our sins, that they are purged, so that as a prophet said, “with his stripes we are healed.” And not only did He drink up and drain to the dregs the cup of infinite indignation and judgment which we deserved because of our sins, but it is also most profoundly and blessedly true that in all the unspeakable distress, brokenness of heart, desertion, and agony which it brought upon Him that He fully honored and glorified God. On that cross of unequaled pain and shame, His perfect love to the Father and to us, His entire surrender of Himself, His delight in the will of God, His unwavering faith, and obedience unto death even the death of the cross, were most pleasing to God, and for His eternal praise and glory. How truly then could the holy Sufferer say when under the shadow of the cross, and yet in spirit beyond it, “I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.” (John 17:4, 5.) In the grave question of our sins being purged (the most solemn and momentous exercise which ever occupied a soul on earth), we see how fully the marvelous work has been wrought without the least compromise of one of the divine attributes, or the least omission as to meeting our deep need. For not only did the Son of God in death upon the cross magnify the love, holiness, grace, justice, truth, and faithfulness of God, but our sins were so strictly and unsparingly judged, that the Holy Ghost points to Him risen and ascended, and tells us that “after he had purged our sins, he sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.” There never was a sacrifice offered before that purged sins forever from the eye of God. Not all the blood of bulls, and lambs, and goats which were ever sacrificed could do this. We read that “it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins” but that “the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.” Is it any wonder then that we are told of the Son, who made all things, and upholds all things, that after “he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high?”

The purification of our sins then took place on the cross more than eighteen hundred years ago, and there will never be another such work. “There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins;” forgiveness of sins is now known when we believe, and we see the One who did it now in heaven on the right hand of God “crowned with glory and honor.” Blessed resting-place for the soul that can look up to heaven and say, “There’s the One that purged my sins!” How truly when looking back on His death on the cross we can say—

It is when the efficacy of the death of the Son of God is believed, being brought home to the sin-convicted soul by the Holy Spirit, that the conscience realizes its peace-giving power. It is clear that in ordinary business a man might be greatly distressed at meeting a creditor to whom he owed a large sum of money and had no means of paying it. It is equally clear that supposing a kind friend had interfered and paid the debt for him, and he knew it not, it would not be the least relief to him; he would still have the same fear and dread of meeting his creditor. But, on the other hand, when he heard the good news that another person had, in the truest love and compassion, freely paid his debt and also shown him the lawful receipt for all demands, what relief would it give, what rest and peace would it impart to his sin-burdened soul! Would he then be afraid to meet his former creditor? Would he not boldly hold intercourse with him as if nothing had ever been between them? And if he heard the very one to whom he had been so heavily indebted say, “I have nothing against you, all is cleared away, all has been justly settled, and I have moreover given you a share of my large possessions,” what a marvelous change would it produce in his feelings, purposes, and prospects! But all this relief of conscience, and all the kindness of the former creditor, fail to illustrate the way in which the conscience of the believer is purged, or to set forth the fellowship into which we are called with the very One we had so dreaded, and only thought of as an angry Judge.

The distress of a sin-convicted soul no one knows but those who have had to do with God, and hold themselves accountable to Him who is holy, and of purer eyes than to behold evil. The consciousness of being exposed to the wrath of God, of justly deserving at His hands everlasting indignation and anguish for having sinned against Him, and seeing no way of escape, is connected with such heartfelt misery as no human language can describe. Such have indeed an evil and an accusing conscience, which no dead works or ordinances of any kind can cleanse. But when such learn on the authority of God’s word, by the Spirit’s teaching, that Christ Jesus has made purification of sins by His own death and blood-shedding on the cross for every on^ chat believeth, then the first ray of hope rises on the desponding soul; and when he ponders the work of the cross, and the perfections and glory of the Person who did it—when he hears and receives the testimony of God as to its sin-atoning and sin-cleansing virtues, then he sets to his seal that God is true, and realizes as a precious fact that he himself is cleansed from all sin.

What a moment of indescribable peace and comfort the soul then knows I Having learned that God in righteousness must condemn sin, and having welcomed the precious truth that He gave His own Son to bear our sins, and the judgment due to them, in order that we might be without sin and whiter than snow in His presence; having believed the divine testimony, that Christ was thus “delivered for our offenses, and raised again for our justification,” he soon finds himself in the very presence of God reconciled and cleansed by His most precious blood. Now, like the poor debtor, he rejoices that another, in pure mercy, paid all his debts for him, and though he be a poor trembling believer, he knows that he is by Christ justified from all things.

He has now a purged conscience. By the precious blood of Christ, brought home to his soul by the Holy Ghost, and received in faith in its all-cleansing efficacy, on the authority of the word of God, his heart is sprinkled from an evil conscience. This is much more than a quiet conscience, he has a purged conscience, for he is wholly set free from guilt in the very presence of God. Many, we fear, are lulled by false religiousness, in various deceptive forms, into a quiet state of mind, but a conscience purged by the blood of Christ is a very different thing. Before this is known, many are going on practicing dead works, vainly promising themselves to make, as they say, “a good end at last.” They are always hoping to be right, which proves they are not. They perform “dead works” to save themselves. But when the cleansing efficacy of the blood of Christ is known on the conscience, they are delivered from “dead works” and delight to praise and honor Him who has washed us from our sins in His own blood, and made us kings and priests unto God and His Father. Hence we read, “How much more shall the blood of Christ, who by the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.” (Heb. 9:14.) So truly is the conscience cleansed, that such “have no more conscience of sins.” Having had the conscience “once purged,” they never know again, as they did before, the intolerable load of a sinner’s guilt before God. Troubled in conscience as saints they may be on account of falls and failures which have been dishonoring to God our Father, and so having lost communion with Him. But if such confess their sins, He is faithful and just to forgive them their sins, and thus give them restoration to communion again. The truth is that those who believe in the Son of God are no longer looked at by God as rebellious sinners in their sins, but are justified persons, children of God, objects of the Father’s changeless and eternal love. So infinite is the efficacy of the blood of Christ on the conscience, that we are told that by one offering we are “sanctified” (or set apart for God), and “perfected forever.” (Heb. 10:10-14.)

Thus we are brought into the very presence of God, to find every question as to our title to be there forever settled, and to have “no more conscience of sins.” Then we know that the One who “purged our sins” went into heaven itself by His own blood, and this bows our hearts with adoring worship and thanksgiving. Being “purged worshippers,” we can offer unto God, by Christ, the sacrifice of praise continually, giving thanks to His name. There we can “rejoice in the Lord always,” and worship the Father in spirit and in truth. Happy are those who so simply receive the testimony of God as to the work of His Son, as to know that they are “worshippers once purged,” and have “no more conscience of sins.”

What unspeakable blessedness we are brought into through the blood of Christ! Sins judged, and dealt with in divine righteousness, according to the holiness of God, in the person of His Son instead of us! The conscience, too, so purged as to be before God—in the light as He is, in the light—in perfect peace. Not a question remains unanswered, not a doubt that has not been fully removed, not a fear that has not been completely cast out, God also giving us His own testimony to the value of the blood of His Son that it “cleanses us from all sin;” that where remission of these is there remaineth no more offering for sin, that by one offering He hath “perfected forever them that are sanctified,” and their sins and iniquities He will remember no more. What liberty also to be now inside the veil in the holiest of all by the blood of Jesus, where He always appears before the face of God for us! —. H. S,

Bible Treasury: Volume 11, Son, The

"God.... hath in these lost days spoken to us in [the person of the] Son.” —Heb. 1:2

The question by which our Lord put the Pharisees to silence, so that “no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions,” was concerning the mystery of His sacred. person. Though they knew that Messiah would be the Son of David, they were completely confounded when asked how the Christ could be both David's Lord and David's son.

And still, “What think ye of Christ? Whose son is He?” are the vital questions on which hangs the eternal destiny of man. It must therefore be of all importance to learn from scripture what is revealed concerning Him; for types have prefigured Him, prophets have heralded Him, one more than a prophet was His forerunner, a multitude of the heavenly host hailed His entrance into this world, and apostles have delightfully dwelt on the glory of His person, the everlasting blessedness of His atoning work, the offices He now so perfectly sustains, and on His coming again. May we then ponder the sacred writings which testify of THE SON with that reverence and subjection which become those who delight to hearken to God's testimony of Him

"We know that the Son of God is come.” The Word which was with God, and was God, became flesh, and dwelt among us: and God, whom no man has seen, has been declared by the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father. The divine moral glory so shone in Him, that Spirit-taught witnesses tell us, “We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, fall of grace and truth.” In olden times, the thorough sinlessness of this peerless One was continually set forth by the imperative requirement, that each victim sacrificed should be “without blemish and without spot,” and His inimitable moral excellencies were borne witness to in the sweet perfume of the burning incense; while various offerings typically expressed His perfect purity, His entire devotedness, as well as the savor of rest God always found in Him, both in life and in death. The laying down of the victim's life, the shedding and sprinkling of the blood, the entrance of the high priest inside the veil once every year, not without blood and incense, all pointed to Him, whose blood was shed for many for the remission of sins, and in virtue of whose one offering the veil was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, thus removing every hindrance to the believer's going at once into the presence of God.

Of the sacred person of THE SON, as also of His sufferings, and the glories which follow, ancient prophets have sweetly spoken by the Holy Ghost. The promised Seed—the Son of David, the Son of Abraham, the virgin's Child—has been manifested according to their word, in the mysterious person of Immanuel. The babe of Judah's prophet has been born, and the Son given, whose name is the Mighty God, the Prince of Peace; who will ere long establish His kingdom with judgment and justice “upon the throne of David.” According to others, Israel's Ruler has come out of Bethlehem, “whose goings forth have been of old from everlasting.” (Mic. 5:2.) The true Shepherd, the Fellow of the Lord of hosts, has been smitten, and the sheep have been scattered. (Zech. 13:7.) The Anti-type of Isaac has been offered up, and raised again. The blood of the true paschal Lamb has been shed, and a way made for us through death and judgment into the very presence of God. It is no marvel, then, that His forerunner should have been divinely taught that He was “the Son of God,” should have announced Him to be “the Lamb of God,” and declared that He who came after him into the world was really before Him—for THE SON was before all things—and that His shoes' latchet he was unworthy to unloose.

Prophets also foretold that He—the Son, Messiah—would be despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, sold for thirty pieces of silver, His sacred hands and feet pierced; that His garments would be parted by the soldiers among them, and lots cast upon His vesture. They also declared that He would be numbered with the transgressors, and bear the sins of many, that it would please Jehovah to bruise Him, and to put Him to grief; that the cry of His distress would be, “My God, my God, why host thou forsaken me?” That though He would be made an offering for sin, and pour out His soul unto death, making His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death; yet the prophet sweetly announced that His soul would not be left in hell [hades], neither His flesh see corruption, but that, having been shown the path of life, He would go book to Him in whose presence there is fullness of joy, and at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore. Jehovah therefore said to the mighty Conqueror over death, Satan, and the grave, “Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.” For this we know He waits, of whom it has been said, “The Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints to execute judgment,” and, that He will sit” upon David's throne,” and “reign before his ancients gloriously."

From this brief glance at the Old Testament prophets, we see that they spake of Him, “who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven, and in earth, and under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Phil. 2:6-11.)

It is no wonder, then, that a multitude of the heavenly host should introduce THE SON into this world with “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good pleasure in men” (Luke 2:14), or that the apostles should so dwell on the glory and perfections of His sacred person, and be inspired to make Him known to others as the object for unchanging delight. One of these divinely-taught writers says, “We have seen with our eyes, we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life, for the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.” (1 John 1:1, 2.) Another Writes of the divine glory of the Son to the Colossians, as “the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature. For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, all things were created by him, and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body the church, who is the beginning, the first-born from among the dead, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence. For in him all the fullness was pleased to dwell; and having made peace through the blood of his cross,” &c. (Chap. i. 15-20.) What a precious cluster of glories is here presented for our contemplation

Again, in the Hebrews we are told that “God hath in these last days” —after all the varied testimony of prophets— “spoken to us in [the person of the] Son” (chap. i. 1); and we propose now to look a little, with the Lord's help, at what is recorded for our blessing concerning Him in the earlier chapters of this epistle. Before, however, proceeding farther, it may be well to press upon the reader the importance of making the word of God as much as possible our vocabulary when speaking of the unfathomable mystery of THE Son, and in all simplicity of faith receiving what God has declared of Him for our intelligence and blessing, instead of drawing deductions, reasoning out conclusions, or allowing ourselves to think or speak of Him according to human phraseology, and thus, unconsciously glide into serious error. We may be certain that “no man knoweth THE Son but the Father,” and that enough has been revealed of Him in scripture for our instruction and comfort.

In Heb. 1; 2 THE SON is remarkably brought before us; in chapter 1 as to His eternal Godhead, and in chapter 2 as to His manhood. Yet not exclusively so in either chapter, for how could this blessed One, who is both God and man in one person, be divided? Perhaps there has not been a more fruitful source of error than the attempt to do this. In both these chapters, however, scriptures are quoted which specially refer to Him as Messiah.

In the first He is also presented as the purger of sins, and then as sitting down on the right hand of God; both which wonderful acts He did being man, yet as no one less than God could do. In the second we see that He took part in the children's flesh and blood, takes not hold of angels but of Abraham's seed, that He is the sanctifier, and the One who, under the title of Son of man, will put all things under His feet. Thus we find that when the Holy Ghost brings before us the eternal Godhead of THE Son, He also reminds us that He is man; and when He specially presents Him to us as man, He shows us that the Child born—the Messiah—is the mighty God. How could He be Maker of all things, Heir of all things, Upholder of all things, and how could He put all things under His feet, except He were verily and truly God? And how could He partake in flesh and blood, be the purger of sins, taste death for everything, and sit upon the throne of David, without being verily and truly man—the woman's Seed, Son of Abraham, and Son of David, according to the flesh? Hence scripture says, “It is Christ that died,” that “the Son of man” was lifted up, and that God “spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all.” It was the glory of His person which gave such eternal value to His work; whereas, among men, it is the dignity of the work which gives honor to the person.

In Heb. 1 THE SON is looked at as “from everlasting to everlasting.” (Psa. 90:2.) He is therefore infinitely above angels—the highest class of created intelligence that man knows; for He had a more excellent name, was emphatically called by Jehovah, “My Son,” and He called God, “Father.” The Son as man is now exalted to the Father's throne, the One to whom angels, and principalities, and powers are made subject; and the world to come will not be put under angels, but under Him to whom it was said, “Sit thou at my right hand until I make thy foes thy footstool.” THE SON, then, is infinitely above angels, who are ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall inherit salvation. That Holy Thing that is born of Mary is called the Son of God, but being also eternally divine in His own person, He is no less than the effulgence of God's glory, and the exact expression of His substance. He is therefore before all things, and greater than all things, for all things were created by Him, and by Him all things subsist.

In the first twelve verses of this chapter, THE SON is, as we have said, particularly looked. at in His Godhead character. He is truly “the First and the Last.” Not only did He most truthfully say, “Before Abraham was I am,” but He was before anything was which is made, for it is said of Him, “by whom also he made the worlds.” We read elsewhere also that He had glory with the Father before the world was, and, father and son being relative terms, we find here His eternal Sonship most plainly revealed. (Ver. 2; John 17:5.) Moreover we are also taught that the Father's counsel and purpose, and His love to us, were in the Son before creation” According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame, before him in love.” (Eph. 1:4.) THE SON, then, is eternally divine. We are instructed by an inspired prophet that one attribute of Godhead is Creator. “To whom will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their hosts by number..... Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard that the everlasting God, the Jehovah, the Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of His understanding.” (Isa. 40:26-28.) He, then, who created all things is Jehovah. We have, therefore, in this first aspect of the sacred person of THE SON, the clearest possible proof of His being “from everlasting."

Secondly, He is brought before us as the One who did by Himself make purification of sins, and set Himself down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. (Ver. 3.) As man had sinned, man must bear the penalty of divine justice for sin; and since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead; but who could satisfy the infinite claims of God's justice? or drink up the cup of His eternal condemnation of sin, but one who was divine Himself? Who else could glorify God about our sins, could put them away forever, and cleanse us by His own blood, but He who had eternal attributes—the Son sent by the Father to be the Savior of the world? Again, who but He could step from the sepulcher to the throne of God, and take His rightful place there? It is not here the aspect of His resurrection as being raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, most precious as that view is; but it is THE Sow, who descended first into the lower parts of the earth, lay in the grave till the third day (thus giving the most decided proof of His actual death), rose again from among the dead in the glory of His own eternal excellency, and took His place on heaven's throne, to which He was righteously entitled “who.... when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.” (Ver. 3.) Blessed be God, there He is, the ascended, glorified Man, and made both Lord and Christ. Thus, in verses 2, 8 of this chapter, we find THE SON is looked at before time, or from everlasting, as the One by whom everything was made; and in time purging sins by Himself, and then sitting down in the highest place of power and glory at God's right hand.

Thirdly, there THE SON still sits; but He is coming again, and then He will be the object of the worship of angels, even as now in heaven angels, and authorities, and powers made subject to Him. Hence we read, “And again, when he bringeth in the First-begotten into the world,

he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him." (Ver. 6.) It need scarcely be said that worship could not be rendered by angelic beings which surround the throne of God to any one who was less than God. To no creature, however blessed by God, or endued with divine power, could such honor be rightly accorded; the idea would be sinful in the extreme. Angels know who the Son is, and that He died for man on the cross; they announced His entrance into the world when born in Bethlehem, they afterward tracked His solitary and perfect path, and ministered unto Him; and when He comes to the world in glory, they will accompany Him in His power. Whatever may be the measure of the intelligence of angels, it is quite clear that they knew to whom worship rightly belongs; for when John was once and again so overcome with the bright shining of an angel, and the wonderful things made known to him, that he "fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed him these things," it was at once refused. Instead of the angel accepting the homage, he rebuked the erring apostle, saying, "See thou do it not. I am thy fellow-servant, and [the fellow-servant] of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God." (Rev. 19:10; 22:9, 10.) Angels, then, who clearly know that God is the true object of worship, will take their happy place of rendering worship to THE SON when He comes as the Firstborn into the world, and in this they will be of one accord, for it is said, "Let all the angels of God worship him."

Fourthly, then His rightful place on earth will be the throne, for He comes not to suffer, but to reign. As the true David, He will occupy His own throne, for all things are to be subdued by Him unto Himself, before He delivers up the kingdom to Him who is God and Father, "when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power, for he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet." (1 Cor. 15:24, 25.) He will establish, too, His ancient people in their hoped-for earthly glory, when all the promises shall be made good to them. And who but one who is God could take possession of all things, and subdue all things to Himself? We read, therefore, "But unto THE SON he saith, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." (Vers. 8, 9.) Thus, in millennial glory, when THE SON—the Messiah—takes His kingly place of power, and reigns before His ancients gloriously, our attention is again called to contemplate Him in His eternal Godhead. Fellows, or companions, He will doubtless have; but here, as in all things, He must have the pre-eminence. It is unquestionably the millennial times in which we here behold THE Son; for it is characterized by righteousness, according to the scripture, "A king shall reign in righteousness." Now God is preaching grace, and bearing with this evil world in marvelous patience and long-suffering, but when THE SON sits on His own throne, He will wield the scepter of righteousness, for, as we have observed, righteousness will characterize His kingdom, not grace. It will be manifest that He loves righteousness, and hates iniquity; and, because He is eternally divine, will be able to subdue all things unto Himself. Then He "will show who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see; to whom be honor and power everlasting. Amen." (1 Tim. 4:15, 16.)

Fifthly, as the eternal Godhead of THE Son has been looked at "from everlasting," before the worlds were made, He is also brought before us as "to everlasting," when heaven and earth shall have passed away. Now He is upholding all things, and by Him all things consist; but when, according to the divine counsels, this old creation shall have fulfilled its course, and have forever passed away, THE SON will still be known in all His unchanging freshness and glory. He by whom all things were made will lay aside, as a garment, what is perishable and has waxen old. We read, "Thou, LORD, in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth; and the heavens are the work of thine hands; they shall perish, but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed; but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail." (Vers. 10-12.) Can there be a clearer testimony to the eternal Godhead of the Son? Who else could have brought everything that is made into existence? or who but He who is Almighty could fold up and lay aside this vast universe, and yet Himself remain in all His infinite and unchanging attributes? Most truly did He say in the days of His flesh, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." What man, what angel, what creature, could truthfully utter such an authoritative sentence? Well might His bearers have been sometimes astonished, and have exclaimed that "He taught as one having authority, and not as the scribes."

Thus has it been our happy privilege to trace in this inspired word THE SON eternally divine before all worlds, then as the Maker of all things, then as purging sins, rising victoriously over death, and taking His rightful place on the Father's throne. We have also been contemplating Him as the One whom angels universally will worship when He comes into the world in power and glory, to reign as King of kings, sitting on His own throne; and, lastly, when time shall cease, and this old creation pass away, we have been instructed that His eternal attributes will shine out in all their divine and unchanging glory and freshness. Well indeed has it been added "Jesus Christ [is] the same yesterday, and to-day and forever."

The Word by whom all things were made became flesh and dwelt among us. But He who is divine is also Son of man—God was manifested in the flesh.

God sent forth His Son made of a woman. Jesus Christ has come in flesh. He, who being in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, was found here in fashion as a man, and took a servant's form. He ate and drank, suffered hunger, thirst, and weariness. He slept, He walked, He prayed, preached and taught. He resisted and overcame Satan in temptation. He groaned and was troubled, He wept, He was grieved for the hardness of men's hearts, and looked round about on them with anger. He so lovingly entered into the sufferings of those around, He cast out devils, healed all manner of sickness with His word, that it was said by the prophet, "Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses." He was then verily man, born of woman, though without sin, and in every respect perfect, spotless, holy, harmless, and undefiled.

THE SON however did not become incarnate in order to make Himself one with us, but that He might die for our sins, and rising again make us one with Himself. It is of all importance to see this clearly; for how could the holy One unite Himself with fallen and sinful man, who justly merited the wrath of God? THE SON, therefore, had a solitary path through this world. By reason of His essential holiness and perfect purity He could not be otherwise than "separate from sinners," however much He went about doing good. There could not possibly, therefore, be union between us and Himself, until our sins had been judged, in His holy person on the cross, and we were righteously cleansed. This the Lord most clearly taught. Referring to Himself, He said, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit." (John 12:24.) For this we know the Father sent the Son. He came to die, for He came to save. In no other way could the righteous demands of God, or the necessities. of our case, be met; for man had sinned, and the penalty of death had come in by sin. He, therefore, took part in the children's flesh and blood, that through death, He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them, who through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage. He takes not hold of angels, but He takes hold of the seed of Abraham, for Messiah was the promised seed of Abraham, and also of David of whom, as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is

over all, God, blessed for over. (Rom. 9:5.) Thus Christ is both God and Man.

His life here, however, was one of suffering. He was truly “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.” He came for the suffering of death. He suffered having been tempted, which must have been deep distress to His infinitely holy soul. He suffered, that, as the Captain or Leader of our salvation, He might be made perfect through sufferings. He not only knew every step of the way and every circumstance connected with us, as Omniscient, but He passed through everything that was needed to make Him fit for the office of Leader of our salvation. Though He were a Son and thus could command all to obey Him, yet He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. His perfectness was in obeying in every respect in circumstances most adverse and painful. His love, subjection, obedience, and faith—all was perfect. And having been perfected, and a man glorified at God's right hand, He is the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey Him. (Chap. 5:8, 9) Ah who can tell the variety and depth of the sufferings of our precious Lord!

He suffered from man for righteousness' sake—was hated without a cause, despised, and rejected. He suffered from Satan in temptation and bruising— “thou shalt bruise his heel.” He suffered (alas how deeply I) by reason of His wondrous love for His own nation, from God's governmental dealings because of their sin, for “in all their afflictions he was afflicted;” and He suffered from God atoningly for sins, the just for the unjust (how unfathomable to us!), when He cried out, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” God only knows the love and sorrow that met there. It was “the death of the cross."

But His was a victorious death; and, as it has been said, He death by dying slew. He saw no corruption. His soul was not left in hades. He rose from the dead, for it was not possible that He should be holden of death. He went through death, and annulled death and him that had the power of death. Thus He triumphed over death and Satan and the grave. The Son of man is therefore a risen victorious Savior.

When John was overcome with a sight of the glorified Son of man that he fell at His feet as dead, He graciously comforted His servant by assuring him that, though He was dead, He is now for evermore a living Person, and holding in triumph the keys of death and hades. “He laid his right hand upon me, saying, Fear not, I am the first and the last. I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, amen; and have the keys of death and of hell [hades].” (Rev. 1:17, 18.) Thus the Son of man has triumphed. Death could not detain Him. He rose from among the dead. His was certainly a victorious death.

“By man came death,” we know, and here we see, “by man came also the resurrection of the dead,” (1 Cor. 15:21.) Hence we find that after Jesus rose from the dead, He showed Himself alive again by many infallible proofs, being seen of His disciples, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. He appeared in their midst, showed them His hands and His side, gave commandments, breathed on them and said, “Receive ye the Holy Ghost;” and expounded unto them in all the scriptures, the things concerning Himself. When some who saw Him were terrified and affrighted, and supposed they had seen a spirit, He fully demonstrated to them the reality of His own actual and bodily resurrection from among the dead. He said unto them, “Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken he showed them his hands and his feet.” (Luke 24:37-40) Moreover, “He led them out as far as to Bethany, and while he blessed them, was parted from them and carried up into heaven;” and they watched Him ascending higher and higher, until a cloud received Him out of their sight; and while they steadfastly looked toward heaven, hoping to catch another glimpse of their precious Savior, heavenly messengers stood by them and said, “Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven.” (Acts 1:9-11.) Nothing can more fully prove the reality of the resurrection of the man Christ Jesus from among the dead. This was victory indeed.

And, as we have just seen, He has ascended. We now “see Jesus.... crowned with glory and honor.” (Ver. 9.) We remember that He was in death, but we see Him glorified at the right hand of God. A man in glory: what a precious object for our hearts “He who descended first into the lower parts of the earth is ascended above all heavens, far above all principality and power, and might and dominion, and every name that is named not only in this world but also in that which is to come.” (Eph. 4:2, 10; and i. 21.) There He is highly exalted—a glorified Man. There Stephen when he looked steadfastly into heaven, saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God. And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.” (Acts 7:55, 56.) There we now have to do with Him. There too we know Him in new relationships. “He is not ashamed to call us brethren, saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me.” (Vers. 11-18.) We know too that it was after His triumphant resurrection, He said to Mary, “Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.” The One, therefore, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, is crowned with glory and honor.

Now He is before the face of God as our High Priest. “Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto [his] brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things relating to God.” (Ver. 17.) After having made atonement for the sins of the people by the sacrifice of Himself, He sat down on the right hand of God. There the glorified Son of man in heaven carries on His never-failing office of High Priest for us, after the Aaronic functions, but according to the Melchizedec order. He is not one that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but is merciful and faithful, able to succor us in temptation, help in every time of need, and bring us right through our pilgrimage, to the end, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for no. He who is of the seed of David according to the flesh, and Son of God, has passed through the heavens, and is our faithful, unchanging, and sympathizing High Priest; and, when He comes the second time and takes His Messiah throne, He will be, according to the prophetic word, “a priest upon his throne” —both king and priest on earth. (Zech. 11:13.)

He is, however, soon coming to reign, “for the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto THE SON; that all should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.... he hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.” (John 5:22-27.) Again we read that God “will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all in that he hath raised him from among the dead.” (Acts 17:31.) The Son being now at the right hand of God is “expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.” Man is yet to be set over the works of God's hands. Man (not angels) is yet to subdue all things unto Himself. “For unto angels hath he not put in subjection the (habitable) world to come;” but quoting from Psa. 8 and applying it to Jesus, the Son of man, he says, “But one in a certain place, testified, saying, What is man that thou art mindful of him? or the Son of man that thou visitest him? thou madest him a little lower than the angels [applied to Jesus in v. 9.] Thou crownedst him with glory and honor, and didst set him over the works of thy hands. Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet.” (Vers. 5-8.) Thus we see that the Son who made the worlds, who became incarnate, who was tempted, who

suffered and died, was victorious over death and Satan; and who ascended into the heavens, sat down on the right hand of God, and entered upon His priestly functions, is yet to come forth and take His rightful place over all things, execute all judgment, and subdue all things unto Himself. “And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."

No doubt one chief reason why the glory and perfections of the sacred person of THE SON are thus so fully brought out in the first and second chapters of the Hebrews is to set forth the infinite value of the one sacrifice, and the perfectness of His priestly office, for there must necessarily be an everlasting efficacy connected with all that He did. Hence, as to the offering, we read, “By one offering he hath perfected forever [or, in perpetuity] them that are sanctified;” and, as concerning priesthood, we are told, There were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: and “every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifice which can never take away sins; but this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, forever [or in perpetuity] sat down on the right hand of God.” (Heb. 7:28; 12:14) Thus, through the infinite efficacy of the one offering, the worshippers, instead of having to do with many sacrifices which could not take away sins, are once purged, and have no more conscience of sins, so that the Holy Ghost can in-dwell them and unite them to Christ in the heavens; such have also liberty to draw near to God—to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, where our High Priest is, and where His blood over speaks. Instead therefore of there being now “a remembrance of sins,” we remember Him, who has by His one offering for over put away sin. Hence, though sin is in us, we have no sin on us; for we are cleansed, sanctified and perfected forever by the will of God through one offering; and God has said, “Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more.” Christ being now in heaven is the clearest proof that our sins have been borne, suffered for, and are gone forever. We have, therefore, “no more conscience of sins.” How rich and abundant is the grace of God to us in Christ!

If, then, in virtue of the accomplished work of THE SON, the conscience is purged, the veil is rent, and He is gone into heaven itself by His own blood, we, as purged worshippers, necessarily have access to God with confidence; our hearts are attracted to where He now is, so that we run the race set before us according to His word; and we also take that position here which is suited to His mind. Hence the believer is looked at in the closing chapter of this Epistle as a happy worshipper, an earnest runner, and a faithful bearer of the reproach of Christ. He is a worshipper inside the veil, where Jesus is, a runner of a race looking steadfastly unto Jesus, and outside the camp with a rejected Jesus bearing His reproach.

The liberty of access for the worshipper is here contrasted with the way of approach, while the first tabernacle was standing, according to the only ritual divinely-instituted but now done away in Christ. It was characterized by distance from God, for the veil excluded them. It was not rent—the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest; so that they never knew what it was to be in the presence of God, as purged worshippers. The priesthood too was of an earthly and successional order, confined to an earthly line of things (not heavenly) as between the people and God. It was a changeable priesthood, and often interrupted by death. There was also “a worldly sanctuary” —a place of worship on earth, a material building, which was truly, and the only one ever recognized as, the house of God. Such was the Jewish order of things. Whereas Christianity tells us of distance—having been removed by the veil being rent from the top to the bottom, when Jesus died upon the cross, so that the worshipper comes now with boldness into the holiest of all. The order of priesthood is heavenly and eternal, all believers being made priests, and Jesus the Son of God being the unchangeable High Priest. Worship therefore is not now connected with a building on earth, but with the holiest of all above, “the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man.” Because the Lord's people are His house, there is now no building on earth, which can be truthfully designated a house of God. (See Heb. 3:6) It was therefore said by our adorable Lord, “Wheresoever two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” (Matt. 18:20)

To attach the idea of a sanctuary now to any building on earth is then so far to abandon Christian ground, and to go back to the Jews' religion; which is not only dishonoring to the Lord, but far more damaging to souls than many imagine; because it throws them at a distance from God, and necessitates their requiring a humanly-ordered priesthood to come between themselves and God. This the natural man likes, because it gives importance to men; while he rebels at the thoughts of divine grace, and refuses the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free. But, blessed be God, we have remission of sins, and we have boldness to enter where He is. Hence we are welcomed with “Come boldly to the throne of grace.” Do we know what it is to be inside the vail, in the sweet consciousness of God's “perfect love” and in the enjoyment of “perfect peace,” while our hearts at the same time are going out to the Father in worship and thanksgiving? It need scarcely be said that this is not the sinner drawing near in order to be cleansed, but the worshipper entering in with boldness, because he is cleansed, and has “no more conscience of sins.” Hence it is written, “Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.” (Chap. x. 22.) Our Lord referred to this remarkable change in the character of worship. He said to the woman of Samaria, “Believe Me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father.... But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit, and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a spirit and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” (John 4:21-24) Worship then must be “in spirit;” suited to the nature of God, and “in truth,” or according to God's own revelation of His mind. Happy indeed are those who thus worship the Father!

At the same time the believer is deeply conscious he is in a world where Jesus was but is not, and is running on to where He is. The spiritual worshipper is also then a devoted runner, and in so doing he is exhorted to drop every weight which impedes his course, to lay aside unbelief in all its delusive forms—that easily besetting sin—and to run the race set before him. (Heb. 12:1-3.) He is encouraged to run, not to loiter, nor to seek a resting place, where the faithful Forerunner had none; but to follow on in the race with patient persevering faith. Not with spasmodic or desultory efforts, but with patience; not looking to men, however well they may have been reported for their faith: but to keep the eye steadily on Him who has run the race perfectly, who knows every step of the way, every impediment and temptation, and is now sitting on the throne of God. We are then to run the race set before us, looking unto Jesus (or looking steadfastly on Jesus) where He now is. Thus turning from every other object, and fixing the eye of our heart on Him, the Leader and Completer (not of our faith, but) of faith, we must look steadfastly and dependently on Him who has trodden the path of faith perfectly from the beginning to the end; for all our resources are in Him. We are enjoined also to “consider him,” whose path was beset so painfully with opposition and trial; for when we well consider Him who endured so great contradiction from sinners against Himself, we become so cheered and strengthened that we do not grow weary and faint in our minds. The blessed Lord had joy in prospect, and so we have the bright hope of being with Him, and like Him forever. We are told that “for the joy which was set before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” The Forerunner is for us entered within the veil, and we are to run the race with patience looking unto Him.

We are also to bear the reproach of Christ. We cannot now be associated with a worldly system of religion on earth, for the veil is rent. He suffered without the gate, and we are exhorted to go forth unto Him without the camp. Our place then here is to suffer with Christ in His rejection. God hath highly exalted Him, and has made Him the central object of His counsels; Christ must therefore be the true and only center for the faithful here. False religiousness is as displeasing to the Lord as irreligiousness itself. Yet there is a way for faith in the darkest times. The Lord has interests still on earth of deepest moment to Him. He cannot bear what is evil. It is only the more hateful to Him, when His holy name is used to accredit it; though ecclesiastical evil is often the last thing which arouses the conscience. Still the word to the faithful is "Let every one who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity," and "go forth unto Him without the camp." This brings its "reproach," but it is the path of blessing. To turn away from what is not according to His truth, "and to go forth unto him without the camp" is clearly His will concerning us. It may entail painful severances; but to be out to the Lord, and "with those who call on his name out of a pure heart," is the divinely ordered path; and that is enough for a true heart. "Let us go forth therefore unto him without, the camp, bearing his reproach." (Heb. 13:11-13.) It has been rightly said that a worldly religion, which forms a system in which the world can walk, and in which the religious element is adapted to man on earth, is the denial of Christianity.

May we know increasingly the blessedness of being inside the veil as purged worshippers, outside the camp with Christ in faithfulness to His name, and patient runners of the race which ore long will bring us into His presence forever: "for yet a little while and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry." (Heb. 10:37.) When the Lord presents Himself as "the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star," it is immediately said "and the Spirit and the bride say Come"! so we may be assured it is the apprehension of His blessed person that will keep fresh in our soul the hope of His coming—the earnest desire of seeing His face. H, H. S.

Crumbs for the Lord's Little Ones: Volume 5 (1857), Our Calling.

"Holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling." —Heb. 3:1.

"The God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus."—1 Pet. 5:10.

OUR calling is not from Egypt to Canaan, but from this present evil world to the presence of God and the Lamb in heavenly places. We are "blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." We are purchased, made nigh to God, sanctified by the blood of the Son of God. He died, the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God. Our promised inheritance, therefore, is not "a land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig-trees, and pomegranates....a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass," (Deut. 8:8, 9) but "a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens"— "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven." (2 Cor. 4:1 Pet. 1:4.)

The SACRIFICE by which we approach God is not that of bulls and goats, which can never put away sin, but the sacrifice of Christ, which is so everlastingly efficacious as to purge our conscience, and to give us boldness with confidence in coming into the presence of God. We enter into the holiest of all by the blood of Jesus. It was the Lord from heaven, the Lord of Glory, Jehovah's Shepherd, the Fellow of the Lord of hosts, the Son of man, the man Christ Jesus who alone could and did put away sin; and this He did by the sacrifice of Himself.

Our HIGH PRIEST also, is not like Aaron, made after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. He, therefore, continueth forever, having an unchangeable priesthood. He is consecrated for evermore by the oath of God, a Minister of the Sanctuary and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man; He is a Mediator of a better covenant, established upon better promises. He hath entered into heaven itself by His own blood, now to appear in the presence of God for us; thus He perpetually presents to God that one offering by which He Lath perfected us forever. Hence "He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by HIM, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." No other priest could sit down; for he never finished the work, but was offering oftentimes the same sacrifices which could never take away sins. But so perfectly finished was the redemption-work of Christ, so eternal in its efficacy, that after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, He sat down on the right hand of God.

God's testimony to the finished work of Christ was not only in raising Him from the dead, but when Jesus offered Himself and died upon the tree, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. Prior to this, no one could enter into the Holiest (the place of nearness to God), under penalty of death (except the High Priest once a year with blood and incense); but the finished work of Christ so purged our sins, and satisfied divine justice, that the rent veil sheaved that the believer could now come at once into God's holy presence, on the ground of what Christ had done. The Holy Spirit now bears witness, in the heart and conscience of believers, to God's estimate of Christ's work, declaring, "their sins and iniquities will I remember no more," and, by Christ, gives us access unto the Father.

Further: we were quickened, when dead in trespasses and sins, and have passed from death unto life. We have been delivered from the power of darkness, and have been translated into the kingdom of His dear Son. So that we are not now viewed as standing in the first Adam, but God, who is rich in mercy, hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, to the praise of the glory of His own grace. It is in Christ, who is at the right hand of God, then, that we now stand. "God hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." We may not always realize and enjoy this, nevertheless, the fact remains unaltered, that "our old man is crucified with Christ," and that we "are complete in Him, which is the Head of all principality and power." God has already accomplished this for us in a crucified and risen Saviour. "We are members of His body, His flesh, and His bones." Careless walk will grieve the Holy Spirit, and hinder our joyful apprehension of this wondrous grace; still, Christ is the Righteousness, Life, Forerunner, and Great High Priest, now in the heavenlies, for "all that come unto God by Him." "As He is, so are we in this world." "As is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." So that the believer may well sing,

Our dwelling-place, therefore, through faith, is in heaven. We now know Christ in God's presence for us; as the Apostle says, "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor." Our true riches, honor, life, treasure, and fullness of blessing, are in heaven, and there our affections should be. "We are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God," and "when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we also shall appear with Him in glory." In reference to the world, we look for its terrible and just judgments, but our hope, our blessed hope is, that Christ will come from heaven, and take us unto Himself. All our obligations are heavenward; we are not debtors to the flesh; neither have we life, or peace, or righteousness from the

world; but Christ gave Himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. The death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus known in power upon our souls, will alone enable us to abide in heavenly places, to show forth heavenly-mindedness, and to know that all our resources of wisdom, honor, joy, and blessing, are in Christ. Thus realizing that we have died unto sin, and are crucified to the world, that our life is hid with Christ in God, we shall be able to say, “Our conversation (citizenship) is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, and fashion it like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.” (Phil. 3:20, 21.)

Christian Truth: Volume 37, Going on to Perfection

In Heb. 6:1 we are told to "go on unto perfection," but certainly it is not to perfection in the flesh. This was the error of the Galatian believers, and brought strong reproof upon them. They were remonstrated by the Spirit of God as being "foolish," "bewitched," and as those who did "not obey the truth," in that having "begun in the Spirit," they afterward sought to be made perfect in the flesh (Gal. 3:3). They "did run well," but they seemed to have lost sight of what Christ crucified had done for them, and to have forgotten that they had two natures, that "which is born of the flesh" and "that which is born of the Spirit." They had let slip the blessed fact that they were now "not in the flesh" (though the flesh was in them), but "in the Spirit," a new creation in Christ Jesus, which neither circumcision, law, nor any ordinances of any kind, could bring about or alter. "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." Gal. 6:15.

It is certain, then, that the going on to perfection mentioned here does not support the false notion, so subversive of Christianity, and so severely censured in Scripture, of seeking to be made perfect in the flesh. As to moral principle, we should, as God's children, seek to imitate our Father, as the Lord said, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Matt. 5:48. This is a totally different thought from being made perfect in the flesh. The truth is that the believer will not lose this evil principle in him, which is born after the flesh and in which dwells nothing good, until the Lord comes, or until the believer is called home to glory through death.

In order to understand what is meant here by "let us go on unto perfection" (or full growth), we need to remember that the epistle is written to Hebrews, and that the expression occurs nowhere else in Scripture. Those addressed had been born and educated in a religious order of things which, though it recognized man in the flesh and under law, was divinely instituted before Christianity was brought in. These Jewish things abounded with types and shadows of realities now made known. They had been accustomed to think of the rudimentary truths of "repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God." They were familiar with divers washings or "baptisms," "laying on of hands" on the sacrifices, and they believed in the "resurrection of the dead" and "eternal judgment." But these things were only the beginning of Christ's doctrine; they were infantile truth, the "milk" of divine revelation as compared with "strong meat," which God has given us since the accomplished work of His beloved Son and the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Many of • these Hebrews were still connecting Christianity with a system on earth, and were taken up with the early glimpses of divine revelation, instead of the fuller enjoyment of knowing God's Son now glorified as the central object of God's present ways. The consequence was that there was no spiritual progress. Instead of being teachers, as they ought to have been, they needed to be taught again "the first principles of the oracles of God." Because of this failure, there was no hope of their knowing in a practical way a truly Christian footing, and progressing in the truth, until they received in faith the "strong meat" which communicated to souls the perfections of the Person, work, and offices of a Messiah not now on earth (though He will be), but glorified in heaven (Chap. 5:11-14).

"Therefore," said the writer to these Hebrews, connecting this portion with what had gone before, "leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection." What seems to have brought the writer to this point in the epistle was that he desired to say "many things" to them about the "high priest... after the order of Melchisedec," the Son in heaven, but they were "dull of hearing." They did not have the sense of the contrast between Judaism and Christianity, but were so taken up with Jewish things which dimly pointed to Christ, instead of with Christ Himself, that their state of soul was low indeed. The inspired writer knew they would not advance until they recognized the Messiah now in heaven as a totally distinct thing, contrasted with the Jewish system which still surrounded them, for the temple was then standing, and some "shadowy things" of Judaism were still going on. Deliverance could only come by their being taken up with the personal glory of the Son, the eternal efficacy of His one offering, His all-prevailing and unchangeable priesthood, and His present intercession for us in the sanctuary above. Here we have perfection, a perfection which not only has its source in divinely "perfect love," but one which gives "perfect peace" to the believer, because he has a perfect conscience and a perfect way of approach to God.

To Christ in heaven the writer of the epistle directed the hearts of these Hebrews. Likewise, when we are under the Spirit's guidance, we pass through the various chapters with our feet consciously on earth, but with our eyes directed to the glorified Son of man in heaven.

In chapter 1 we look at the Son, by whom the worlds were made, who, "when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." v. 3.

In chapter 2 the proper attitude of a believer on earth is described as gazing on the Lord in glory. "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor." Chap. 2:9.

In chapter 3 we are to consider Him, not only as the One who came down from heaven, but who has also ascended there, and entered into His priestly office for us. "Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." verse 1.

In chapter 4 we behold Him as Man having passed through the heavens, yet Son of God. He is there as our sympathizing High Priest, so that we may hold fast our confession, and boldly approach God's throne where we find grace for help in times of need. What unutterable blessedness we know in present intercourse with the Son of God where He now is! "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession [confession]. For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." vv. 14-16.

In

In chapter 6 we see Him as the forerunner who is gone inside the veil for us who are still running the race here. What a blessed object for the contemplation of our hearts! "Within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made a high priest forever after the order of Melchisedec." vv. 19, 20.

In chapter 7 we are still gazing on the Son in heaven, and we see His eternal and unchangeable character, as able to save us right on to the end, and ever living to make intercession for us (vv. 24-28).

In chapter 8 He is presented to us as a sitting priest who is presently active in the sanctuary in heaven. These were entirely new ideas to a Jew. Their priest, from Aaron downward, could never sit down. He was always standing because of the many sacrifices he had to offer which could never take away sin. But "We have such a high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man." vv. I, 2.

In chapter 9 we learn that He entered heaven itself by His own blood, and that He now appears before the face of God for us, having obtained eternal redemption. He has made the power of it known to us by the eternal Spirit as we go on toward our eternal inheritance (vv. 12-24).

In chapter 10 we are instructed that we have liberty to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus where He is, and are assured by the witness of the Holy Spirit that our sins and iniquities will be remembered no more (vv. 14, 19), and that the coming of our Lord is nigh. "Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." v. 37.

In chapter 12 we are enjoined to look away from every other object and unto Him who ran the race of faith perfectly; unto Him who endured the cross and despised the shame, who resisted sin unto blood and is sitting at the right hand of the throne of God. While waiting to meet Him at His coming, we are sustained and cheered by thus being occupied with Him where He now is (vv. 1, 2).

In chapter 13 we are supposed to be so occupied with Him, and all of God's goodness and mercy to us in and through Him, as to be offering "by Him" the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks "to His name." Furthermore, like Him, we are not to forget to minister to those around us.

It is clearly the mind of God that we should now, while on earth, know the heaven opened to faith by the rent veil. It is also His mind that we should have personal occupation with our Lord Jesus Christ there. This truth delivers us from a weak and infantile state of soul. It is not "milk," but "strong meat," because it ministers to us the perfections of Christ in heaven, the eternal efficacy of His one offering, and of His divinely-appointed and unchangeable priesthood as sitting on the throne of God.

It is well to lay this to heart, and to ask ourselves often, "Am I taken up with the Son of God in glory on account of what He is in Himself and what He is to God? Am I occupied with the One in whom are all my resources, blessings, joy, strength, and inheritance?" The more we ponder this epistle, the more we shall be convinced that our souls have not fully enjoyed the blessings which the accomplished work of the Son entitles us to, unless we are consciously inside the veil where He now is and offering to God the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving as purged worshipers. Then our hearts delight to sing-

"0 fix our earnest gazeSo wholly, Lord, on Thee,That with Thy beauty occupied,We elsewhere none may see."

H.H. Snell

The Evangelist: Volume 4 (1870), "Of Necessity a Change"

Heb. 7:12.

PRIESTHOOD and law, as wrongly applied, are two giant oppressors of God's people, and two great robbers of the glory of Christ. Men do not, or will not, see God's necessity for changing the system of Judaism, because they do not, or will not, see the glory of Christ. And the reason we do not see the glory of Christ is because we are so full of ourselves. It may be our works, our religion, our church organizations, our preachers. But we say it without fear of contradiction, that immediately a saved soul sees the glory of Christ, he is free from priesthood and law, and rejoices in Him whom God has exalted.

There are many who would indignantly thrust aside every thought and teacher that insinuated the sacrifice of Christ was not sufficient, who will yet allow thoughts and teachers hinting that there is such a thing as a mere man standing between God and His people. Now one of the present glories of our Lord is His priesthood; it is a part of His gracious work for His people who are upon the earth. He stands their High Priest, in God's presence for them. He upholds them on their way to heaven. He intercedes for them. By Him they draw near to God. He has joy in this blessed office of His, and God will allow none to interfere with His Son in this work. As God will reject for all eternity every sinner that pretends to come into His presence save by Jesus, so too does God refuse the officiousness of those who thrust themselves between His people and Him, asserting that they occupy a more intimate place than their fellow-men, and that they are, by reason of their office, in a nearer position to God than other men. We say God rejects and refuses all this pretension because He loves to glorify His Son.

The Scripture gives us an insight of heaven after the death of our Lord, and it is of deep importance that we should know what is there. Fresh from His conquest of Satan, the grave, sin, He went up on high, and God appointed Him to be High Priest. (Heb. 8:1.) We see Him now, the man Christ Jesus, the glorified, the exalted—having entered the heavens by His own blood (as Aaron entered the holiest on the day of atonement) in the presence of God "for us." He has gone within the veil by His own blood "for us;" God beholds Him there "for us," and He bears the burden of all His people's infirmities there—He ever lives to make intercession for them there, in the very presence of God.

Christ being God's High Priest in heaven, there is no longer left a place for priests on earth (except the priesthood of all believers). Hence God has changed the whole system of priesthood. The earthly order of priesthood is set aside, there is no longer a successional priesthood, men are no longer called to the priesthood, but the priesthood is after Melchisedec as to order—a royal priesthood, a holy priesthood, a priesthood associated with the person of One whom God delights to honor as priest.

God forbid that we should glory in any other priest save Jesus Christ. What shall we say of those who go back in spirit to that Jewish system which God has changed? who divide between priests and people, and worse, who divide between God's High Priest and His people; who make themselves a hedge between the holiest of all and the worshippers, who practically bind up the rent veil, and keep God's saints outside.

But the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law, and this brings us to that other giant law. Now the law is good, if a man use it lawfully, that is, we may bring the law to condemn the sinner and to slay him; but if we put the poor singer who feels his sins under the law, we are enemies of the cross of Christ, and enemies, too, of His glory within the holiest of all.

“Of necessity," saith the Scripture, there is a change of the law; and the needs be is the glory of Christ. It would not consort with His majesty that the word spoken by angels should have a place with that salvation which Christ preached. There needed a change. Priests are set aside, and law is set aside, in order that Christ may be everything.

We would say to any beloved soul who is contending for the law as his rule of life, Consider God's necessity! Consider that as the priesthood is changed —that order of men who taught Israel the law—so also Christ and His salvation have taken the place of law which they taught. Consider, if you go back to the law, you leave Christ. You cannot have part Christ and part law, for this God will not permit. If you want the law then you must content yourself with the priests, if you have Christ you have salvation, and Him as your priest. The law made nothing perfect. It never made a man perfect in peace, righteousness, or joy. It was weak and unprofitable, for it gave no strength to the sinner to obey its commands, and produced no fruit in him. When a believer puts himself under law he begins to "do," he tries his best; and this is a sliding away from Christ. We have not to bring anything to God, we have not to bring Christ to God, for God gave us Christ, and Christ is in God's presence for us. If you say, but I must bring the blood to God by faith, you are doing something, and practically forgetting that God has done everything; you are attempting to give to God, forgetting that God gives, that Christ gives. We have only to believe.

Salvation which the Lord preached has taken the place of law which angels spake. And the salvation is complete. The blood has washed away sins. The cross has ended self in God's sight. The grave has been emptied of its prey. Christ is now in God's presence for us, and as Priest He saves to the uttermost—to the end, all that come unto God by Him.

What a blessed change has God effected for us! Shall we not delight in it? What! shall we go back and clothe ourselves in the old-fashioned garments of Jewish religion, and forget our risen Savior and Priest? Shall we return to temples, to priests and people, to the shadow? No, no—

Streams of Refreshing From the Fountain of Life, Death and Judgment Past for the Believer

And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation (Heb. 9:27, 28).

There are three different appearings of the Lord spoken of at the end of this chapter. We read of Christ having appeared at the end of the world — the end of the ages — to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself (Heb. 9:26). You see it was not simply to make a way for the sinner that Christ died, but to do what nothing else ever did or could do — to put away sin; and so completely has this been done, that we read elsewhere of sins being purged, blotted out, cast into the depths of the sea, cast behind God’s back, never more to be remembered, and the like, to show us God’s estimate of the value of Christ’s work. Some say that they must every now and then look at their sins; but how much better is it to look to Jesus, and see how completely they have been

put away!

Observe, the Scripture says,

PUT AWAY!

Then we have another appearing mentioned in the closing words of the chapter, which is yet future, though we know not how very near it may be; but I shall hope to refer to that soon. Meanwhile, I would call attention to the very solemn truth recorded in Heb. 9:27, 28:

As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.

The as and so here are very emphatic.

Death and judgment are God’s appointments for men, because they are sinners. The divine verdict is not only that

all have sinned (Rom. 3:23; 5:12),

but that all are

under sin (Rom. 7:14) — servants of sin (Rom. 6:17; 20);

so that sin to the natural man is something agreeable to his nature; hence we read of the

pleasures of sin (Heb. 11:25).

Death is the result of sin, and so is judgment; and what can God’s condemnation of sin be but eternal? Hence we read of the

second death (Rev. 21:8),

the lake of fire. Death, then, is God’s just sentence on men because of sin —

the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23).

There was one Man here on whom death had no claim, because in Him was no sin; sin having been laid upon Him, sin in the flesh was condemned in Himself, and He died; but He saw no corruption.

It was not possible that He should be holden of death (see Acts 2:24).

This was the spotless, holy Jesus, the Savior of sinners.

Men know they must die, and therefore try to make it, by comfortable circumstances, as agreeable as they can; but they cannot bear to think of “judgment.” Nevertheless, it is God’s appointment, and cannot be altered. Men are exposed to death and judgment; for they are under the dominion of sin as well as the guilt of sin; they are, therefore,

servants of sin (Rom. 6:17; 20),

and

the wages of sin is death.

This is very plain. It is not simply the death of the body; but if a man die in his sins, he will be raised again, and judged for those sins before the great white throne, and then cast into the lake of fire, the second death of everlasting darkness and misery. Those of you, therefore, who are still in your sins are going on to death and judgment — God’s appointments. How can you bear the thought of being judged by the light of God’s infinite holiness and unchanging hatred to sin?

We have here, as it were, two parallel columns. The one headed “men,” and having written under it “death” and “judgment”; the other headed,

them that look for Him (Heb. 9:28)

— “believers,” and under that is written, “Christ put away their sins, and consequently delivered them from death and judgment.” How wide the contrast! The one clouded with darkness and misery, the other bright with light and glory. Observe the as and so. As death and judgment were the doom of men because of sin, so Christ bore the sins, and death and judgment. He bore

the sins of many (Heb. 9:28).

How blessed is the portion of those who have Christ for their Savior!

I would now, my friends, ask if you have received Jesus the Son of God as your Savior? I do not ask if you have good intentions; for I believe multitudes intend to go to heaven who are still treading the broad road to destruction; neither do I ask if you have some knowledge of the doctrines of Christ; but I do ask if you have received Him? You may say, I pray more, give more, deny myself more, and the like; but that is not the question. To know Christ, and take Him as your very own Savior, because there is no other, knowing you must perish in eternal misery without Him because of your sins, this is the vital question. For it is not knowing doctrines, or giving alms, or saying prayers, that can deliver you from death and judgment, but Jesus the Son of God, and Jesus only.

As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God (John 1:12).

Whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish (see John 3:15).

Or, as the blessed Lord said in another place,

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation (or judgment) (John 5:24).

Blessed deliverance! Happy indeed are those who, having simply received Christ as their Savior, can rest their heads on their pillows in sweetest confidence and peace, knowing that their sins were purged by the sacrifice of Christ, and that they will not come into judgment. Such are already on the other side of death.

They have passed from death unto life (see John 5:24; 1 John 3:14).

The believer, then, is delivered from what every unbeliever is exposed to — death and judgment. How is it that he is delivered from death? for do not we see that saints die just the same as sinners? They may appear to as to their bodies; but the wages of sin is not simply the separation of soul and body, but there is a “sting” and “terror” connected with death that knows no rest or solace. The believer is so completely delivered from these things that he can say,

O death, where is thy sting? (1 Cor. 15:55)

for the sting of death being

sin (1 Cor. 15:56),

it is removed by the precious blood of Christ, which cleanseth from all sin. The “terror,” too, is gone, because he knows that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. The believer’s death, therefore, is not called death in the New Testament, but falling asleep in Jesus. Hence, too, the blessed Lord said,

If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death (John 8:51) —

he shall never taste of death (John 8:52).

Blessed, glorious fact, that the soul that has accepted Christ for its Savior is so completely delivered from death, that, when Jesus comes, those who are alive will at once, in a moment, be changed, and caught up into the air to meet Him!

As to “judgment,” nothing can be more contrary to the teaching of Scripture than to suppose that saints are going to be judged as to whether they shall have eternal life or not. I refer to the wrong use made of our Lord’s teaching on the sheep and the goats. On referring to it (Matt. 25:31-46), you will see that there is no idea of resurrection there, not one dead person raised; but, instead of that, it is the King coming here, and judging the nations as to how they dealt with His brethren, a remnant of Jews who will go forth with the gospel of the kingdom after we have been caught up at the Lord’s coming. It is Christ assembling and judging living people. Nothing can be more opposed to the precious truth, that every believer now has everlasting life, is a child of God, is passed from death unto life, than the false idea of God’s children going to be judged. That every believer will appear before the judgment seat, or bema, of Christ is quite true; but there will be no question of salvation then, but of reward for service; and we shall appear there like Christ in glorified bodies.

It is most blessed, then, to see that God teaches us that death and judgment have been already met for us by Jesus on the cross, and that which is before us is not, as some say, a day of judgment, a great assize, to decide who shall be saved and who not; for I affirm that Scripture nowhere teaches us to expect that, but to expect Christ. Hence Heb. 9:28 concludes with, and to them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

There will be no question with Christ and believers about sin, and therefore not of its consequences — death and judgment. Christ will then put forth His redemption power on our bodies, and thus not only give us full and everlasting deliverance from sorrow and all the consequences of sin, but, in a moment, change our vile bodies, and fashion them like unto His glorious body, so that we may have full capacities for ceaseless and untiring enjoyment of Himself. Blessed hope indeed! Precious portion! now children of God, delivered from death and judgment, and having the blessed hope of being for ever with the Lord, and for ever like Him! The believer is therefore instructed to look back on the cross, and see that Christ there put away his sins, and delivered him from death and judgment; to look up to the throne, and see Jesus now appearing in God’s presence for him, his righteousness and great High Priest; and to look for His coming to bring him into eternal enjoyment with Himself.

In a moment, like a lightning flash, and the twinkling of an eye, He will change these vile bodies, and then at once our grateful hearts, loosed for ever from every bond, will burst forth in one eternal anthem of praise —

Worthy is the Lamb (Rev. 5:12).

Now, if we sing a few hymns, nature grows weary, and admonishes us that it is enough; but then it will be untiring and unending worship and delight in the Lord Jesus. We even now feel that nothing is comparable to Jesus. If the world were to pile up all its wealth, or gather together all its pleasures, or concentrate all its honors, and present them to a child of God, his reply would be — Jesus only can satisfy me.

I ask you then, dear friends, have you delight in Jesus? Is He precious to your souls? He is the Father’s delight, and all intelligences in heaven are in subjection to Him. If you, then, cannot find delight in the Lord Jesus, how can you be fit for the Father’s company? Christ loves me; He loved me when dead in trespasses and sins. I know this; therefore I can say,

Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly (Rev. 22:20)!

His coming again has no terror for me, but delight. Oh, how blessed it will be to find oneself in a moment brought into a region of eternal life, eternal love, eternal glory, and, more than that, to have capacities for its unceasing enjoyment! How blessed, then, is the promise, that

unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation (Heb. 9:28).

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