

HEBREWS

by Adolph Saphur

Saphir's exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews examining Christ's superiority over angels, Moses, and the Levitical priesthood, and the call to persevere in faith as the great cloud of witnesses demonstrates.

10 Chapters

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01 Comparison & Contrast of the Old & New Covenant

EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

CHAPTER I.

COMPARISON AND CONTRAST BETWEEN THE OLD AND NEW COVENANT; THE PERFECT AND ULTIMATE REVELATION IN THE SON.

Hebrews 1:1-4. THE first four verses contain, as it were, an epitome of the whole epistle, and therefore it will be necessary for us to dwell more minutely on their weighty sentences. We consider the first and part of the second verse :

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by the Son."*[I] The great object of the epistle is to describe the contrast between the old and the new covenant. But this contrast is based upon their unity. It is impossible for us rightly to understand the contrast unless we know first the resemblance. The new covenant is contrasted with the old covenant, not in the way in which the light of the knowledge of God is contrasted with the darkness and ignorance of heathenism, for the old covenant also is of God, and is therefore possessed of divine glory. Beautiful is the night in which the moon and the stars of prophecy and types are shining; but when the sun rises, then we forget the hours of watchful expectancy, and in the calm and joyous light of day there is revealed to us the reality and substance of the eternal and heavenly sanctuary. Great is the glory of the old covenant; yet greater is the glory of the new dispensation, when in the fullness of time God sent forth His own Son and gave unto us the substance of those things of which in the old times He had shown types and prophecy. When the apostle says it is God, the same God "who spake at sundry times and in divers manners unto the fathers by the prophets, who hath in the last days spoken unto us by His Son," he confirms and seals the doctrine which was held by the Hebrews, that unto them had been committed the oracles of God; and that in the writings of Moses and the prophets they possessed the Scripture, which could not be broken, in which God had disclosed unto them His will-the counsels and purposes of His grace. "Unto them," as the apostle declares to us in the epistle to the Romans, "were committed the oracles" (or the out speaking) " of God." And, as Jesus Christ Himself continually testifies, Moses and the prophets spake of Him. The Scriptures were that complete and infallible record of the revelation of God, from which all our knowledge of the grace and will of the Most High is derived. This solemn acknowledgment of the fundamental importance and divine authority of the Scripture is from the very outset to gain the confidence and to establish the hearts of the Hebrew brethren. It is to give them the assured and trustful feeling of home. Thus the gospel narrative commences with a summary of Old Testament history, from Abraham to David and the Babylonian captivity, and to Jesus, the Immanuel predicted by Isaiah. Christ, or Messiah, is the comprehensive word, of which Moses and the prophets are the preparatory and expository heralds. The Saviour identifies Himself constantly with the Jewish Scripture-with the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He, of whom the Jews confessed that He was their covenant God, was according to the declaration of the Lord His Father. And as the

apostle of the Gentiles testifies to all churches, and most emphatically to the Church which was in the metropolis of the world, Rome, that unto Israel was entrusted the word of God, that Israel is the root, that the Jewish prophets and apostles are the foundation, so was it necessary and natural to remind the Hebrews that the God who spoke to their fathers was now speaking to them, that they heard the same voice, and were blessed by the same love.

" God hath spoken unto the fathers ;" and by that expression "unto the fathers" the apostle reminds us that without a church, without a union of believers, without a manifestation of God in grace, historically, among a people whom He had set apart for His service, there would have been no Scripture; and that there was a congregation of the Most High from the very beginning of the world. " Unto the fathers" whom He had chosen that they might have fellowship with Him, that they might worship Him and rejoice in His name, God spake in old times, even as in the last times unto the Church-unto those who are called both from among Jews and Gentiles-He has made fully known His purpose in Christ Jesus.

This, then, is the great resemblance. The same God in the old covenant and in the new covenant. He spake unto His church or unto His people. The Father is the author of revelation in both. The Messiah is the substance and centre of the revelation in both. The glory of God's name in a people brought nigh unto to love and to worship Him, is the end of the revelation in both. The two are one. Martin Luther has quaintly compared it to the two men who brought the branch with the cluster of grapes from the promised land. They were both bearing the same fragrant fruit; but one of them saw it not, yet he knew what he was carrying. The other saw both the fruit and the man who was helping him. Thus is it, that the prophets who came before Jesus testified of Him, although they did not yet behold Him; and we who live in the fulness of times see both the Christ of whom they testified, and them-selves who were sent by God to witness of Him. But let us consider the marvellous unity of the two covenants.

"God hath spoken." This is the first point. Oh, how little do we think of the grandeur and majesty and all-importance of this simple declaration, "God hath spoken." A living God and a loving God must needs speak.*[II] The god of the philosophers is a silent God, for he hath neither life nor affection ; but our God, who created the heavens and the earth, who is and who loves, must speak. Even in the creation, which is an act of the condescension of God, He utters His thoughts; and when He created man as the con-summation of the world, it was for this purpose, that man should hear Him and love Him, and should rejoice in His light and in His life. When sin enters into the world silence ensues. Man dreads God, and the melody of praise and prayer ceases; but the need of a revelation re-mains continually the same. God has created man, that out of the fullness that is in God, man may have living water wherewithal to satisfy his thirst. When man forsakes the fountain of living water he cannot get rid of the thirst, and he cannot divest himself of the nature with which God has endowed him; so that there is still within man the same absolute and utter necessity for a revelation of God from on high.. He sees God's works in nature ; he sees God's dealings in history ; and when he examines his own mind, heart, and con-science, he reads there, although the letters seem almost obliterated, the record of the holiness and of the all-sufficiency of the only true and living God. Yet it is impossible for him to find in nature, history, or within himself that authoritative, living, and clear revelation and unfolding of the mind of God in which alone light and life can be brought to him. " Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered the heart of man" the things, which alone can satisfy the immortal spirit, whom God has created for the very

purpose, that he should hear and with gladness obey the voice of God. Therefore it is necessary that God should speak. And God does speak. It is a very simple declaration of Scripture that God has spoken, a grand truth expressed in simplest words, in order that we all may understand it. Often we read the words and do not realize what marvel of condescending love they reveal, what great and central mystery they unfold. " And God said to Abraham, to Moses, to the people of Israel." "The word of the Lord came unto the prophet." "Thus saith the Lord." Take a little child that has begun to think and to will, and even the thoughts and volitions of that little child remain an impenetrable mystery to you-an unknown land-unless that child chooses to express his thoughts and to utter his desires. And if this is true of a child, how much more is it true of Him who is unsearchable, the ever blessed and eternal God? Who knoweth the things that are in man except the spirit that is in man? And who knoweth the thoughts of God except the Spirit that is in God ? For God's thoughts are not as our thoughts. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so much are God's thoughts higher than our thoughts. Who, then, can find out the Almighty by his own cogitations? or who can search the counsel of the Most High by the penetrating glance of his own intellect ? Unless God speaks we do not know the thoughts of God. But notice, secondly, man having by his own sin fallen away from God, and silence reigning now, it is only the infinite compassion and love of God that induces him to speak. If there was no redemption, there would be no revelation. If there was no blood of the Lamb, there would not be a single syllable uttered unto man by the Most High. It is because God is the God of redemption, that He is the God of revelation. It is be-cause in Jesus Christ there is an atonement that God began to say to Adam in love, "Where art thou?" The love of the Father, and the blood of Jesus Christ, and the inspiration of the Holy Ghost; behold, these are the three necessary foundations upon which the Scripture rests. God, the Triune Covenant God, hath spoken. And that God hath spoken is a very awful thing, full of power and life. We have got accustomed to it, to believe that we have the thoughts of God embodied in His word, and that He who is almighty and ever blessed in Himself, and against whom we have sinned, hath in His infinite love uttered unto us the thoughts of His compassion and of His mercy; but God Himself is astonished at it, and commendeth His love, and saith, " Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth : for the Lord hath spoken." And saith again, "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater : so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth : it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." And again, that He has magnified His word above all His name. And again, that He will come as a Redeemer unto His people, and that He will manifest Himself unto them by speaking. "I who speak am He." "Therefore my people shall know my name; therefore they shall know in that day that I am He that doth speak." (Isaiah 52:6; comp. John 8:25.) And throughout all the Scripture this wonderful indication is given unto us, that there is one who is the Word of God, and yet a person equal with Him-self, the bearer of all His thoughts and purposes, His beloved, His only begotten Son. God hath spoken: in old times unto the fathers by the prophets ; fully and perfectly unto us by His Son. In both dispensations the same God, on account of the same sacrifice, impelled by the same love, and for the same sublime and gracious purpose.

Both Old and New Testaments are of God ; the New Testament, as the Church - father Augustine said, is enfolded in the Old, and the Old Testament is unfolded in the New.*[III] Nor can we, who live in the times of fulfillment, dispense with the record of the preceding dispensation.*[IV] As an

old author writes : "As the brilliancy of the sun appears far greater when contrasted with the darkness of the shade, so this epistle compares the light of the gospel with the shadows and types of the Old Testament, and by this means displays the glory of the gospel in full relief ; for as shadows are images of bodies, so the ancient shadows are images of Jesus Christ, of His power and of His graces, and assist us to recognize more and more the substance and the truth ; but from hence we derive also this additional advantage, that although the shadows of other bodies serve only to obscure them, the shadows of the Old Testament are so many reflectors, contributing light to the gospel." But now let us consider the contrast. Jesus Christ was not born till four thousand years after the creation of the world. He came in the fulness of time. Why were so many ages allowed to elapse before the Word was made flesh ? Herein also is revealed the condescension of God. When it is said that "in the fulness of time God sent forth His Son, born of a woman," you must remember that this "born of a woman" refers also to the four thousand years, in which His goings forth the woman-of the daughter of Zion-of the Jewish nation. During all these years He who in the fulness of time came, and was born of the Virgin Mary, was going forth out of the human race-out of the chosen family-out of Israel, the covenant people of God, making Himself a little sanctuary unto us, as it were, condescending to our limited capacity, teaching us line upon line and precept upon precept, developing truth as the history of the nation developed. " At sundry times and in divers manners" did God speak unto the fathers by the prophets.

He chose prophets to be His messengers. The meaning of a prophet is one who is directly commissioned by God ; one who, whatever his tribe, position, and dignity may be, is chosen by God according to His good pleasure, and is gifted with the Holy Ghost, and is entrusted with the message of God to utter it to the people. These three things constitute a prophet: direct commission from God Himself, gift of the Holy Ghost, and being entrusted with the very thoughts and words of the Most High. It is not merely by the prophets, that God spake. They were chosen not merely as the channels of separate and isolated revelation. God spake in them. They were the personal bearers of the message, the representatives and exponents of divine truth. Their words and typical actions were inspired, and in them the word of the Lord came unto Israel. When God in His infinite condescension sent prophets unto His people from the very beginning of the world (for by "prophets" we must understand all the messengers that God sent), *[V] this was a great, good, and perfect gift in itself ; and not only for one age, but for all gene-rations, for the instruction and guidance of the whole Church.

Yet let us consider what were the imperfections of these messengers. The first imperfection was this-that they were numerous; they were many. One succeeded another. They lived in different periods. Another imperfection was, that it was " in divers manners," in dreams, in similitude's, in visions, in symbols. Each prophet had his peculiar gift and character. Their stature and capacity varied. They were men of different temperament and tone of mind. The manner in which the revelation of God was given to them varied; even in the case of the same prophet the One Spirit appeared in various manifestations. Highest stands Moses, who there-fore predicts, as in type so by direct announcement, the "prophet like unto me," to whom God spake not in vision, or in a dream, or in dark speeches. (Deuteronomy 18:1-22; and Numbers 12:1-16.) Another imperfection was that they were sinful men. When Isaiah beheld the glory of God, he said, "Woe is me! for I am undone : I am a man of unclean lips." When Daniel, the "man greatly beloved," enjoyed communion with God, he felt and confessed that he had sinned, and transgressed, and done

wickedly. All of them, from the greatest downwards, were men full of infirmities and sins. Another imperfection was that they did not possess the Spirit constantly. Of a sudden, after a long pause, the Spirit of God came upon them. God spake unto them, and gave unto them His message. But it was not like a continuous river. The word came to them from time to time; they did not possess the word. Another imperfection was this, that of that message that was entrusted to them they did not understand the heights and the depths. They themselves had to search diligently, and to enquire what the Spirit that was in them did signify of the sufferings and glory that should come. Another imperfection was, that, as they did not understand adequately that portion of the message that was given unto them, they could still less comprehend and contain the whole message. They saw only one aspect of it, only one portion of it in connection with the peculiar history and the peculiar trials of the people at the period to which they were sent. Another imperfection was, that they all testified, like John the Baptist, "I am not the light. I am only sent to witness of the light." They were only finger-posts directing the pilgrim, as he was in pursuit of the heavenly city, to go on further, until he would come to the pearly gates of the New Jerusalem.

We notice the imperfect and fragmentary character of the old dispensation, when we consider not merely the words, but the types, which are living prophecies. There was not a single one which could stand by itself, it had always to be supplemented. Abel shows to us that the righteous shepherd was to suffer and die ; Enoch that the man of God would be lifted up into the heavens ; Noah that there will be a Righteous One who will save not merely himself, but others, out of the destruction and judgment which sin draws down from a holy God. If we want to have an idea of the salvation of God we must combine the three -Abel, Enoch, and Noah-in one person ; the Righteous Man, who suffers, saves, and enters into glory. Moses is a type of a mediator, prophet, priest, and king ; but to obtain a view of the true Redeemer you must combine him with Joshua, for only Joshua leads the people into the promised land. Melchizedek is a priest and king, but we must combine him with Aaron in order to have an idea of atonement and of intercession, as well as of blessing and rule. David is a shepherd meek and lowly, a man who does not lift up him-self above his brethren, and rules in love and in justice ; but we must combine him with Solomon to get the idea of the kingship, both in its gentleness, sympathy, and suffering, and in its glory and extensiveness. Wherever we go we find it is in fragments. There is an altar; there is a sacrifice. There is a fourfold sacrifice, a sin-offering, a burnt-offering, a peace-offering, a meat-offering. There is a high priest; there is a tabernacle; there is a holy of holies ; there is a candlestick ; there is a shewbread; there is a veil. Everything a fragment ; everything in itself showing unto us some aspect of truth, some portion of the treasure, without which we would be poor ; but we must combine them all to see the full and blessed truth. The old dispensation was imperfect. This is evident from the very fact that the message was sent in sundry fragmentary portions and in many different ways. It appears also from the nature of the chosen men, in whom the Lord spake. They were not merely finite and limited in their capacities, but sinful and fallen; and they witnessed of the perfect, ultimate, and all-comprehensive revelation of the light of Jehovah in the latter days. Great was the glory of the old covenant; for it was God who spoke. It was the Lord God of the covenant, of redeeming and sanctifying love, who for the sake of Christ and in Christ spoke unto His chosen people, and in the marvelous wisdom of His educating fatherly guidance taught them by a variety of types and of gradually unfolding prophecies. But now the time of fragmentary, imperfect, and temporary revelation is past. God speaks to us now in another and more glorious manner.

Look now at the contrast. The whole contrast is in one word-in our language in one syllable-"by the Son." The prophets were many: the Son is one. The prophets were servants: the Son is the Lord. The prophets were temporary: the Son abideth for ever. The prophets were imperfect: the Son is perfect, even as the Father is perfect. The prophets were guilty: the Son is not merely pure, but able to purify those that are full of sin and pollution. The prophets point to the future: the Son points to Himself, and says, "Here am I." God has spoken to us "by His Son."*[VI] He is the only Prophet. God asks, "Who is like unto me?" To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? "Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being His counsellor hath taught Him?" "With whom took He counsel, and who instructed Him, and taught Him in the path of judgment, and taught Him knowledge, and showed to Him the way of understanding?" God asks proud man, "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?" Who is there that knows God, or is equal unto Him? None but the Son. He was with Him before the foundations of the world were laid. The eternal, uncreated Word was with God before the morning stars sang together and the angels shouted for joy. He is the true and faithful witness; for He speaks of that which He hath seen, and testifies of that which He knows. "No man knoweth the Father but the Son. No man hath seen the Father. The only begotten of the Father He hath declared Him." He is the true and faithful witness, whose testimony is co-extensive, if I may so say, with the counsel and the things of God : the Prophet whose mind is adequate to understand the mind of the Father. He is not merely the true and faithful witness because He is from everlasting, He is also the beloved of God. Notice this in the word "Son." "The only begotten," says John, "who was in the bosom of the Father," who is His treasure and delight, the infinite object of His love, in whom from all eternity was His rejoicing, who shares with Him all His counsels. This beloved one of God-oh, surely He is the true messenger who will reveal all the secrets of the Father's heart, and who will tell unto us all the fullness of His counsel, and all the purposes of His grace ! God hath spoken to us by His Son.

Now contrast Him with the prophets. Were the prophets sinful? Behold our blessed Jesus, born of the Virgin Mary, conceived by the Holy Ghost, true man, yet growing up from His infancy in the love and fear and knowledge of God, with-out spot and blemish, not merely sinless but gifted with every perfection, showing forth true humanity according to the mind of God. Were the other prophets dependent upon momentary visits of the Holy Ghost? Look at Jesus. You never read in the gospels that the Spirit came upon Jesus, or that the word of God came unto Him. The Spirit was always in Him ; for He had the gift of the Spirit without measure. The word of God was always in Him, abiding, living. Oh, how beautiful is that expression of the apostle Peter, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." Not, "Thou utterest the words of eternal life;" but, "Thou hast them : they are thy property, thy possession. Thou art Lord of the words, master of the words, fountain of the words." Notice again, the prophets say, "Thus saith the Lord." Jesus says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you;" and yet He spake nothing except what He heard the Father say; for He is the Son of the Father. The Son, and therefore equal; the Son, and therefore subordinate; yet whether the Father speaks or Jesus speaks, it is one voice, one love. And not merely does He say, "Verily, verily, I say unto you ;" but He Himself is His message. Not like the prophets does He testify of one that was to come after Him ;*[VII] but He says of Himself, "I am the bread of life. I am the resurrection and the life. I am the way, the truth, and the life. I give unto every one that cometh unto me rest and the water of life." And thus, dear friends, we ascend to the marvellous truth, that Jesus, the Son of God, not merely declares unto us the message of the Father, but He Himself is the message of the Father. All that God has to say unto us is Yaw. All the thoughts and gifts and

promises and counsels of God are embodied in Jesus. He is the Light, the Peace, the Life, the Way, and the End. And this leads us still higher. How is it that the message and the gift are one ? Because Jesus is the Word of God. " In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." How mysterious and intimate is the union, how deep and essential the relation between the Son of God and the revelations of God in Him and in the Scripture ! Christ, the Son, is the real, substantial, eternal Word, by whom the worlds were made, by whom all things are upheld, by whom God speaks unto us, and reveals His saving love. Christ is the Word of the written Word,*[VIII] the substance and spirit, the centre and life of Scripture; and as the Word He quickens and blesses us with eternal blessings. How comprehensive and simple is the declaration, "God speaks in His Son."

Let me remind you how in the Son all the message of God is contained. I appeal to your remembrance of the teaching of Scripture. You who know the Scripture, and you especially who have come through the law unto the gospel, will understand me when I say that if the sinner knew nothing else but this, " God has sent a messenger, and this messenger is His own Son," he might discover in this the whole gospel, good news, glad tidings ; for, in order to send unto us condemnation, in order to give unto us the knowledge of our sin and of our desert, in order to send unto us the message of impending judgment, His own Son is not needed. Any angel would suffice for this work; any servant could proclaim this message. Moses is able to utter it ; even our own conscience is sufficient messenger. When God sends His own Son into the world, when God makes the stupendous sacrifice of allowing His only begotten to take upon Him our flesh and blood, there can be only one meaning in it SALVATION. *[IX] It can only have one purpose-our redemption. It can only have one motive-the overwhelming love of God. In the fulness of time God sent His own Son-to teach, to preach, to announce judgment ? Oh, no, a thousand times no. God sent His Son to redeem us. Behold, I declare unto you tidings of great joy. Unto you is born this day a Saviour. Eternal life is in Christ Jesus the Son before the world began. These two ideas are always connected in the teaching of the apostle Paul-the law and time-that which passes away and man, the gospel and eternity, and the Son of God and the everlasting counsel. So Paul says "in promise of eternal life which God gave unto us before the foundation of the world," because it is not human, but divine; not temporary, but eternal; not connected with man and his works and efforts, but entirely and exclusively connected with the mission of the Son of God. God has spoken to us by His Son, and therefore we know that He has spoken peace to us.*[X] But notice, secondly, as the Sonship is the be-ginning of the gospel, so it is also the end and purpose of God's message. God, speaking to us by His Son, shows unto us that we also are to become the sons of God. He that receiveth a prophet in a prophet's name shall receive a prophet's reward; he that receiveth Him in a righteous man's name, a righteous man's reward; but he that receiveth the Son of God as the Son of God shall become a son of God. Jesus will give him power to become a son of God, born of the Spirit unto eternal glory. "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God." Such is the marvelous declaration of the apostle John. " Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," was the confession of Simon Bar-jona. Jesus replies, "Flesh and blood have not revealed this unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." So great a thing is it for a poor sinner to know that the only begotten of the Father was made flesh and dwelt among us, and died for our salvation, that whenever any one among the Jews or the idolaters said, "I believe that Jesus is the Son of God," the apostles said : " Come, let us baptize him. What need we more? He has discovered the secret. The secret has been revealed to his

soul. God has come to him God dwelleth in him, and he in God. Let us baptize him." This is the rock upon which the Church is built-" Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." God has spoken to us by the Son, and in knowing the Son we receive Sonship, the adoption. And this is the peculiar glory of the new covenant, this the distinguishing feature of the Pentecostal Church. In the Incarnate Son the Father has brought many sons unto glory. The only begotten of the Father has, after His death on the cross, become the firstborn among many brethren. The Holy Ghost, coming through the glorified humanity of Jesus, unites us to Him, who is the beloved Son, and in whom the eternal and infinite love of the Father rests upon all His believing people. In the Son we know and have the Father; in the Son we also are the children of God.

Lastly, brethren, remember this is the ultimate revelation. There can be nothing higher; there can be nothing further. In "these last days" He hath spoken unto us. "Little children, it is the last time." The Saviour testifies in the book of Revelation: "These things must shortly come to pass." Surely, I come quickly. We are hastening unto the coming of Christ. Oh that we may know Him who is coming,-as the Son of God! If Christ is our life, then, when the Son of God shall appear, we also who are the sons of God-now in weakness, suffering, temptation-shall be made manifest with Him in glory. Amen.

[I] * Literally God, who in many portions and in many ways spake In ancient times unto the fathers (or for the fathers) in the prophets. In many portions refers more to the matter, in many ways to the methods, of revelation. The Greek word *lalsas* denotes a confiding expression of inward thought, sentiment, and will. The expression, in the prophets, reminds us of the condescension of God, who clothed His thoughts in the garment of the prophet's individuality, and adapted His word to the peculiar character of the time and messenger. Hence in the prophetic books the words of the Lord and of the prophet frequently succeed one another are alternate.

[II] * Compare my remarks in the necessity of Revelation in Christ Crucified.- Lecture v.

[III] * In Vetere Testamento Novum latet, in Novo Vetus patet. What is the law, but the gospel foreshadowed? What the gospel, but the law fulfilled?"-HOOKER

[IV] * This thought is more fully stated in my book, Christ and the Scripture; and in chap. v. of my Lectures on The Apostolic Commission. Is not this epistle another illustration of the truth, that they only who accept with reverence and faith the Old Testament understand fully the peculiar glory of the New Covenant? Compare 2 Corinthians 3:1-18. The neglect of the ancient Scriptures necessarily leads to a dim apprehension of the fullness, liberty, and joy of the gospel. While, therefore, the intention of many is to exalt the New Testament, they must necessarily fail unless they adopt the method of our Lord and of His apostles, which is to teach according to the Scriptures.

[V] *"God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets sines the world began." (Acts 3:21.) "Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after." (Acts 3:24.) "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied." (Jude 1:14.)

[VI] * Or more correctly in One who is Son. Notice here also the IN. For the whole message of God is only in Christ; and Him we only seek to know (Php 3:10), and know only is aims in part. (1 Corinthians 13:1-13)

[VII] * Jesus does indeed speak of the Comforter, the Holy Ghost But what is the mission of the Comforter? Is it not to glorify Christ? to bring to the remembrance of the disciples all that the Saviour had taught? to take of the things of Christ and of the Father, and to show them unto us? The Holy Ghost is not a substitute for Jesus, but by Him the real presence and indwelling of the Father and the Son are vouchsafed. Jesus is the Son, manifesting forth His glory. (John 2:1-25.)

[VIII] * "The Scriptures and the Lord Bear one most holy name : The written and the incarnate Word In all things are the same.'

[IX] * It need scarcely be added that the teaching and the life of the Lord Jesus, and even His death on the cross, proclaim the law of God, and reveal to us our guilt and lost condition; and that in one aspect, the Father sent Jesus to Israel as a preacher of repentance, "peradventure they will reverence my Son." But the primary, as well as the ultimate object of His mission, was to seek and to save that which is lost, to preach the glad tidings of salvation.

[X] * To preach Jesus is to preach peace, joy, life. The evangelist, that is, the bearer of the glad tidings, "opens his mouth, and be-ginning at (whatever) Scripture, preaches Jesus". (Acts 8:35.) "The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching Peace by Jesus Christ (He is Lord of all)." (Acts 10:36.)

02 The Glory of The Son of God

CHAPTER TWO THE GLORY OF THE SON OF GOD

Hebrews 1:1-4

WE have considered the contrast between the Old and New Dispensation, which is brought before us in the words of the first and second verses, God speaking in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, and God speaking in these last days*[I] unto us by His Son. When the apostle arrives at that word, "by His Son," he has reached the central and culminating point of all the revelations of God. The Son of God has come. In this all things are summed up. For what other purpose could the Son of God come but for salvation? Judgment, the preaching of the law, mere teaching, are works indeed high and important, but which may be executed by any creature chosen and sent by God. The message of law needs only human and angelic mediators. But when the Son of God Himself comes, surely it must be for the purpose of a new-creation; it must be for the purpose of the manifestation of infinite love and boundless compassion, bringing deliverance and life. Again, if the gift is salvation, who else can bring it but the Son of God? Prophets have announced the will of God. Moses has declared unto us His holy commandments. By the law cometh the knowledge of sin and condemnation. By the prophets is kindled the hope of redemption. But no man, no angel, no creature, can restore us. If we know the depths of the fall, we know also the grandeur of the remedy that is needed. As soon as we hear the Son of God is come, we may expect salvation ; as soon as it is announced to us that salvation is to appear, we may expect none but the Most High can bring it ; for Jehovah is Redeemer; He only is our salvation. Not like a gift from heaven, as sunshine, and rain, and bread ; not as a servant, or angel, or messenger, does Jesus come to this earth, but the Son of the Father, equal with Him in glory and majesty ; the Lord from heaven, unto whom all things belong, who abideth in the house for evermore. Thus was it that the apostle Paul, from the very commencement of his Christian life, from the very moment of his conversion, saw these two ideas combined. He is Lord from heaven above all; He is Jesus, who died for the sinner, and identifies Himself with the church. And therefore, throughout all his epistles, as throughout the whole experience of the children of God, these two wonderful facts are seen together. How can we sufficiently adore Him who is the Son of God! How can we sufficiently love Him who shed His precious blood to deliver us! The moment he says "the Son," the apostle has reached a mountain-height from which a vast and most extensive view opens before his eye. We are accustomed, in the epistles of the apostle Paul, to have him take us, with the mighty wings of faith and love, unto high, lofty peaks, and show unto us the wonderful land of Immanuel, boundless and infinite, as well as full of beauty and sweetness, and perpetual harvest.

Thus is it in the epistle to the Ephesians, where he begins by ascribing praise to God the Father, who hath "blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Having gained this wonderful position, " with Christ Jesus in the heavenly places," he shows unto us the eternity before the foundation of the world, when God chose us in Him; and he points out to us the ages that are to come, when God shall be glorified in Christ Jesus, and in the church whom He has

given unto His Son, when we who first trusted in Christ shall be to the praise of the glory of His grace. Thus is it in the epistle to the Colossians (chap. Colossians 1:14-29). The moment he speaks of the redemption which we have through faith in the blood of Jesus, He opens unto us the glory of the Lord Jesus who died for us, and leads us back to the very beginning of things, when all things were made in Him, and to the end of things, when all things shall be summed up in Him. God's eternity has become our home. All things are ours, because in Jesus we behold the Son of God. But accustom yourselves always, when you hear of Jesus, to think of Him as divine and human -two natures in one person. When you hear of the Son of God, think of that glorious and loving One who was born of the Virgin Mary ; who lived for thirty-three years upon earth in poverty and lowliness; who died upon the accursed tree; who rose with the self-same body out of the grave, and appeared unto His disciples, and spoke unto them, and ate with them broiled fish and of an honeycomb ; who ascended in His body into heaven, and who shall so come again-the man Christ Jesus, the Son of God-to reign upon the throne of His father David, and to show forth the majesty and the love of God throughout all His creation.

It is of the incarnate Son of God that the apostle speaks; and showing unto us His glory, he leads us, in the first place, to the end of all history, He is appointed the heir of all things ; (2) to the beginning of all history, in Him God made the ages; (3) before all history, He is the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His being; (4) throughout all history, He upholdeth all things by the word of His power,

(I) The end of all history. The Father has appointed the Lord Jesus Christ, His Son, the heir of all things. Him, the Son of Abraham and the Son of David, the theocratic Son, the Messiah ; not in His abstract Deity, but as the Son who be-came man ; as the Word made flesh ; as the Lord God, visiting and redeeming His people ; as the Son who became the servant to fulfill all Jehovah's good pleasure. Thus He promised unto Abraham that his seed should be the heir. Thus He promised unto the Son of David, who is also David's Lord, and the only-begotten of the Father. "Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost ends of the earth for thy possession." He ratified it through all the prophets; and finally the angel who appeared unto the Virgin Mary declares unto her that the holy child shall be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David, and He shall reign over the house of Judah for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end. The Father hath appointed Him, in the everlasting covenant, according to the good pleasure of His will, in the infinite love and delight which He had to Him who is His equal, to be "heir of all things." What great expressions these are in Scripture! What wonderful conceptions, far transcending any-thing that men ever could have imagined! The Old Testament speaks of heaven and earth, summing up all things by these two words. The New Testament speaks of the creation of God-all things which He by the word of His power and in His wisdom hath called forth; or it speaks of the ages-ages upon ages, worlds upon worlds, in which the manifold fullness of the divine thoughts come gradually into existence. All things He hath given unto Jesus to inherit; *[II] as the Messiah, the theocratic Son, according to the promise to the fathers, and this only on the basis of His eternal and essential Sonship. Because He is the Son of God, therefore is He the Messiah. "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hands." According to His deity there is no necessity for any gift, reward, or transfer. According to His deity incarnate, the Messiah, in the everlasting covenant, is appointed Heir, and all things are given into His hand.

What are these "all things"? It is clear that there is nothing excepted that is not given unto

Him. So said the risen Saviour,-" All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth." In His intercessory prayer before His sufferings He had said, " Thou hast given Him power over all flesh." This is the first thing. - The whole human race is given unto Him. Since He took upon Him our flesh and blood, God has given unto Him the whole human race-power over all flesh. And out of this whole human race, which belongs unto Him by eternal right, and by the right of His incarnation, by the right of His perfect and holy humanity, by the right of His unspeakable love, and of His death,-out of this whole world of humanity God has chosen in Him a people, that the Son should give eternal life to "as many as thou hast given Him." "Thine they were, and thou gavest them me." All these are His in a special sense. That innumerable multitude which no man can number from among all nations, peoples, and kindreds, and tongues-the chosen family in whom God has manifested His love, who have been renewed by the Holy Ghost, who have been washed in the blood of Jesus, who have been trained, educated, sanctified-all the lively stones, who by the Spirit have been built on the only foundation, who have been chiselled, beautified, perfected by the all - loving Divine Spirit, through experiences and sufferings most precious, appointed by perfect wisdom and grace, who have become the members of His wonderful mystical body, they all are His. He not merely rules over them ; He lives, He moves in them. He thinks, and they think; He feels, and they feel. His will is the power which energizes in them. As a man who is in perfect health and strength has control over all the members of his body, so the whole church is the body of the Lord Jesus Christ, each member in his separate sphere, each according to his peculiar preparation and gift of nature and grace, each shadowing forth some feature of Christ's beauty, and echoing some syllable of the Divine Word-all perfect, all beautiful-organized into one harmonious, living, and glorious whole-" the fullness of Him that filleth all in all." They belong unto Jesus. God has given us unto Him as His inheritance. And this church Jesus Christ has obtained as the first and central part of His inheritance. As the material sun is placed in the firmament to be a source of light and heat and joy unto the rest of the creation of God, so God appoints the church to be the first-fruits of His creatures-the body of Christ, wherewith He influences and blesses, whereby He guides and controls all things. Even over angels they shall rule: even unto powers and principalities more ancient and majestic than our race He shows forth by them the good pleasure of His will and the fullness of His counsel and love. And the material creation which God hath made in Jesus Christ He hath also given unto His Son, that Jesus, through the glorified church, and by the angels in heavenly places, as well as through Israel and the nations dwelling on earth, should be glorified in the whole realm, which is His portion and His inheritance. How rich is our adorable Jesus! The blessed Lord, when He was upon the cross, had nothing. 'He had not where to lay His head; even His very garments were taken from Him. He was buried in a grave which belonged not to Him or to His family. On earth He was poor to the very last; none so absolutely poor as He. He rose again, and then declared that all power is given unto Him by the Father in heaven and in earth. He has appointed Him the "heir of all things." As man, He is to inherit all things; as Jesus, God and man in one person. All angels, all human beings upon the earth, all powers in the universe, when asked, "Who is Lord of all?" will answer, "Jesus, the Son of Mary." Our poor earth, Bethlehem-Ephratah, little amidst the thou-sands of this world, has been chosen that out of us should come He who is the heir of all things.

"All things." Nothing shall be lost. You re-member that apparently startling word in the par-able of the talents, "Take from him that hath the one talent, and give it unto him that hath the ten talents." What is the meaning of it? What-ever has been dispensed in the kingdom of grace-whatever seed has gone forth from the divine sower-whatever thought, whatever beauty, what-ever element that is valuable, and good, and true-can never be lost. The unfaithfulness of man will never lose it to Jesus and to His beloved church. It must remain in the family; it must be secure and permanent. The one talent that the unfaithful steward did not use is not to be wasted and to be lost unto the commonwealth ; but it is to enrich the chosen people ; for all things are given unto Jesus. He has appointed Him heir of all things. And lest any one should mistake or misinterpret the truth of God, as if any passage in Scripture encouraged the hope that all beings should be finally brought unto happiness and into the love of God, let us remember that the "all things" includes also that dark and fearful region of which we know so little (enough only to be filled with terror and dismay)-that awful region where the light and the love of God can never penetrate, where there is uttermost darkness. Even under the earth, in hell, in the abyss, Jesus has power. (Php 2:1-30.) He has power over death, and shall ultimately destroy it. He has power over Satan, and shall ultimately bruise him under our feet, banish him and imprison him where he can no more send forth the influences of sin and of injury. And all everywhere-friends and foes, saved and lost .--shall acknowledge that Jesus is Lord; for He who has power in heaven and on earth has also the keys of Hades and of death. He is "appointed heir of all things."

All things are His. And this is so natural; because, in the second place, God has made all ages, "or" all worlds," *[III] by Him. It is natural that He who is the Alpha should also be the Omega. Scripture teaches us creation as the work of the triune God. God is triune, and therefore in everything that God does we behold the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. You read, in the first article of the creed, of "God, the Creator of heaven and earth;" in the second, of Jesus as the Redeemer; in the third, of the Holy Ghost. But as in Jesus, the Redeemer, we must behold the Father, even as we receive through Him the Holy Ghost; as when we speak of the Holy Ghost we must behold the Father and the Son, of whom the Spirit testifies, and by whom He is sent; so when we think of the Creator, we must not think merely of the Father, but we must think of the Word by whom and the Spirit through whom all things were made. "The Word was with God," equal with God, and in love and continual intercourse and communion with the Father. And this Word was the beginning of the creation of God (Rev. iii.; Col. i.), Himself eternal and uncreated ; that is to say, in the Son of God all the creation was planned and summed up from all eternity. In Him was life; in Him was light; and God in Him beheld all things that were to come into existence. He is before all things (not merely as before and above time, but) as the idea and cause of all things. He is that eternal wisdom of which we read in the book of Proverbs, which was with God before the foundations of the world were laid. God has made all things by Christ according to Christ, and for Christ. What more natural, then, that He by whom and in whom all things were made should be also the inheritor of all things?

(3) But the apostle goes still further. Before all history He is "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His being." Wherever He looks He sees Christ, the light. Without Christ, there is darkness. Think of the end of history, and you are lost in amazement; think of the beginning of the world, and you are lost in ignorance; think of before the beginning, and you are altogether lost in an element transcendent and incomprehensible, because it is not for our finite

minds to contemplate such wondrous heights until the heavenly, divine light of revelation comes to our aid. And who is the light? Christ is the light. The eternal, infinite God reveals Himself in Christ. The Son is the light, which maketh manifest; God is manifest in Him. Christ is "the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His being." By the glory of God, His own inapproachable, infinite light is understood.*[IV] We must not imagine that Jesus Christ is the light illumining something which is not light ; for God is light. The Father is light, yet not to us without the mediation of the light, which is Christ. Without Christ He is darkness by excess of brightness. It is because that Sun is so exceeding glorious, so exceeding bright, so exceedingly unbearable in its majesty, that it shines forth in another sun-and yet not another, but one with Him-which God, in His wonderful wisdom and power, hath given unto all worlds ; that in this sun they may behold the brightness, the effulgence, the outflow of His glory. The glory of the God of Israel appeared between the cherubim; the tabernacle itself was called the glory; and when the tabernacle was removed, God's people exclaimed, " Ichabod"- the glory has departed. These were symbols, but when Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary, we beheld the glory of the only-begotten-the glory of God in the face of His Son Jesus Christ.*[V] And this brightness of the glory is the express, substantial, true, living image of His being; so that he that seeth the Son seeth the Father. In Jesus we behold infinite power, wisdom, goodness, holiness, compassion, truth. All things that are in the Father are in the Son. The divine sub-stance is revealed to us in the Son, who is the image of the invisible God. It is as the Son that the eternal life, which was with the Father, was manifested unto us. He who declares unto us God, whom none hath seen, the Word, is God (John 1:1.), He is truth, substance; and the beloved disciple testifies of Him: He is the true God and eternal life. And as the Lord Jesus is the heir, the end and consummation of all things and the beginning of all things, and the eternal Word before all things, the apostle Paul tells us (4) that throughout the course of history, in providence, he beareth all things with the word of his power.*[VI] If it was not for Jesus and for the atonement, if it was not for the Lamb foreordained from the foundation of the world, the history of this world would never have been continued after the fall of man. The reason why God in patience and long-suffering continues the ages, delays judgment, and sends forth the gracious and life-sustaining influences of His Spirit to arrest the process of decay and disintegration ushered in by sin, is that Jesus the Lord is the restorer; and it is the good pleasure of the Father's will to reconcile in Him all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His Cross. But not merely are all things upheld for the sake of Christ, but also through and in Him. He by whom all things were made is the life of all things. " My Father worketh hitherto, and I also work." He is the inherent energy, truth and beauty of all things. He is as it were the spirit, the symmetry, the logic and substance of all that exists. By Him princes rule and senators decree justice. In Him every truth is rooted. By Him everything that is firm stands. By Him all things are continued; for He is the Word of God-the expression of the eternal thoughts and truths of the Most High.

Although the history of Israel is in many respects unique, yet it is also to be viewed as a specimen of the history of all mankind. If we had an inspired record of the history of nations, we should see that in all history Christ is the centre and the moving as well as the upholding power. Moses saw from the beginning that the heathen would not possess this light of knowledge, and would ascribe to themselves what is manifestly only the work of Jehovah. (Deuteronomy 32:27-38.) Thus it happened literally in the case of Ashur, which ought to have recognized the hand of Jehovah in their victory over the surrounding nations and their gods, as well as over Israel and Juda, but who ascribed glory to themselves, and boasted in their praise. (Isaiah 10:8-15.) The examples of

Nebuchadnezzar, Darius, and Cyrus show how the heathen might have traced the guidance of Jehovah in their own history." *[VII] I t is easy for us to see how the great victories of the Greeks, by which they conquered the Eastern Power, before which the whole world trembled, how the establishment of the Roman Empire, and the unity and communication thereby established among many nations-how all the great movements of the past were subservient to the spread of Christ's gospel and the gathering of His church. All nations must be evangelized (Matthew 24:14) ; and hence doors, which for centuries seemed hopelessly closed, are opened through events which apparently are quite secular in origin and spirit, but which are only instrument; in the hands of Him who openeth, and no man shutteth. *[VIII]

It is the Lord Jesus who is moving all things, carrying on by His wisdom and power the development and progress of all things, restraining and overruling, guiding and blessing, that the purpose of God may be accomplished, and that ultimately the kingdom may come.

Christ is Lord of all. The whole universe centers in Him. A star appears at the time of the Messiah's advent. The sun loses his splendor when Jesus Christ dies upon the cross. There shall be again wonders and signs in the heavens when the Son of man shall come in power. In the material world we know that there have been many and great cycles of development. And both science and revelation teach us to look forward to a new earth. It is the Lord Jesus who shall make all things new. And all developments are borne up and moved by the word of His power. Oh, I know that the general conception which the world has of Jesus is that He is Lord of a spiritual realm, of thought and sentiment, bishop and head of ministers and pastors for edifying souls! But the world does not know that He is moving all things by the word of His power; that all politics, all statesmanship, all history, all physics, all art, all science, everything that is-all that has substance, truth, beauty, all things apart from that cancer of sin which has attached itself to it, consist by Jesus the Son of God.

Now, when the apostle has given us this idea of the wonderful glory of the Lord Jesus, the Son whom God has appointed Heir of all things, by whom He has made the worlds, who is " the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His being," who " upholdeth " and moveth "all things by the word of His power," He continues by stating something still more marvelous. Why has this wonderful and glorious being, in whom all things are summed up, and who is before all things the Father's delight and the Father's glory ; why has this infinite light, this infinite power, this in-finite majesty, come down to our poor earth? For what purpose ? To shine? To show forth the splendor of His majesty? To teach heavenly wisdom? To rule by His just and holy might? No! He came to purge our sins. What height of glory ! what depth of abasement ! Infinite is His majesty, and infinite is His self-humiliation, and the depth of His love. What a glorious Lord! And what an awful sacrifice of unspeakable love, to purge our sins by Himself!

Sin has brought Him down from heaven. Our defilement has drawn Him from the height of His glory. Oh, what an expression, what a climax! "Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His being, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins."

Sin may be viewed as a transgression of God's good, just, and holy law, deserving punishment, and bringing down the curse of God. Sin may be viewed as a disease unto death which requires healing. Sin is also defilement, and this view seems both the deepest and the most painful. Here perhaps we see most clearly and feel most painfully the difficulty, the utter impossibility, as far as

man or angel is concerned, of being delivered from sin, and brought nigh unto the source of life, love, and blessedness.

Sin is a great and heavy burden. It is a departure from the Father's house into a far country. It is ingratitude and rebelliousness, yea, even hatred of God. Power can lift and remove a burden. Compassion can seek the wayward and lost sheep, and follow it across hill, and moor, and wilderness until it finds it. Grace can stoop to declare unto an enemy the message of peace and good will. But sin is defilement. It is that which is loathsome to God, which fills His inmost being with repulsion. Think of our sins as defilement. Think of their number, of their heinousness! Who will remove this fearful and utterly loath-some iniquity which separates us hopelessly and infinitely from God in His holy and righteous love? Who will touch the leprosy? Who can take it out of the way, and cleanse the sinners, so that they appear pure and spotless in God's sight? The Son of God came to make the purification of our sins; and this, oh marve of marvels! by Himself. Not like the high priest in Israel, offering something as a sacrifice; not with the blood, the life of another, but by Himself. He came into contact with this sin. He was the only one who could properly understand the true nature, depth, and guilt of sin. God of God, Son of the Father, He perfectly sympathized with the Father in His loathing and abhorrence of sin; but having befriended us, and having become one with us, He could not bear the thought of our being lost. So this loathsomeness of our iniquity, as loathsome to Jesus as to the Father, He takes upon Himself, as Joshua the high priest is seen by the prophet Zechariah. Jesus, perfect in His love to the holy and righteous Father, perfect in His love to the sinful and guilty people whom He came to save, with infinite hatred of sin and with infinite love of the sinner, enters, alone and unassisted, into that awful wilderness where, as our substitute and sin-bearer, He feels the Father's face turned away from Him. As the expression of His agony, in which faith and love endured all things and triumphed, He utters the cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Then Jesus the Son of God purged by Himself our sins. The manner and power of this purification form the subject of this whole epistle. But in this short expression, "By Himself He purged our sins," all is summed up. By Himself: the Son of God, the eternal Word in humanity. Himself: the priest, who is sacrifice, yea, altar, and every-thing that is needed for full and real expiation and reconciliation. Here is fulfilled what was pre-figured on the day of atonement, when an atonement was made for Israel, to cleanse them from all sin, that they may be clean from all their sins before the Lord. (Leviticus 16:30.) Thus our great High Priest saith unto us, Ye are clean this day before God from all your sins. He is the fulfillment and reality, because He is the Son of God. "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John 1:7.) The church is purchased by the blood of Him who is God. (Acts 20:28, with His own blood.) Behold the perfection of the sacrifice in the infinite dignity of the incarnate Son !*[IX]

Sin is taken away. Oh, what a wonderful thing is this ! When once you see that Jesus the Son of God died upon the cross, and purged your sins, and that because of His obedience unto death God hath exalted Him at His right hand, that, having effected by Himself this purification, He entered into heavenly glory, you have no more conscience of sin. You do not require day by day, as it were, to receive the forgiveness of your sins. You have been washed, you have been made clean, you have received full absolution and remission. Nay, more. In the heavenly sanctuary where Jesus is, sin no more can rise; and as you were crucified and buried with Him, so you are raised with Him, and seated together with Him in heavenly places. You need only to confess day

by day, and with great humility, and contrition and sorrow, your continual transgressions and trespasses, that your feet may be washed. "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit : and ye are clean." But conscience of sin you have no longer. And although, as Christ becomes clearer and dearer, we see and feel more our sinfulness and unworthiness, although with increasing sorrow and mourning we confess our unbelief and ingratitude, we have no longer conscience of sin, the conscience is free from the burden, and purified from the defilement of sin. As forgiven and accepted, as pure and spotless, as worshippers within the holiest of all, we appear before God : in the light of His love we behold, and acknowledge our sin.

Christ, the Son of God, the Lamb that was slain, is our High Priest, our Righteousness.

What other-man-invented and appointed-priest will intrude here? What other sacrifice can be mentioned? What works, offerings, or tears of our own can be thought of? Jesus, the Son of God, the Son of man, by Himself hath cleansed us from our sins. The apostle has thus spoken of the greatness of Christ. Why does Jesus reveal His majesty and His glory? Not that we should tremble, and not merely that we should reverence and adore, but that our hearts should be drawn out to Him in love. The words of Jesus Himself in Matthew 11:1-30 are quite a parallel to our passage. Jesus first shows that no man knoweth the Father but the Son, and no man knoweth the Son but the Father, and that all things are given into His hands. Why does He say this? Why does He, as it were, exalt Himself, and reveal His dignity, and His divine authority over all creation? It is only that He may embrace us in His arms; it is only that He may add immediately, " Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Oh, the more majestic and glorious Jesus appears to- us, the sweeter will be our peace, and the more childlike our confidence! This great, this infinite, this glorious Jesus was attracted by your very sin, and by your very guilt, and by your very helplessness. It was to purge our iniquities that He came down from heaven. Let us know, that we have obtained mercy, and that we have received the forgiveness of our sins, even through the redemption by the blood of Christ. Let us know it, that henceforth we may no longer be the servants of sin, that henceforth we may no longer walk in darkness ; but, being delivered from all fear, and brought nigh unto God in Jesus, we may walk in love even as the Saviour God has loved us, and that we who have obtained mercy may show in our daily walk that we are merciful, forgiving one another, and forbearing one another, and introducing into every branch of our life and every sphere of our activity the new principle of love, even the holy, forgiving and renewing love of God. Amen.

[1] * The contrast between the time before the first advent and the last days will be again referred to in connection with ii. 5. The expression, "last days," occurs Genesis 49:1; Jeremiah 23:20; Ezekiel 38:16; Hosea 3:5; Micah 4:1; Isaiah 2:2; Daniel 2:18. According to the Jewish canon of interpretation, the last days denote the days of the Messiah. Now, according to the perspective of Old Testament prophecy, whenever some obstacle which stood in the way of the fulfilment of the Messianic promise was removed, the immediate advent of the time of blessedness was expected, and then a new revelation was given which disclosed some further delay, and enlarged the vista of God's expectant people. Thus 2 Sam. vii. points to a son of David ; Daniel ix. to seventy sevens after the return from exile. But since the day of Pentecost the apostles knew with a perfectly assured clearness that the days of Messiah had commenced, as the exposition of Joel's prophecy by the apostle Peter distinctly declares. (Acts 2:17.) In "these last times" the beginning, or the first advent,

and the consummation, or the second coming of the Lord, are viewed sometimes as coincident, or at least as lying very close together, and this in harmony with Old Testament representation ; for instance, Isaiah lxi., the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of vengeance of our God. And at other times the two advents are viewed as separated by the period of the Church, and the second coming of Christ is viewed as the transition between our days and the "world to come." Thus in one sense we live in the day of fulfilment (" the darkness is past, the true light now shineth") ; in another sense, in the days of expectation and waiting, the Son of God Himself on His Father's throne expecting and looking forward. While we are thus contrasted with the fathers of old we are also like them (and like God's ancient people at present), holling forward to the Hope of Israel (Acts 26:6)

[II] * Compare Romans 4:13;Romans 8:17;Galatians 3:29;Zechariah 3:7. The Lord has not yet entered fully into the actual possession of the inheritance which, according to the Father's eternal counsel, and as a reward of His obedience unto the death of the cross (Php 2:1-30.), is appointed unto Him. Notice how the promise is given unto Him, as our Saviour and Head. We are joint-heirs with Him. He and His people will be glorified together, according to the blessed mystery that we were crucified together with Christ. What glory! and yet a glory which always reminds us of our sin and unworthiness, and of the grace and love of the Lamb that was slain.

[III] * "By aivnes ages is meant the same as by the 'all things' Scripture has various modes of expressing the idea of the universe. In the Old Testament there is no comprehensive word ; there the two great divisions are mentioned heaven and earth. In the New Testament we have the terms-creation (ktisis, Mark 10:6;Mark 13:19;2 Peter 3:4;Revelation 3:14), the world being viewed as created by God; all things (1 Corinthians 8:6;1 Corinthians 15:27) as the totality of all finite being, ages, or (slaves) as that which exists and moves in time. The most common expression is kosmos, but without reference to the classical idea of an artistic work."-Kahnis' Dogmatik, i. 247.

[IV] * dpaugasma a, occurs only in this passage. (Compare 2 Corinthians 4:6;Colossians 1:15.) In Christ we behold Him, whom none can see. But Christ is not merely a reflection of the Father, but is Himself light. God covers Himself with light, as with a garment ; but the apostle speaks here of the essential glory of God, which appears to us is the person of His Son. The two aspects of truth, that the Son is equal with the Father, and that the Son is begotten of the Father, are expressed in the old creed "Light of light." The Father hath life in Himself, and hath given unto the Son to have life in Him-self. (John 5:26.) "Who is so void of understanding as to doubt concerning the eternal being of the Son? for where has one seen light without effulgence?" (ATHANASIUS) "The sun is never seen without effulgence, nor the Father without the Son.'

(THEOPHYLACT.)

[V] * Compare Ezekiel 1:26;Ezekiel 1:28;Ezekiel 1:4;Ezekiel 43:2;Exodus 24:16; where glory of the Lord appears evidently to be a person. Thus the Messianic promise is often expressed, as inIsaiah 40:5thew:5thew:5: " The glory of Jehovah shall be revealed." In Exodus 24:16, after stating that the glory of Jehovah abode upon Mount Sinai, the verse continues, "And He called unto Moses." Notice also (Exodus 33:19) the request of Moses, "Show me thy glory," is answered" I will make all my goodness pass before thee. This harmonizes beautifully with the Scripture teaching, that in the Son, the Saviour, glory is beheld, as the full manifestation of grace; as, for in-stance, "The Word was made flesh and tabernacled among us. and we beheld His glory, the glory of the only

begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

[VI] * The Son of God is a person; for He has the word." (BENGEL.) [VII] * BAUMGARTEN, Apostelgeschichte, i. 350.

[VIII] * Think, for instance, of the way in which China, only a few years ago, was opened to the Christian missionaries.

[IX] * Although the addition by Himself might at first sight seem superfluous, the thought being already indicated by the medial form *poinsamenos*, yet this full and emphatic declaration is most frequent in the apostolic writing, and both befitting the importance of the subject as well as confirmatory to our faith. (Com. 1 Peter 2:24.)

03 Christ Above The Angels

CHAPTER III.

CHRIST ABOVE THE ANGELS.

Hebrews 1:3-6.

“WHEN He had by Himself purged our sins, He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high ; being made so much better than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said He at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee? And again, I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to me a Son? And again, when He bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, He saith,*[I] And let all the angels of God worship Him.” The opening verses of this epistle contain, as it were, a summary of doctrine. *[II] They set forth the glory of the Son of God. We behold Him as the Christ, the true Prophet, in whom is the perfect and ultimate revelation of God; the true Priest, not merely fulfilling all that was prefigured by Aaron (who purged by Himself our sins), but also fulfilling that which was prefigured by Mlekchizedec, king of righteousness, at Salem, seated in heavenly glory, and crowned with majesty at the right hand of the Power on high, exalted above all angels and principalities. We behold in these verses the nature of Christ. He is the Son, the brightness of the Father’s glory, and the express image of the Father’s being. We behold the work of the Son: by Him all worlds were created; by Him all things are upheld; by Him the atonement was made; and as He is appointed the heir of all things, history shall find its consummation in His manifestation and kingdom. And here we behold also the exaltation and the future glory of the incarnate Son, given unto Him as the fruit of His obedience. He is seated at the right hand of the Father, and all things are put in subjection under Him. Is it more wonderful to see the Son of God in Bethlehem as a little babe, or to see the Son of Man at the right hand of the Father? Is it more marvelous to see the Counselor, the Wonderful, The mighty God, The Prince of Peace, the ever-lasting Father, a child born unto us, and a Son given unto us-or to see the Son of Man, and in Him the dust of earth, seated at the right hand of God ? The High Priest entered once a year into the holy of holies; but who would have ventured to abide there, or to take up his position next to the Cherubim, where the glory of the Most High was revealed? But Jesus, the Son of Man, ascended, and by His own power, and in His own right, as well as by the appointment of the Father, He is enthroned, crowned with glory and majesty. On the wings of omnipotent love He came down from heaven; but to return to heaven, omnipotence and love were not sufficient. It was comparatively easy (if I may use this expression of the most stupendous miracle) for the Son of God to humble Himself, and to come down to this earth; but to return to heaven, it was necessary for Him to be baptized with the baptism of suffering, and to die the death upon the accursed tree. Not as He came down did He ascend again; for it was necessary that He who in infinite grace had taken our position should bear and remove our burden and overcome our enemies. Therefore was His soul straitened to be baptized with His baptism ; and therefore, from the first moment that He appeared in Jerusalem, He knew that the temple of His sacred body was to be broken, and He looked forward to the decease which

He should accomplish on that mount Not as He came did He ascend again ; for He came as the Son of God ; but He returned not merely as the Son of God, but as the Son of God incarnate, the Son of David, our brother and our Lord. Not as He came did He ascend again; for He came alone, the Good Shepherd, moved with boundless compassion when He thought of the lost and perishing sheep in the wilderness; but He returned with the saved sheep upon His shoulder, rejoicing and bringing it to a heavenly and eternal home. He went back again, not merely triumphing, but He who had gone forth weeping, bearing precious seed, who Himself had been sown, by His sacrifice unto death, returned, bringing His sheaves with Him. There had been given unto Him in His resurrection the Bride, the Church; she was raised with Him to be seated with Himself in heavenly places. It was when He had by Himself purged our sins that He sat down at the right hand of God; by the power of His blood He entered into the holy of holies; as the Lamb slain God exalted Him, and gave Him a name which is above every name.

"The Father said unto Him, Sit thou at my right hand." But it is equally true that the Lord Jesus Himself ascended, entered into the most holy sanctuary, and took His place at the right hand of God. He sat down : this expression shows that it was not merely the exaltation by the Father, but His own act and right ; for Scripture is careful to teach us not only the sub-ordination of the Son, but also His equality with the Father. Thus are we taught that the Father raised up Jesus, and also that Jesus had power to lay down His life, and He had power to take it again: "The Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep." "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." For this purpose the Son of God came down to earth, that through suffering, and after having purged our sins, He might return to glory, that in His transfigured humanity He should have the glory, which as the Son He had with the Father before the foundation of the world. The cross was the only way to the throne. The session at the right hand of God is spoken of in Scripture exclusively as of the Messiah, the Son of David, the Lord, who is God and man. And now, the God-Man, the Son of God incarnate, Jesus who is the Christ, being exalted to the right hand of the Father, the apostle teaches us that God has given to Him a more excellent name than the angels, and that He has obtained this name by inheritance. He does not speak here merely of the Son of God in His deity; for if He spoke of Him as the Son of God merely, would it not only be superfluous, but would it not be also blasphemous and irreverent, to speak of Him who is Lord over all as greater than the angels ? But when he speaks of Jesus the Son of God and the Son of Man, then is it necessary, salutary, and comforting for us to know that this Jesus, who was born of the Virgin Mary, formed in fashion as a man, in all things tempted like as we are, yet without sin, that Jesus in His humanity is now exalted, and that a name is given to Him above all angels. We who live in the West think a name of slight importance; but God always taught His people to attach great importance to names. The first petition in the Lord's Prayer is, "Hallowed be Thy name;" and all the blessings and privileges which God bestowed upon Israel are summed up in this, that God revealed unto them His name. The name is the outward expression and the pledge and seal of all that a person really and substantially is ; and when it says that the Son of God has received a higher name than the angels, it means that, not only in degree, but in kind, He is high above them. He has obtained it by inheritance; that is to say, God decreed from all eternity to give that name unto Him, as the Son and Mediator. In the book of Revelation we are told that the Son has a name which no man knoweth. There is an infinite, incomprehensible depth and mystery in the Son as there is in the Father; and as no man knoweth the Father save the Son, so no man knoweth the Son but the Father. But an excellent name, a name which is above every

name, has been revealed unto us; and such is the loving-kindness of God, that Christ's highest name and His sweetest name are identical; even Jesus, who saves His people from their sins."

Now, in order to prove this truth, the apostle reminds the Hebrews of a number of passages in which the Messiah is spoken of. And here let us briefly consider the method according to which the quotations are given. We must notice that the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews always quotes the Scriptures as the Word of God. He does not say, ' as David says,' or ' as Isaiah says,' or 'as Moses says,' but whenever he quotes from Moses and the prophets he always quotes their words as the words of God, or "as the Holy Ghost saith," or "as One saith ;" because among the Hebrews it was well known and firmly believed that "all Scripture was given by inspiration of God," and that every word of God is pure. Our Saviour, when He quotes the Scriptures, sometimes says "the Scripture," sometimes "the prophets," sometimes "David," sometimes "Isaiah." And so also the apostles do not always introduce quotations from Scripture in the same manner. The human and the divine character of the word must both be acknowledged and remembered. According to the spiritual condition of the persons addressed, and according to the purpose of the speaker, is the manner in which the words are introduced as God's or the words of Moses, &c. Sometimes the words, which are manifestly the utterance of Jehovah, are quoted: Well doth Isaiah say, and Isaiah is very bold, and this both by the Lord Jesus and the apostles. So fully and freely is the human channel in all its individuality and spontaneity acknowledged, though the divine authority and the inspiration of the Holy Ghost are always maintained and pre-supposed. Our Lord appeals even to the books of Moses as "your law;" when Israel does not recognize the Word incarnate, He refers them to the document which they held as their own, and in which they trusted, not knowing its power and spirit. To him who has not the word abiding in him, the books of Isaiah, Matthew, Paul, are simply the writings of these men. To us they are the word of God. In this epistle all quotations are traced direct to the Lord Himself, thus corresponding with, and carrying out, the key-note struck in the first verse of this epistle : " God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son."

Jesus, after His resurrection, opened unto His disciples the Scriptures. He spoke of Moses and of the prophets, and specially mentioned the Psalms; and we read, " Then opened He their understandings that they might understand the Scriptures ;" and after the day of Pentecost the Holy Ghost brought all things to their remembrance, all the words and instructions He had given to them ; and we see from the Acts of the Apostles that they saw, as it were, the whole edifice of Scripture in the grandeur and symmetry of its structure. Now they were full of light. These very men who before were not able to understand what they saw with their own eyes, still less to comprehend His words, remembered and understood now that all these things happened that the Scripture might be fulfilled. (John 2:22;John 20:9.) The infallible instructions of the Son of Man were brought back to their remembrance by the Great Teacher's aid. And shall we not there-fore attach the Greatest value and the greatest importance, as well as the most implicit and docile faith, to the explanations given in the Acts of the Apostles, in the Epistles, and in the Revelation, of quotations from the Scriptures? We are bound by a blessed tie to their interpretations. *[III]

David is called a "patriarch" on account of the position which he held in the history of Israel; a "prophet" because, as he tells us, " The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and His word was in my tongue." (2 Samuel 23:2.) But he was also a type in his own character and history of that One who was to come. Many people read the Scriptures without considering the perspective of Scripture. It

appears to them as a picture, so to speak, upon a flat surface, in which there is no perspective; they do not see the gradual unfolding and development ; they do not perceive the historical basis upon which prophecies rest, and the varying shades and tints which their peculiar position and distance in reference to the fulfillment gives them. They do not remember that the Lord Jesus Christ had His goings forth from of old, from everlasting; that His condescension goes back far into the ages, and that the whole Jewish nation was, as it were, the mother out of which the Messiah proceeded. Thus their history not only contained prophecy, but their history is prophecy. The evangelist Matthew gives us the key to the whole Jewish history in the first chapter, when he tells us that the infant Jesus was taken by Joseph and His mother Mary into Egypt, " that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my Son." Israel and Israel's history are typical ; they are installments as well as shadows of the great history.

It is very wonderful how, in God's ways, fixed necessity and liberties go hand in hand. In a way which we cannot understand, but which we can admire and adore, God's counsel must stand fast ; while His people act and move in perfect liberty, and His enemies are left to freedom and dealt with in patience and justice. From all eternity Jesus is appointed the Son of David ; but the development of history goes through liberty, the exercises of faith, of hope, of patience, of love, of joy, of suffering. Everything that is human is in sweetest harmony with that unfailing and unchangeable purpose of God's love which must surely come to pass, even as in the greatest sin-the crucifixion of our Lord-the determinate counsel of God was fulfilled ; and yet it was "with wicked hands," and of their own free choice, that the Jews crucified the divine and loving Saviour. This same blending of liberty and necessity is seen in the history of the patriarch. By a free choice of faith Abram, who was chosen to be the father of Israel, and of all who are blessed in the Messiah, left his father's house, and followed God. By faith he received the promise of Isaac, and, as a reward of his implicit confidence in the truth of God and in his death-conquering power, the eternal promise was renewed and sealed to him. And the inward clinging of the soul to the word of the Redeemer God, which amidst many struggles and failings characterized Jacob, who is Israel, breaks forth, interrupting the inspired (objective) predictions, when on his death-bed he exclaims, I have waited for thy salvation. Quietly and gently God fulfilled His counsel, hidden as yet to David, when the son of Jesse was taken from the sheep-folds. He did not know the wonderful significance of that morning when Samuel came to his father's house, and all his brothers passed before him, and David, in the simplicity and unconsciousness of his youth, was chosen and anointed to be king over Israel.

It took some time-it took many years of bitter sorrow, of painful conflicts-before the meaning of that act was explained to David himself. And at last, when through all the varied and profound discipline which he underwent, and by the inward teaching and the heart-renewing work of the Holy Ghost, God brought out in David, according to his limited and human measure, what in perfection is only in the Son and Lord of David, he went forth a true king of Israel-a man after the heart of God, strong in faith and love to the Most High, gentle and meek toward men, anointed by the Spirit, upheld by loyal and free Israelites, who loved him intensely and were willing to die for him, and yet not lifting up his heart above his brothers, but desiring to rule with the righteousness of meekness, and to show forth judgment and truth ; to found his kingdom upon the word of God, upon knowledge and light, justice and love, concord and brotherly affection ; building his dominion more upon the hundred golden pillars (as we might call them) of the Psalms, founding his throne

on the firm foundation of his union with all the godly in the land, of their harmony in the praise and joy of Jehovah. Think of him thus as a parable, as it were. Think of this shepherd king, by the grace of God and the loving and free choice of God-fearing men—a king whose power rests upon invisible pillars, not upon outward authority, and pomp, and splendor. He gathered round about him not that which was high and lofty and lifted up ; he looked not, like Saul, to that which seemed strong and mighty, but to the meek of the earth, the excellent, who put their trust in Jehovah, those who knew how to praise and to serve the God of their fathers. Thus was David a true king after the heart and mind of God ; and when he thought of building a house of God, then God sent unto him the prophet Nathan, and confirmed to him the promise, that as he was king over Israel, so his seed was to rule after him ; that the throne of David was to be an everlasting throne. Of that seed of David it was also said that God would be a Father unto him,*[IV] and he should be God's son. David is quite overcome with the condescension and love of God, and, being filled with the Spirit, he saw that Solomon was not the completion of this prediction, and that he to whom God had thus promised to be a Father was to be One infinitely greater and higher than himself or his own children; that God spake of that One for whom all the fathers looked, and waited as the revelation and full realization of God's salvation. I may say of David as it was said of John the Baptist—" He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light "-He was not that King, but was sent to witness and to prefigure that King—the Son of the Most High. And thus, in all the sufferings and exaltations of David, in all the events and experiences of his life, he felt and saw that the lowest and deepest foundation of his own life was the Messiah, Christ Himself; that his own sufferings were ultimately to be fulfilled in the Son, who was above all. And therefore it is that in the Psalms of David we find David ; his very heart and soul, the man himself; but we find also Christ. David and Christ are completely identified. David, according to his limited measure, is an installment of Christ. He is a type of Christ ; and therefore that psalm which was an expression of David's experience, in which he cried, " My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?" is also the expression of the experience which no finite mind can fathom ; the Lord Jesus on the cross utters these very words ! What marvelous poetry is here, not in words merely, but in life and history! What wonderful condescension! He who is Jehovah, David's Lord, is mirrored forth by the son of Jesse. David's Son is none other than the Son of God, and He shall rule over Israel for ever. "I will give you the sure mercies of David." There is no other man in Scripture thus identified with Jesus Christ ;*[V] and therefore He is emphatically called "the Son of David." It is in this light that we must read the expressions quoted here by the apostle from the second psalm.

Most majestic is the book of Psalms. Very significant and striking is the commencement of this book, so grand and sweet, so precious to all the children of God, even as it was peculiarly near and dear to the Lord Jesus during His life on earth. The book of Psalms commences with two psalms, which have no superscription. The first chapters in the books of Scripture are often, as it were, the expressive announcement of the subsequent chapters ; the countenance of the whole ; the short, compressed key-note is struck ; out of the abundance of the heart the inspired author seems to utter immediately the sum and substance of his commission. In the first two psalms we have a summary of the whole book. The first word is ` Blessed,' and the conclusion of the second psalm is, "Blessed are all they that trust in Him." *[VI] For God's thoughts are always thoughts of love. And though by reason of our disobedience, and the corruption of our heart, we cannot obtain the blessing which the law promises to all who keep it (Psalm i.), the promise of David's son was given in order to bring unto us new and greater blessing through the marvels of redemption.

(Psalms 2:1-12.) As the apostle Peter said, "Unto you first, God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you." All the thoughts and purposes of God toward His people are blessings' *[VII] The psalmist represents in the second psalm all the world united against God; He describes their determined, inward, and zealous opposition to Him. He describes God in His holy calmness, in His quiet majesty. He has laid the foundation, He has ordered the method, rule, and triumph of His house from all eternity. He can afford to give centuries and thousands of years to His enemies to mature all their plans, to utter all their thoughts, to bring forth all their objections, and to try all their experiments. He is patient also, and long-suffering; not willing that any should perish, but that sinners should turn unto Him and live. But He has anointed His holy King. He has appointed One-that wonderful person, Who is His representative and the sceptre of His might-God and man, through Whom the power and the pleasure of the Lord are to be established on the earth. And this Son is now declaring to us the decree, the counsel according to the good pleasure of His will, the purpose which cannot be changed, the promise which standeth firm from eternity to eternity: "Thou art my Son ; this day have I begotten Thee."

Now what this passage means is evident from the exposition given to us by the apostles. It refers to the resurrection of Jesus. He was the Son of God before the incarnation. We must ever hold fast the fundamental truth of the eternal, essential Sonship of our Lord. It was the Son who was sent into the world, and given unto us by the Father. Thus Scripture teaches; and not that He who was sent and was born of the Virgin Mary thus and then became the Son. At the incarnation the Son of God became man. (Galatians 4:4.) But the truth specially taught here is, that the Son of David, the Theocratic King, the Messiah, who is to subdue all ungodliness on the earth, and to exalt all who trust in Him, is "declared to be the Son of God with power."

Let us consider the apostolic interpretations of this psalm. In the book of Acts 13:32) the apostle Paul, speaking of the resurrection, said : "And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that He hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. And as concerning that He raised Him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, He said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David." Here the general and comprehensive view is taken of Jesus as the Messiah and fulfiller of all God's promises; and the "to-day" of the second psalm is referred to the resurrection. In like manner the apostle writes to the Romans, with evident reference to our psalm: "His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of Holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." Analyzing now the comprehensive term Messiah into its constituent parts-Prophet, Priest, and King-we notice, besides the above reference to His kingship, that Peter in his address to the Jews quotes the prophecy of Moses-" A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren" (Acts 3:22) ; even, as he says, that " God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you." (Acts 3:26.) And as to the priestly office, Paul declares that Christ glorified not Him-self to be made a High Priest, but He that said unto Him, " Thou art my Son ; this day have I begotten thee." *[VIII]

Thus in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, when as Messiah He was fully brought into His prophetic, priestly, and regal dignity, was fulfilled the word-" Thou art my Son." Unto which of the angels said God this at any time ? What angel has a name like this name? What angel can be compared with our Lord, the Man Christ Jesus, who was crucified and liveth for evermore? The

apostle passes on to another passage, which has no reference to the first coming, but to Christ's second advent, when God shall bring in again into the inhabited earth the First Begotten. The 97th Psalm speaks of the (return or) coming of Jehovah to the earth to subdue His enemies, and to be the rejoicing of His people. The psalm commences with a call to the inhabitants of the land, and to all the earth, with the multitude of isles, to rejoice at the coming of the Lord Jehovah, who shall reign and deliver the godly, and manifest His glory. It is the advent in which, as Zechariah almost in the same words predicts, Jehovah shall be King over all the earth. (Zechariah 14:1-21.) The period between the first and second advent is not beheld by the prophetic psalmist. The world during this interval seeth Jesus no more. He is hid. The heavens contain Him, and only His people see Him by faith, and know His presence by the indwelling Spirit. He is ruling the world ; but He is not known, not recognized. But God shall bring Him in again, He shall bring Him into sight and manifestation. Not as the only-begotten, mark; for as the only-begotten He came in His incarnation (John 1:14;John 1:18), but as the first-begotten ; that is, as the risen Lord, the second Adam, the first-begotten of the dead, the first-born among many brethren. Thus the prophet is supplemented by the apostle. Jehovah, of whom the psalmist speaks, is identified by the apostle with the risen Jesus, the Son of God. Now at His coming (the second, as we Christians know, not coincident with the first, as according to the prophetic perspective ancient Israel believed) the world is divided into the righteous, the upright in heart, who worship and love God ; and idolaters, that serve graven images, and boast themselves of idols. Just as in the Apocalypse we read the world is divided into the saints of God, and those who worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark upon their foreheads and in their hands. The advent of Jehovah brings judgment and confusion to the idolaters, and a harvest of light and joy to the godly. (Psalms 2:1.)

Now, bringing in the glorified Son, God the Father, who alone has the right to command creatures to perform acts of worship and adoration, saith unto the angels, " Worship Him."*[IX]

Thus is humanity in the person of Messiah exalted far above any creature. Thus the consummation of all history, and the perfect manifestation of God's glory to the rejoicing adoration of angels and men, will be in the Lord Jesus, who is not ashamed to call us brethren, who is one with us by a link which can never be severed. Who then is like unto Jesus? Who like Him is adorable? Holiness and goodness are worthy of adoration only in their essence and source. He, whom holy angels are called by God to worship, must be essential holiness, goodness, love-must be none other but the infinite and eternal, the ever blessed and coequal Son of the Most High.*[X]

How near is Jesus unto us, although He is so high above us ! This is the very reason why God has exalted Him. This is the reason why He is so high above everything, above all powers and dominions ; that He who has all power and love may be visible and accessible ; that every one may see Him, and draw near to Him; that out of the lowest depths we may behold Him ; and that from the utmost corner of the land we may cry unto Him, and be saved. Jesus is exalted for the very purpose of being a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins. If Jesus was not so high, would He be so nigh ? He who is omniscient, omnipotent, all-wise, all-loving, whose sympathy is full of human tenderness, is in the holy of holies for the very purpose that He may succour, comfort, and uphold us during the days of our trial and sorrow, that He may be a present help in time of trouble. Jesus is exalted above all, that He may fill us with His power and love. He is high above us, that, looking unto Him, the author and finisher of faith, unto Him who through the cross entered into glory, seeing Him constantly above us, the Lamb in the midst of the

throne, we may run with patience the race set before us. With all the holy angels and all the saints of God we look unto Him, we worship and rejoice as an old father of the German Church says-" Jesus is in heaven; therefore it is easy for a poor sinner to have his heart in heaven. Let Jesus dwell in the heart, and then heaven will be in the heart." Amen.

[I] * Literally, when He shall have brought in again the first-begotten into the habitable earth. The time is future; and the place, not the world in general, but this earth of ours, which is the chosen sphere, where Christ is to be manifested and to reign.

[II] * They contain a summary of the first chapter and the germ of all truths expounded in this epistle. The following analysis of Bengel is useful. " His Majesty is set forth (1) Absolutely by the very name ' Son,' and by three glorious predicates, ' Whom He hath appointed," By whom He made the worlds," Who sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;' thus His course is de-scribed from the beginning of all things till He reached the goal (vv. Hebrews 1:2-3). (2) Relatively, in comparison with the angels (v. Hebrews 1:4): the confirmation of this follows, and the very name ' Son' is proved at verse Hebrews 1:5; the 'heirship,' verses Hebrews 1:6-9; the 'making the worlds,' verses Hebrews 1:10-12; the 'sitting at the right hand' of God, verses Hebrews 1:13-14."

[III] * Notwithstanding many plausible objections to and limitations of this assertion, I cannot think and say otherwise. I believe also in the inexhaustible, many-sided, and eternal meaning of Scripture above the capacity and measure of the prophet, or of any individual or any period of the church. This has been expressed by Stier as the "Vollsinn," and by another in the quaint and some-what paradoxical sentence-Whatever Scripture can mean, it does mean.

[IV] * a Samuel vii. A very important chapter; commencement of a new phase of Israel's history; one of those turning-points with which commences a new period. The promise refers primarily to Solomon, who built the temple, who reigned in peace, and who extended the kingdom in manifested and acknowledged glory. The typical character of Solomon is set forth clearly in Psalms 72:1-20, where the Messiah, the Prince of Peace, the Divine King and Lord is described, and his reign of truth and prosperity. In 1 Chronicles 17:17 also it is evident that David knew the fulfillment was in the distant future: "Thou hast also spoken of thy servant's house for a great while to come, and hast regarded me according to the estate of a man of high degree, O Lord God." Luther translates, "Thou hast regarded me in der Gestalt eines Menschen, der in der H&he Gott der Herr ist," in the appearance of a man, who in the height is God the Lord. Stier renders, "And this is the manner of a man, who is God the Lord."

[V] * David therefore often stands for Messiah. Hosea 3:5; Ezekiel 34:23, &c.

[VI] * Psalms 1:1-6. was viewed as a prologue of the whole collection. Comp. Acts 13:33, where the words, "Thou art my Son," are quoted as the first psalm. The ancient Jewish view is expressed in the beautiful saying-The first psalm begins and ends with blessing. That is because the first and second psalms are one. The first psalm is didactic, a response, as it were, to the law of Moses (David's Bible); the second prophetic, Messiah's kingdom.

[VII] * Luther on Psalms 2:7: "Here the whole law is abrogated, and the office of Christ most clearly and distinctly described. He teaches not what we are ; for this the law doeth; but He teaches who He is, the Son of God, that we may receive Him, and use His gifts with rejoicing and delight.'

[VIII] * In Revelation 2:27 we see that the second psalm, though applying directly to the resurrection, extends to the time of the second advent, when Messiah shall declare the decree to the Gentiles. "Now" (Psalms 2:10) the time of grace, "then" (Psalms 2:5) the day of judgment. Although the words are thus connected with the resurrection of Christ, we must still view them as referring also (implicitly and fundamentally) to the eternal, essential Sonship. Both aspects, the eternal and historical, are found in the prophetic writings: Proverbs 8:1-36. contains the germ of the doctrine of the eternal generation of the Son. "To-day" is thus viewed by the church fathers to refer to the timeless and eternal generation.

[IX] * The angels are mentioned frequently in connection with the second advent. (Matthew 16:27; Matthew 25:31; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; 2 Thessalonians 1:12.)

[X] * We shall consider in our next lecture the reason why the apostle Paul institutes this comparison between the incarnate Son of God and the angelic creation.

04 Christ Above The Angels

CHAPTER IV.

CHRIST ABOVE THE ANGELS.

Hebrews 1:5-14; Hebrews 2:1-4.

I CONTINUE the argument of the apostle to prove that Jesus is exalted above the angels. He began with the second psalm, in which, based upon the promise which God gave unto David, and which is recorded in the second book of Samuel, the glory of the Messiah, as the omnipotent King of all nations, appointed and upheld by the Father, is described, founded as it is upon the eternal and essential Sonship which was manifested in His resurrection from the dead. Well known was this psalm among the Jews, and well understood was it that it spoke of the divine dignity of the Messiah; for it was in the light of this psalm that Nathanael, as soon as Jesus manifested Himself unto Him as the searcher of hearts, exclaimed, " Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel." It was on the basis of this psalm that the high priest adjured Jesus to tell him whether He was the Christ, the Son of the living God.*[I] Nathanael and all Israelites' knew that the Messiah, who was to be King, was to be in the dignity and glory of the Son of God. As in the second Psalm the Son of David is addressed in a way in which God never spoke to any of the angels, so in the 97th Psalm, which describes the coming, or in New Testament light the return, of Messiah to earth, He is said to be Lord and King, and all angels are commanded to worship Him. The 97th Psalm speaks of the advent of the Messiah, which is yet in the future, to which both the believing synagogue and the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ are looking, when He is to be manifested in great power, and to be acknowledged as King of the whole earth. Fire and darkness go before Him, and He shall execute judgment upon the nations, and divide the idolaters from the faithful, and the wicked from the godly. For in this _ psalm the world is described as in the same condition as that referred to in the book of the Revelation. When Jehovah comes, the man who is to be the Lord and King of the whole earth (as is said also in Zechariah and all the prophets), then shall all idolaters be confounded, and they that are upright in heart shall enter into the harvest of light. And so in the book of Revelation, His own people are they who have not worshipped the beast and yielded to idolatry; whereas all the rest of the world shall have fallen away both from the Son and from the Father. In our own day, religious questions begin to concentric on this point-Is God the Creator? or is there no God ? Men, who deny that Jesus is the Son, begin to deny the Father also. The apostle reminds us, that while Jesus is thus spoken of, as the Son, the angels are only the swift and penetrating messengers in obedience to the power and will of God. He proceeds to another psalm, the 45th, and he asks the question : " To which of the angels said He at any time, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever : a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom ?" That 45th Psalm is unique among all the Psalms of David. It is the germ of the Song of Solomon. If there is a doubt whether the Song of Solomon refers to Jehovah in His covenant relation to His people, then it must likewise be doubtful whether this 45th Psalm refers to the Bridegroom, who is to be the divine Man, the Lord of Israel; and if not, it is impossible to explain

how this psalm finds its way into a collection of hymns, whose great and constant theme is God as King and Lord of Israel and the nations. But we see from the opening verses that it is a mysterious psalm, and that here, as in all the Scriptures, we have to search and dig below the surface, that we may discover the hidden treasure of pure gold which rewards those who pray to behold the wonders of God's teaching. The author of the psalm is himself astonished at the wonderful, beautiful, and multitudinous thoughts which rose within his heart, and looks upon them as given to him by a higher power, he feels that he is carried away by a mighty afflatus, by a powerful tide, that he is only the pen of a ready writer; and he begins to consider the thoughts which are in him, but not of him. His heart is overflowing with the abundance of the revelation which the Lord God is giving unto him. Then he beholds in the Spirit one who is beautiful and fair, a true and real man, yet free from all imperfection and all defilement; in whom there is that true beauty of holiness and uprightness which manifests itself in words of truth and grace, poured into His lips. And this holy and lovely One, although He belongs to the human race, is yet not of them, but stands quite by Him-self, and towers high above them, even as heaven is above earth. He is One with us, yet above all the children of Adam. He is also the mighty One, El Gibbor, the mighty God, who (compare Isaiah 9:6) subdues all enemies by that meekness and righteousness which He introduces into the world. And because He loved righteousness and hated iniquity, therefore God anointed Him with the oil of gladness above His fellows; or, in New Testament language, "because He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, therefore God highly exalted Him." The Son of man is the Christ; He is anointed with the Holy Ghost, the oil of gladness, above all His equals. As He speaks also in the prophet Isaiah, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives; to give to them that mourn beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." The psalm thus reveals unto us the mystery of the Trinity-the Son, God and man in one person, "fairer than any of the children of men," obedient unto death, exalted by the Father, and anointed by the Holy Ghost. God the Father thus addresses the Son of man-"Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom." *[II] To which of the angels was ever language addressed as unto this One, who indeed is born of a woman, the Son of man, a descendant of David, who lived upon earth the servant of God, honoring the law of Moses, and obedient to all the commandments of God? But to Him the Father has given a throne and a sceptre for ever, and speaks to Him as His equal from all eternity unto all ages. But the apostle continues by quoting another psalm. Christ is in all the psalms; they speak of Him. The divinity and humanity of the Lord are set forth in all the Scriptures. It is the delight of the Father, in all the Word, to honor the Son, even as it is the delight of the Son continually to point to the Father that we may see His glory. The apostle refers to the 102nd Psalm -a psalm which, without apostolic teaching, I doubt if any of us would have had the boldness so to apply; for in many respects it is the most remarkable of all the psalms-the psalm of the afflicted One while His soul is overwhelmed within Him in great affliction, and sorrow, and anxious fear. He has been righteous, He has been holy; but men persecute Him. He is forsaken, His tears are His meat day and night, and yet God had exalted Him. God had shown unto Him that He was His chosen One; God had prospered Him up to a certain point; He upheld Him, carried Him through, sustained and honored Him, caused His work to prosper and His word to bring forth fruit. But then, instead of entering into glory, He felt that His path was shut up, that all His people forsook Him and rejected Him; that in-stead of light there was darkness; that

instead of a throne there was the cross before Him. God had lifted Him up, given Him power, given Him the hearts of His people. God had for thirty-three years continually said unto Him, "Thou art my Son. Thou art my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul is well pleased;" and at last, in the middle of His days, before His work was completed, He was to be cut off. Persecution and dismay, and the unbelief of the people, met Him; and His soul was "exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." The shadow of the cross fell into His heart, and His soul was straitened within Him.

Thus, in the 12th chapter of the gospel of John, we read that His soul was sorrowful in the anticipation of that hour, for the sake of which He had come into the world. Thus it was in the garden of Gethsemane, and yet He knew and believed that God would deliver Him. And when this afflicted One pours out His heart He says, "Thou wilt arise, and have mercy upon Zion. The time to favor her, the appointed time, will come." He rests with firm faith on the promises of God, in which light and glory are secured to Israel. God's counsel must stand, His counsel must be fulfilled. Then it is that God the Father replies to Him, "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands." *^[III] Then it is that God the Father replies with this word of assurance to this afflicted, mourning, distressed One, reminding Him that although for a little season He has become a servant, and entered into darkness and sorrow, though He has humbled Himself, and feels like David, "I am a worm and not a man," yet is He none other but the Lord, the Word, the Creator of heaven and earth. He was in the beginning with the Father, when the word went forth from God to lay the foundations of the earth. By Him also the heavens were framed. He is the Eternal, the First and the Last, who shall remain the same for ever. Although the elements shall melt away, and the heavens and earth be moved ; although the world in its present phase shall pass away and be put off like an old vesture, yet this suffering One is the Lord ; He is the same, and His years fail not.*^[IV]

How marvellous is this! how incomprehensible this union of divine and human, of eternity and time, sadness and omnipotence ! Do not wonder that such language of anguish, faintness, and sorrow, of agonising faith, is attributed by the Holy Ghost to Jesus. Remember that the life of Jesus was a life of faith, a real, true, and earnest conflict; that "He is the author and finisher of faith;" and that, although He continually took firm hold of the promises of God, yet His feeling of sorrow, His sense of His utter dependence on God, His anxious looking forward to His last sufferings, all this was a reality. He gained the victory by faith; He knew that He was through suffering returning to the Father; He knew that as Son of man and Redeemer of His people He would be glorified with the glory which He had with the Father before the foundations of the world were laid. To which of the angels said God at any time, as He said to the meek and lowly Jesus, "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth"? *^[V] And lastly the apostle quotes the short but most comprehensive 110th Psalm. Of all the psalms it is most frequently quoted in the New Testament. Martin Luther says this is "Der Haupt Psalm"-the chief psalm, the head psalm, the psalm which was the greatest strength and consolation to him, as it ought to be to all God's people. "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." The Jews in the time of Jesus all knew that this psalm referred to the Messiah. There was not the slightest doubt about this. Hence our blessed Saviour asks them this question-How is it that David, speaking of the Messiah, in the Spirit, by the Holy Ghost, calls Him Lord, if He is his Son ? Here was a dilemma. The 110th Psalm refers to the Messiah; how then does David call Him Lord ? In three of the gospels is this passage quoted; and the question of our Saviour is so

important and so much a leading central one that all the (synoptic) evangelists reported it. Christ always referred the Scripture unto the Holy Ghost, and in this passage He does so explicitly -"David in the Spirit;" that is to say, when by the Holy Ghost there were revealed to him eternal truths. It was impossible for man's mind, unassisted, to know what is declared in this psalm, to rise to this height, and to have the comprehensive view opened to us here. Peter, in his sermon on the day of Pentecost (and it is to be noticed that that great model and typical sermon was nothing else but unfolding of Scripture), says to the Jews, "David did not ascend into the heavens." The Jews regarded David with the most profound veneration. They felt that Messiah was, in a peculiar sense, connected with their great king. The apostle is almost afraid to refer to David's death and burial. And therefore he says, "Let me freely speak unto you of our father David ; that he is dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day." But as a prophet, and knowing the promise of the Son of David-the Messiah-he said, "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand." This is the passage*[VI] that the apostle Paul afterwards expounds so fully in our epistle, showing from it the peculiar glory of the priesthood of Jesus as the true Melchizedec. On this psalm are based the expressions of the epistles on the ascension of Christ. *[VII] What does it mean? That the Son of man, the Son of David, was to be exalted by God high above all things, and that He was to be placed upon the throne as His equal, endowed with all might and all dominion. And thus it is that our blessed Saviour says, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth;" and thus is it that He ascended high above all heavens, in order that in His humanity as well as in His divinity He might govern and fill all things. "Unto which of the angels said He at any time, as unto Jesus, Sit thou on my right hand?" But now you may ask, Why does the apostle speak about the angels? He has shown from the 2ndPsalms 2:1-12, from the 97thPsalms 97:1-12, from 2 Samuel 7:1-29., from Chronicles, from the 110thPsalms 110:1-7, most clearly that this man Jesus is none else but God, Lord, of infinite and eternal Majesty ; and that, therefore, in His humanity also He is highly exalted above all angels. But what is the point of this comparison? What is its importance and the inference to be drawn from it? The argument is simply this: the old dispensation, the law, was given by the mediation and administration of angels. If Jesus was above angels, then His dispensation, the new covenant, His priesthood, are high above that of the law. The Jews thought much about the angels. As Stephen said, and the apostle teaches in the epistle to the Galatians, the angels were connected with the giving of the law: "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels. The Lord is among them, as in the holy place of Sinai." The chariots of God do not consist of anything that is material and inanimate. Intelligent living worshippers, loving and obedient spirits, are the chariots upon which God moves. Thus, in the ancient prayer of the synagogue, the angels are called the Ophanim, or the wheels. Stephen says, "You have received the law by the disposition of angels." In the epistle to the Galatians, Paul reminds them that "the law was given through the administration of angels."

Scripture speaks often of the angels. Let me remind you of some of the doctrines which the Bible contains concerning them. In the first place, human beings know nothing about angels, except what God pleases' to tell them. Hence all that human poets have imagined about them is of no importance or value, unless it agrees with the record of the divine Scripture. With regard to the angels, I may notice three tendencies to error. The first tendency to error we see in the epistle to the Colossians, and we may call it " the Gnostic error," when men, following their own speculative reason, endeavor to penetrate mysteries which are not revealed to us, and form erroneous views of the angels as to their nature, and their relation to God and to Christ.

Secondly, the Romish error, according to which the angels are placed in a false mediatory position, and are invoked, when men rely upon their inter-cession, or call upon their aid. The only case recorded in Scripture of the angels being invoked in any way is when David calls upon them to bless the Lord, and with His other creatures to exalt Him, their God and our God. And the third tendency is what I may call the Protestant one-to think too rarely and in too isolated a manner about them; not to consider sufficiently what is said about them in Scripture, and not to feel and remember vividly that they are constantly with us, that we and they are members of one great Family, and that the angelic worship and the worship of the church are harmonious.

Now Scripture tells us of the angels only, as it were, incidentally. It is as if some one who dwells in a great and vast realm, but who does not think it wise, necessary, or salutary to give us full and systematic knowledge of it, occasionally, as we require it, lifts the curtain, and gives us a glimpse of the perfect and harmonious whole of that world in which He is enthroned.

Notice the multitude of angels: "We have come to an innumerable company of angels." In the book of Revelation it speaks of "myriads, tens of thousands, and thousands of thousands," millions of angels. In the gospel of Luke "the multitude of the heavenly host" praise God, and announce in songs of gladness the Saviour's birth to the shepherds. An immense, countless multitude of angels ! Let our minds expand to the idea Let the innumerable company of angelic beings who have loved and served God for thou-sands of years show us how grand is that world in which we live, and in which this poor earth, on account of the blood of Jesus-the Son. of God-which redeemed it, is the dearest spot. This in-numerable multitude is a polity, a state. There are gradations in it, groups, orders, legions of angels. "Jacob called the name of the place Mahanaim." There are the cherubim and the seraphim; thrones and dominions. There is Michael the defender, the champion of God's people, especially called forth in the latter days. We read of the archangel, whose voice shall be heard when the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven. There is a kingdom with gradations, with order. This kingdom is intimately connected with the kingdom of grace. Jesus tells us every day to think of this connection and harmony. He teaches us to pray, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." When a sinner is converted, the angels rejoice; and when Jesus comes again, the angels will come with Him. There is only one kingdom of angels and men; and all that God has created form one wonderful united whole. We cannot see the angels; not because they are invisible; for we could see them at this moment if God saw fit to open our eyes. The things which are true, substantial, lasting, and real, are things as yet invisible, and apprehended only by faith. They will last for ever, though they are not yet seen by us; and when all that is unreal and shadowy shall disappear, then they shall be made visible at the appearing of our great God and Saviour. Whenever there is a crisis in the history of God's kingdom the angels appear, as at the giving of the law, and at the incarnation of the Son of God. Thus we read of angelic manifestations before and after the birth of Jesus. The Son of man often speaks of and always beholds the angels. In the garden of Gethsemane an angel appears to strengthen Him, and angels appear to the disciples at the resurrection and at the ascension of the Saviour. When He comes again multitudes of angels shall come with Him and separate the evil from the good; before the angels Jesus shall confess His people.

Angels are connected not merely with salvation and with the spiritual kingdom of God, but with all the kingdom of God; with all physical phenomena. There was an earthquake at His resurrection. Why? Because angels had been and rolled away the stone. The Pool of Siloam had miraculous

powers; "for an angel came down at certain seasons and troubled the water," and endowed it with healing power. The angels carry on every development in nature. God does not move and rule the world merely by laws and principles, by unconscious and inanimate powers, but by living beings full of light and love. His angels are like flames of fire; they have charge over the winds, and the earth, and the trees, and the sea. Through the angels He carries on the government of the world. And these angels, whom God has made so glorious, who excel in strength, hearken to the voice of His commandment and obey Him, while they in worship continually behold the countenance of the Father. They are always ascribing glory and praise, and constantly adoring with joy and wonder the glory of God as it is revealed in the Lamb that was slain, and made manifest in the Church of Christ. For as Christ is the centre, so the church is exalted in Him that in the church the manifold wisdom of God may be made known to principalities and powers.

Now, glorious as the angels are, they are in subjection to Jesus as man; for in His human nature God has enthroned Him above all things. Their relation to Jesus fixes also their relation to us. In a great house there may be many servants who are honored, trusted, and beloved; but the position of the little child who is the heir is different, though as yet he is inferior in knowledge, strength, and attainments. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for those who shall be heirs of salvation?" You who are the children of God, begotten by the Holy Ghost, you are the brethren of Jesus; for "He took not hold of angels, but in His great love He took hold of the seed of Abraham." You are the future kings and rulers, and unto man in Christ all things are put in subjection, as it is said in the 8th Psalms 8:1-9: "Are they not all ministering spirits?" They love us. We know it, because they showed a most unselfish and tender interest in our salvation. When Jesus descended from heaven, and visited our earth, so far from being filled with envy, they rejoiced, and with great alacrity came down and brought the glad tidings to the shepherds. With joy they also announced that Jesus is risen, that He is exalted, that Son of man whom-O mystery of mysteries!-they had seen agonizing in the garden, who was then strengthened by an angel; whom they had beheld on the cross. How glad were they to roll away the stone; how rejoiced when they saw Him exalted above the heavens; how tenderly they expressed their sympathy with the sorrowing women; "for I know that ye seek Jesus which was crucified. He is not here : for He is risen, as He said." We know they love us; for they rejoice when a poor, fallen, degraded sinner turns from ungodliness and takes hold of salvation as it is in Jesus. They watch us in our dangers, in our difficulties. "God has given His angels charge over us, to keep us in all our ways, lest we dash our foot against a stone." They are astonished, and marvel when they see Lazarus in his poverty, in pain, in distress, despised and forgotten by man. Day by day they watch his patience, his faith, his trustful cleaving unto God, and eagerly they learn from him more and more of the mystery of suffering, and of man's fellowship with Jesus ; and lovingly they wait for the appointed hour, when, delivered from the body of pain and death, they carry him safely, and gently, and swiftly into Abraham's bosom. And after having ministered unto God's people to the end of this age, they shall rejoice when they hear His voice saying unto the children, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." For Jesus' sake, "are they not all ministering spirits?" Oh, how great is Jesus! How great is the covenant of grace! How great is the glory of the Son, and how wonderful is our position as children of the Father! And now, brethren, the apostle is not able to continue his argument without first giving vent to his feeling of solemn anxiety about our salvation, and exhorting us earnestly and affectionately. We ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard. So great a salvation has

been revealed to us; salvation which has its origin In eternal depths of love; salvation which is built upon the rock, even the sufferings and resurrection of Jesus the Son of God; salvation which is con-summated in glory, greater and higher than that of the angels, by which the highest position is given to us among all creatures in the kingdom of God. If so great salvation is neglected-I do not say rejected or treated with contempt and unbelief ; but if it is neglected ; if we do not rise to the height of this argument ; if the love of God does not melt our hearts ; if we do not think salvation the one thing that is necessary, important, essential ; if we do not devote to it our whole heart, our whole soul, all our energies; if we do not strive to grasp it with all our might, concentrating all our earnestness and strength, how shall we escape ? Jesus has Himself declared and brought it; God the Father has ratified it and sealed it; the Holy Ghost has confirmed it with His gifts and wonders. It is the ultimate revelation of God; it is the unspeakable gift of His love, according to His eternal purpose. Have we this first chapter? Is it ours? Do we possess it? Can we say, " I will go with this into eternity ; " I believe it from my heart ; it is a treasure to my own soul ; I stand upon this rock ; I hear His voice in the Son, and therefore I can go to Him with child-like confidence? Let me sum up, and apply the teaching of this chapter in four questions. Do we worship Jesus? In this chapter He is called by divine names, the Son, Lord, God. Divine works are assigned to Him; the creation of the world, the upholding of all things, the atonement upon the cross, and the government now from the right hand of the Majesty. Divine attributes are given to Him; He is omniscient, He is omnipotent, He is unchangeable, He is eternal. Divine worship is accorded to Him. God the Father Himself commands the angels to worship Him. Do you worship Jesus, Jesus the Son of David, who was crucified upon the cross? Have you learnt, like Thomas, to say unto Him, "My Lord and my God"? The second question is this: Do you know truth P Do you belong unto the generality, the majority of this world, who think that one religion is as good and true as another, one religious opinion not more valuable or certain than another? Have you the truth, the one truth? Do we know that God, who has spoken in times past by the prophets, has now spoken unto us fully, clearly, and finally in His Son? Jesus saith: "I am the truth; "we have received the true, real, full, perfect, ultimate revelation of the mind of God in Jesus Christ His Son. Oh, what a blessed thing it is when, instead of being tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine, and instead of depending upon the wisdom and ingenuity of human reason, we have this rock-God hath spoken; in Jesus hath God spoken! The third question I ask-Are you free from all your sins? Are they all forgiven? Are you forgiven? Jesus has purged away our sins by one sacrifice upon the cross. "The blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, cleanseth from all sin." Of Him all the prophets witness, all the apostles witness, and the angels witness, and God the Father, God the Son, and the Holy Ghost witness, that "Whosoever believeth in Him has," that moment, "the perfect absolution, remission, and forgiveness of all sins," and is pure and spotless in the sight of God. Do you believe that Jesus who died on the cross is now at the right hand of God? Oh, then, understand also the full meaning of David's word-"With God is forgiveness of sins, that He may be feared!" As we were crucified together with Jesus, so, in consequence of our justification, Jesus was raised and we are accepted in the Beloved. We are now free from sin, and in the presence of God. In Christ we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. He hath taken away all our transgressions.

Lastly, Do you know that Jesus, your Saviour, your Lord, your God, is at the right hand of God, and that you are the brethren of Jesus and the children of the Father, and the heirs of the kingdom? Do you live in the hope that you will behold Him, that you will see Jesus as He is, and that then you will be like Him? And having this hope in you, do you purify yourselves even as He is pure? Oh,

live in the love of God! Live on the love of God! Live from the love of God! Start with the fullness of God's love in Jesus Christ! Never be tempted to go back again to the terrors or to the method of the law! Never be tempted to look again to anything else but the blood of Jesus, which taketh away all sin! And each time you go to the Lord's Table and commemorate the dying love of Christ, say to yourself, "Now I am showing to all the world the death of the Lord; that He has finished the work, that salvation is perfect, that He has offered a complete, all-sufficient, and full atonement." Rejoice that Christ is here who was crucified yea, rather, who is risen again, and that we who believe are the body of Christ, one with Him for evermore. Who is he that will condemn or that will separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus? He who died for us is none else than the Son of the Most High! May the Lord grant unto us "that we may know Jesus, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings; that we may be made conformable unto His death;" and that we may attain unto the glory of the first resurrection when the heirs of salvation shall be made manifest with Jesus Himself. Amen.

[I] (1)* Hales says the sole application of this illustrious prophecy to the Messiah was the unquestionable doctrine of the primitive Jewish Church. He adds a few quotations: " Our masters deliver, that the blessed God said unto Messiah, Son of David (who is shortly to be revealed in our days), `Ask of me somewhat, and I will give it thee,' as it is said in Psalms 2:7-8." The Midrash Tillim understands the Gentiles of Gog and Magog, and states that Messiah is styled "my Son," and not "a Son to me;" that is, absolutely and not relatively, as in Nathan's prophecy.

Jarchi affirms, that whatever is sung in this psalm our masters interpreted of Messiah the King; but "according to the sound of the words, and for the confusion of the heretics (i.e. Christians), it is convenient that we expound it of David."-From Vise. MANDERVILLE'S HORA HEBRAICA.

[II] (2)* There is abundant evidence to prove that the Jews applied this psalm to Messiah. Stier says: "We cannot enter into controversy with those who see in this psalm only a marriage song or hymn to an earthly king, without first discussing the general principles of Scripture faith... "This psalm is not isolated in the Bible. (Comp. Isaiah 54:5; Isaiah 62:5; Jeremiah 3:1; Ezekiel 16:8; Hosea and Canticles passim; John 3:29; Matthew 11:25; Matthew 22:1-46; Matthew 25:1-46; Ephesians 5:32; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Revelation 19:21.) Gibbor is a title of Messiah. He is mighty to save. Compare also with verse 6 the Jewish tradition: " We have heard that Christ abideth for ever." (John 12:34.)

[III] (3)* Stier: The Messiah receives here the mighty answer of God, 'It is impossible for Thee to succumb; for Thou art the Living One with me from all eternity.' Christ is here presented as Creator; He is Lord (Jehovah) ; the earth is His and the fullness thereof.

[IV] (4)* In Hora Hebraica, already quoted, interesting extracts are given (pp. 100-102) to prove that the ancient Jews referred this psalm to Messiah and His days. On verse 27, " But thou art He," the Jews say that Ani and Attah and Hu, I and Thou and He, are names of God denoting three persons ; and their anthem, publicly sung on the last day of their feast of tabernacles, is, "For thy sake, O our Creator Hosanna ; for thy sake, O our Redeemer Hosanna ; for thy sake, O our Seeker Hosanna!" as if, says Bishop Patrick, they beseeched the blessed Trinity to save them and send them help.

[V] (5)* Kurtz sums up the contrast between the angels and the Lord Jesus: (1) The angels are servants in the kingdom; the Son has a throne, and is therefore Ruler. (2) They work in the shape or power of the lower elements (wind and fire); He by the moral power of righteousness. (3) Their work is changing and transitory; Christ's rule immutable and eternal.

[VI] (6)* "A Moonshee in India noticed that David, though himself a prophet and king, spoke here of another as his Lord. He was anxious to know who was meant He afterwards read in Isaiah of One who suffered on account of our sins. He was anxious to know who was meant by this description. When some time after he read the creed of the Christian Church-'Crucified, dead, and buried; the third day He rose from the dead, ascended into heaven, sitteth at the right hand of God,' it flashed across his mind that Jesus is He of whom David speaks in the '110th Psalm.'" -Quoted in RICHTER'S Haurbibel. (Psalms 110:1-7.)

[VII] (7)*Ephesians 1:20: "When He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places." And again, 1 Corinthians 15:27 "For He hath put all things under His feet"

05 Jesus The Son of man For The Suffering of Death

CHAPTER V.

JESUS, THE SON OF MAN, MADE LOWER THAN THE ANGELS, FOR THE SUFFERING OF DEATH.

Hebrews 2:5-10. THE apostle now enters into the holy of holies. He approaches the great subject of the epistle-Jesus Christ exalted through sufferings, by death, even by His own blood, entering as a great High Priest into the heavenly sanctuary. He has reminded us already that Jesus as the Son of God hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than the angels. He now wishes to show us what humiliation and sufferings He endured upon earth, and that these did not merely not interfere with His glory, but are the meritorious cause of his exaltation.

"Unto whom hath God put in subjection the world to come of which we speak?" The world to come was a topic of instruction and conversation among all God-fearing Jews; and when they came to believe in Jesus, their attention was still more directed to the fulfillment of prophecy, and their affections more deeply interested in that future of which all the prophets had testified. Jesus Himself had spoken of the re-generation of the world, when the twelve apostles should "sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." The world to come evidently does not mean heaven, because heaven is a present kingdom, in which the glory of God is manifested, and in which the worship of the angelic and the beatified hosts continually ascends to the throne of God. It is evident from Psalm viii., in which the world to come is described, that it has reference to earth and to the future dominion of Messiah, the Son of man. The world to come does not mean the gospel dispensation; for that began with the preaching of Jesus and the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. But this world to come is something future, to which all the apostles were looking; for Peter testifies, "We look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness ;" and again, that the heavens must receive Jesus "until the times of the restitution of all things." The world to come, according to the opinion of the ancient synagogue, means the renovated earth under the reign of the Messiah; it means the time predicted in the prophets, when the kingdom shall be given to the Son of David, and Israel shall dwell in their own land in peace and righteousness, and all the heathen nations shall walk before Him and worship the God of Jacob; when abundance of food and raiment shall be for all the poor and needy; when oppression shall cease on the earth, and the voice of cruelty shall no longer be heard ; when even the outward creation shall manifest the presence of the peace of God and of the blessing of the Most High; when from the river even unto the great sea the King shall reign; when war shall be learnt no more by the nations; when the will of God shall be done upon earth as it is done in heaven. This world to come, which is so fully described in the prophets, must be under subjection, under the government, and under the rule of some one. It has not been put in subjection unto the angels; but, as the word of God teaches us continually, it has been put in subjection under the Messiah, the Son of David, the Son of God. He it is who is to be the beloved of God, to reign upon earth, fulfilling the whole counsel of God; in whom all the promises given unto the fathers were to

be "yea and Amen."

Now the testimony of one concerning this reign upon earth in the world to come is given in Psalm viii., and in speaking of it the apostle does not say "David said;" for, as we have already noticed, all his quotations in this epistle are given in this impersonal way, and reference is immediately made to the source of all Scripture, even the Lord God Himself. Although it is very instructive for us to know what David saw, and what Isaiah thought and felt, and in what peculiar circumstances they were placed historically when the predictions were given to them, yet it is important for us to see the higher truth, that these men were the medium and channel of a higher revelation which they themselves did not fully understand. The apostle Paul reminds us that these things happened and were written for our instruction. The apostle Peter reminds us that the prophets enquired diligently into the things they were enabled to write, and that they described them not for themselves, but for us, to whom the gospel is now preached in clear fullness. Scripture is thus 'Spirit-breathed and eternal; and it is for us to enter in faith and reverence, and meditate on the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of the counsel of God. How marvelous, when we remember that David and Isaiah did not understand fully what through their inspired lips was uttered! How wonderful when we think of it, that all the great periods of the church, from the first to the second coming of Jesus, were to a very large extent hidden from them, so that they saw the first coming in suffering and the second in glory, as if they were two continuous events scarcely separated by any interval, and that they beheld at Messiah's coming, Israel on the restored earth in peace and blessedness. And the Gospels, and Acts of the Apostles, and the Revelation, fill up that great and wonderful interval, during which Christ gathers from Jews and Gentiles a body for Himself. And, notwithstanding this great distinction between the prophetic and apostolic writings, there is such a harmony of truth and of sentiment, such a oneness of spirit, such an inter-penetration of the two portions of Scripture, that, wherever we go in this grand and spacious temple of God's word, we see the one central idea and the one pervading thought; we feel that the Builder is the Lord of ages, who was, and is, and is to come. What is it that we see? The glory of God Himself. In the morning of the world's history, in the early dawn all was mysterious, dark, and dim. The truth was only given in a fragmentary manner, yet the manifestation of the glory was continually assuming more distinct features. Glimpses are given unto us of a wonderful human countenance, like the son of Abraham, Isaac, suffering in meekness; like Joseph, entering through humiliation unto glory; like David, ruling in lowliness, beloved, though persecuted. We behold a heavenly, divine One, appearing as the Messenger of the covenant; the Angel, in whom is the Name, the Rock that followed them in the wilderness; the Captain of the host of Israel; the Son of David; until in the gospel of Matthew we see the glory of God "in the face of Jesus Christ"-the same countenance and the same character; all these various luminous streaks breaking through the darkness; all these various and occasional approximative manifestations; all these beams of light, if I may so speak, condensing themselves at His appearing, and showing themselves at last in perfect distinctness and brightness; so that what many prophets and kings desired to see and to look into is, in God's great condescension, come unto us. We behold unveiled, what they beheld afar off.

If such is the unity of Scripture, it is a very important subject to dwell upon. We can easily understand the difficulties which outsiders find in perceiving how thoroughly convinced we are of the truth of Scripture; how no shadow ever crosses our minds about the divine authority of the word of God; how the objections and discrepancies which science and criticism bring forward,

and the difficulties in the interpretation of the word of God do not affect our faith; how we have an inward perception and conviction of the inspiration by beholding the perfect unity of the Scriptures, from Genesis to Revelation. "One"-whether David, or Zechariah, or King Solomon-one in a certain place "testifies." He is a witness to what God has revealed.

Now, what is the testimony of Psalms 8:1-9? Look at the psalm. What does it mean? David praises the goodness of God, and the condescension of God to man. The name of God is known all over the earth; the glory of God is high above the heavens. He who has made the heavens, and the moon, and the stars, condescends to frail and feeble man, and to the son of man. He is mindful of him, only placed a little below the angels, but crowned with glory and honor. He has given him power over all things in the world, over the beasts, and over the cattle, and over the fowls of the air. This psalm is evidently responsive to the original investiture, of man with power when first created by God. God created him in His image, and appointed him to be the ruler upon earth. But does this explain the psalm? Let us look candidly, and say if this key is sufficient to open it. God's name is not now known over the whole earth; and this man, of whom the psalmist speaks as ruler, is it Adam? It cannot be Adam, because he does not speak of man, but the "son of man." He speaks evidently of the descendants of Adam. "Out of the mouth of babes and suckling's thou hast perfected praise." Is it fallen man? True, he is lower than the angels, inasmuch as he inhabits a mortal body, and is limited and finite in many ways. But where is his power over creation? As it says in the epistle to the Hebrews, "We do not see all things yet put under him." But the apostle gives to us the key, that the psalmist speaks of the world to come, and of Jesus the Son of man; and when we think that this psalm is written by the Holy Ghost, and when we take in connection all the passages referring to it in the word of God, we shall understand that this is one of the most comprehensive and far-reaching predictions that the word of God contains. *[I]

God created man to be the ruler of the earth; he was to be the representative of God and king here below. All things were to be subject to him. This is the very idea of a king, as we find in the book of Daniel. "Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold." (Daniel 2:37-38.) The idea of kingship is that it is not an authority entrusted to man by man. It does not come from below. It is a power and sovereignty given by the supreme Lord of heaven and earth Himself. And the kingship of Nebuchadnezzar, as it comes from God direct, so it involves everything upon earth. Not merely are all peoples and nations and languages to render allegiance to him, but the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air, which move on and over his territory, are also subject to him. He is invested with power by God Himself, and over all things is his dominion. Now this kingship which Adam lost by his sin is to be given unto one who is called the "Son of man." Jesus our Lord evidently referred to this passage also, when He called Himself the Son of man. It is in this expression that the passages in Daniel are rooted. "From henceforth ye shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven." He is called the Son of man because He is the sum and substance of the human race, the representative and restorer of humanity-the man Christ Jesus. He is the second Adam; in Him there is a new commencement of humanity given unto us. He is the Son of man not merely in that He is a partaker of flesh and blood, and that, born of a woman and appearing in the likeness of sinful flesh, He has become one with our race; but because it is given to Him to be the head of the new humanity: He is to be Lord

and Ruler, the King of the earth. This Son of man, made a little lower than the angels, is to be the King; and through Him the knowledge, love and life of God shall be brought to the ends of the earth. All people that on earth do dwell, all people to the furthest islands of the sea, shall know and worship the God of Israel. God's name shall be excellent on the earth while He has exalted His glory above the heavens; that is, the whole earth shall see the manifestation of grace in the church which is to the praise and glory of His name; the manifestation of salvation-glory, which is above all angels and all things belonging to the first creation.

"Out of the mouth of babes and suckling's thou hast perfected praise." This was fulfilled at the time when the children sang "Hosanna" to the Lord; it is a symbol and it is fulfilled now continually when out of the mouth of babes are declared the mysteries the Father reveals to them (Matthew 11:1-30); and it shall be fulfilled when it shall be found that by the foolishness, and weakness, and nothingness of believers, God brings to naught the wisdom of the wise, and the power and glory of the world. But this Son of man whom God chose for Himself was made a little lower than the angels that He might taste death; for through this death was He to enter into the glory and honor with which the Father decreed to crown Him for His obedience and humiliation.

Let us consider what it is that the Son of man, humbling Himself for us, has endured. There are two expressions used-to suffer death, and to taste death. Let us remember that between Jesus, as He was in Himself, and death there subsisted no connection. He was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary. He was without sin, without spot and blemish. He had never transgressed the law. In Him Satan could find nothing. Death had no personal or direct relation to Him. Do we look upon death as being the punishment of the transgression of the law? Christ fulfilled all righteousness. The Lord Jesus Christ, as far as His humanity was concerned, was free from the power of death. No power could kill the Lord Jesus Christ. "No man taketh my life from me; but I lay it down of myself." The Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of Life, of His own power and will, laid down His life. The death of the Lord Jesus Christ in this respect is different from the death of any human being; it was the free, voluntary, spontaneous act and energy of His will. When the Lord Jesus Christ died He put forth a great energy. He willed to die. And so in one sense we may say that His death was a great manifestation of His power.

Let us consider that the Lord tasted death. A man may die in a moment, and then he does not taste death. John the Baptist was beheaded; it was in the twinkling of an eye that the severance took place between body and spirit. Men may die in a moment of excitement, and, as extremes meet, almost in unconsciousness, or with calmness and intrepidity, with lion-like courage, as many a warrior; but that is not tasting death. The death of our Lord Jesus Christ was a slow and painful death; He was "roasted with fire," as was prefigured by the Paschal Lamb. But it was not merely that it lasted a considerable time, that it was attended with agony of mind as well as pain of body; but that He came, as no other finite creature can come, into contact with death. He tasted death; all that was in death was concentrated in that cup which the Lord Jesus Christ emptied on the cross. During His lifetime He felt a burden, sorrow, grief ; He saw the sins and sorrows of the people; He had compassion, and wept. In the garden of Gethsemane He realized what was the cup which He would have to drink upon Golgotha. He was in great agony, not in-stead of us, but because He shrank from that impending substitution on the accursed tree. There is no substitution and expiation in the garden-the anticipation of the substitution was the cause of His agony; but on the cross He paid the penalty for the sins of men in His own death. But what was it that He tasted

in death? Death is the curse which sin brings, the penalty of the broken law, the manifestation of the power of the devil, the expression of the wrath of God; and in all these aspects the Lord Jesus Christ came into contact with death, and tasted it to the very last. He tasted it as the consequence of sin, though He knew no sin in Himself personally; but He, as the perfect, pure, and spotless Son of God, and Son of man, had an infinite appreciation of the evil of sin in its loathsomeness, in its cruelty, in its apostasy from God, in its contrariety to the will of the Holy One. He saw the true nature of sin Godwards and manwards; upwards to the throne of holiness, and downwards to the bottom-less abyss; in its depths, and in its everlasting consequences, did He perceive it. We do not see the real consequences of sin, not knowing the exceeding sinfulness of sin. We find it difficult to realize that such awful infinite results should come from it; but He saw sin in all its mystery, in all its reality.

Death is the penalty of the transgression of God's law. He had magnified the law and fulfilled the law all the time that He was upon earth. In His heart the law was written as upon the tables in the ark of the covenant. He delighted in the will of God, not as something external to Him, but as something that lived within Him, the music and rhythm of His soul. He saw death as the result of the transgression of the law, and the curse and punishment of the law. He was made under the law, and now He was made a curse for us.

Satan has the power of death. Jesus says, "This is your hour and the power of darkness;" and it was Satan, the prince and the power of darkness, whom Jesus vanquished upon the cross. He came into contact with the prince and the power of darkness, whose right it was to insist upon the hand-writing of ordinances, which is against the transgressors, and who can fix the sting of death by applying it with the strength of law. (1 Corinthians 15:56.) And last of all, and most fearful of all, it was the expression of the wrath of God. The just displeasure and indignation of God against sin makes itself felt in death. Death is being forsaken of God; it is the expression of the withdrawal of God's favor and strength. Death is to be left without God. The Lord Jesus Christ came into contact with death as the wrath of God. He tasted death with full and perfect consciousness. Therefore He said, at the end of the three mysterious hours during which the Sun lost his light,*[II] "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" With fullness of faith He continued clinging to God; for in all this He acknowledged the truth, the righteousness, and the faithfulness of God, and called Him "my God." Thus did He taste death. Thus did He who was life itself come into contact with death; thus did He who was holiness itself come into contact with sin; and thus His love to God and to man was sublimated, as it were, to the highest perfection. Thus He satisfied the holiness, justice, truth, and faithfulness of God; and thus He took away the sting of death as the penalty of sin and the strength of Satan.

Christ was made a curse for us; He was forsaken of God, and left alone with the power of darkness. But though He emptied the cup of wrath, though all the billows and waves of death went over Him, He continued to live, to trust, to love, to pray : He gained the victory in the lowest depth of His agony. His love was stronger than death, and in His death He brought life to all those whose sins He bore. He tasted death by the grace of God. It was the grace of God that gave Him up unto death. "It pleased the Lord to bruise Him." The ultimate reason of Christ's death is the love of God to Jesus and the children given to Him; its ultimate purpose, the manifestation of God to angels and to men. "That He, by the grace of God, should taste death for every one." Scripture throughout refers to the sacrifice of Jesus as the consequence of the love of God; and as the manifestation of

divine love "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself." It is only the enemy, the unbeliever, who represents the Scripture doctrine to be that the anger and the wrath of God the Father had to be appeased by Jesus, in whom there is greater clemency and mercy than in the Father. This is a false witness. It is the love of God that Jesus revealed; nay, it is God's love that Jesus died for the guilty. Christ did not die in order that God might love the world; but it was because God loved the world that Jesus died. Through Christ crucified we behold God as Father. But what love would it be if Christ's death was only an example? What if there had been no necessity for that unspeakable gift-for that stupendous sacrifice? What if sin could be forgiven without the character of God being vindicated? without the manifestation of His justice, truth, and holiness? if the law could have been set aside, and its penalty and condemnation passed over? if the favor of God could rest immediately on the sinner who recognizes the love of God, and the real obstacles between God and the transgressor remain as they were, untouched, unremoved? And these objective obstacles are the hatred of God against sin, the wrath of God against evil-wrath as a necessary and essential manifestation of love, which is in perfect holiness and justice-the condemnation of God's law, which is holy, just, and good, the power of death, and Satan, the prince of darkness. The subjective obstacles (in man) are not less real-his hardness, hatred against God, and death in trespasses and sins. If Jesus died only as a martyr and example, or as manifesting the love of God, who was willing to receive repentant sinners, we can-not understand the reason of agony and sacrifice so awful and of miracle so transcendent as the incarnation. Nor would such a death bring us nigh unto God. There would still be the in-finite distance between God and the conscience; and the mountains of our guilt, the condemnation and curse of the law, and the righteous displeasure of God, would still separate between Him and us. Christ would be no mediator; for He would, on this supposition, never have entered into our real position, difficulty, and death. The lost sheep would still be in the wilderness, and the Good Shepherd would have only shown His willingness to rescue it, His compassion, self denial, love, but would not actually have found and saved it. Only when we believe the Scripture testimony, that He laid down His life for and instead of us-that He became sin and a curse in our stead-that His blood was shed as a ransom for the remission of our sins-only then do we see that in Jesus we have the love, favor, and blessing of God, that in Him we have redemption, and are brought nigh to the Father. And notice, He tasted death by the grace of God for every one. We speak about the pardon of sins. We are pardoned; but all our sins have been punished. God forgives us, but our sins He never forgives, never pardons, in the sense of remitting their punishment. All our sins were laid upon Jesus, every one was punished. "God condemned sin in the flesh." He executed judgment upon all our sins, for every one of us, for all the children of God. For each of them Jesus tasted death. Here there is not merely the forgiveness of sin, but there is the actual putting away of all our sins; and the apostle explains to us that this great and marvelous mystery of the death of Jesus as our Substitute, bearing our sins, bearing our curse, enduring the penalty of our sins, and overcoming all our enemies (that is the law, and Satan, and death), that this is in order to manifest unto us the fullness of the perfection of God.

"For it became Him, of whom are all things, and by whom are all things, to make the Captain of our salvation perfect through sufferings." What a marvelous declaration! "It became Him." It is in accordance with the divine perfections. All divine attributes are harmonized here-His wisdom and His mercy, His justice and His holiness, His power and His truth. "It became Him because of His love, it became His justice, it became His wisdom that thus, it should be. There was in it no triumph

of one attribute over an other, no prodigality which infinite wisdom could reprove, no facility which infinite holiness could challenge; there was a common rejoicing of all God's attributes in their common and harmonious exercise." God's attributes (we speak humanly and with great imperfection) are all simultaneous. They all move together, because they are all-perfect and all-glorious. In His mercy He must be righteous, in His justice merciful; in His wisdom there is strength, in His power patience.

Everything that is in God is beautiful and perfect. "Of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things;" and that in which He has concentrated the revelation of Himself must become Him. The more we look upon Jesus as our Redeemer, and contemplate the atonement upon the cross, the more do our thoughts expand, and the more do we see the image and glory of the Most High; the more do we dread sin, the more do we enter into the knowledge of God and into fellowship with Him. Who brings out the perfection of God but the Lamb slain? Well then may it be said, "It became Him to make the Captain of our salvation perfect through sufferings."

If I may so say, God is never so Godlike as when He reveals Himself in Jesus crucified for sins. Oh, how did the Jews shrink from the mystery of the Crucified One! How did every thought in them rebel against the idea of their King being hanged upon the tree! How hard it is for them to believe that the Messiah was the Crucified One! They turn away from the cross of Jesus and rest, in what they believe a spiritual faith, in the one incomprehensible, invisible, glorious God. They forget that throughout the Old Testament times God revealed His glory, and that the promise is the appearing of the glory, the manifestation of Jehovah. They do not understand the mystery-God revealed and glorified in the death of His Son. It became Him, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. He brings many children to glory. We use the word glory often in a superficial and thoughtless way. What is glory? What glory do we possess? Are our bodies glorious? Soon they will be in the grave, the food of worms. Are our minds glorious? We may, in a moment, lose the light of reason, and forget all the information we have acquired, and be unable to think connectedly. Are our hearts glorious? They are polluted with sin. Are our souls glorious? We have no strength or life in ourselves. Then what is the glory? What glory is ours? What do you expect when you are laid in the grave? You remember that Jesus said to Martha at the grave of Lazarus, when the signs of corruption were so evident and repulsive, "Only believe, and thou shalt see the glory of God." Ah! God's glory. Not the glory of Lazarus. Not our glory, but His own glory. "We rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Now see how easy it is to believe that there is no other righteousness but God's righteousness. A mortal, sinful, and weak creature, I expect glory, though my body is laid in the grave, and mind and heart fail me. The glory I hope for is Christ's-to be glorified together with Him. It is divine glory. We rejoice in hope of the glory of God. What righteousness have I? I have no righteousness but Christ's righteousness. Just as God will give me His glory, so He hath given me His righteousness; not the righteousness which is by the works of the law, the fruit of my own endeavors, not partly mine, and partly the result of looking to the Lord Jesus Christ. The sinner is guilty, lost, and imperfect; but, clothed in the righteousness which is from above-God's righteousness-he is perfect, glorious, beautiful. Then I understand what the apostle Paul says-"Whom He justified, them He also glorified." If He has given me Jesus as my righteousness, then He has also given me Jesus as my glory. It is His purpose to bring many children unto glory, and it was necessary to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. The apostle touches here only briefly on what forms one of the

chief themes of the epistle to the Hebrews-the connection between Christ's sufferings and glory.

Without entering now on this truth, I conclude with this remark: Most of us last Lord's-day commemorated the dying love of Jesus. The Lord's Supper is the connecting link between the first and second coming of Christ. Looking back we see the finished work of Jesus, the sacrifice which He has made; by which one sacrifice, once for all, He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. By faith we are sanctified, separated unto God; our sins are forgiven, our righteousness is divine, we are complete in Christ. Looking forward, we expect the world to come; we show the death of the Lord till He come. That same Jesus whom now, in His personal absence, though we see Him not, we love and trust, in whom we rejoice, and who is specially with us while we commemorate His dying love, shall return to take the kingdom and the power. Now during the interval we live by and on what Jesus has done for us when He died upon the cross. We are always celebrating the Lord's Supper. And this is His wondrous love, that day by day He gives us His body to eat, which is meat indeed, and His blood, which is drink indeed. This is outwardly expressed at the Lord's table. The daily, hourly, secret but most real life of the Christian, which is nothing else but eating Christ and living by Him, even by Him who gave His body and shed His blood for us; this is manifested to ourselves, the Church, and the world, by the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, in which the union between Christ and the believer is renewed, confirmed, and sealed. The spiritual Lord's Supper is for every day and all the day; for this is our life, to feed on Jesus, who died for us. This is the glorious consequence of His death-"I am He that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore." And this is, if I may so speak, His blessed occupation now-to feed and strengthen the children until He shall come again in glory. He continually renews and imparts to us that love which died for us upon the cross.

Oh, that we may know what it is to be justified and what it is to be glorified! that we may be clothed with God's righteousness now, and that we may be glorified together with Christ at His coming! Let us take the cup of salvation, behold Christ crucified, but now exalted, our righteousness and glory. Amen.

[I] * Luther : " This psalm speaks entirely of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory which He obtained through suffering, as Hebrews 2:9 clearly testifies." It is quoted as referring to Christ: (1) Matthew 21:16; (2) 1 Corinthians 15:27; (3) Ephesians 1:20-22; (4) Hebrews 2:1-18. Luther has beautiful remarks on the spiritual teaching and consolation of the glory and honour of Christ. (Isaiah 53:1-12; Isaiah 61:1-11; Psalms 45:1-17) The designation "Son of man " is given, with the exception of Ezekiel, to none but Messiah. In Daniel 7:13 the expression is Ben-Enosh, which brings before us more vividly that He who was crucified through weakness is now exalted and glorified. In this psalm Ben-Adam is more appropriate-" the Adam above," "the Adam on high, who has dominion over all things," an expression occurring in the Talmudic writings and the Zohar. Compare also Romans 5:1-21 and 1 Corinthians 15:1-58.

[II] * "These were three mysterious hours. The time of this desertion corresponds with the 4th verse of Psalms 8:1-9, in which the Sun is not mentioned (Matthew 27:45)."-BENGEL, Gnomon.

06 Jesus In All Things like unto His Brethren

CHAPTER VI.

JESUS, IN ALL THINGS LIKE UNTO HIS BRETHREN-THROUGH SUFFERINGS AND DEATH OUR HIGH PRIEST.

Hebrews 2:11-18.

JESUS CHRIST as the Son of God, and according to that glory into which in His humanity He has entered through His sufferings and death, is high above the angels. It was necessary for Him to pass through sufferings and through death; it was in accordance with the divine plan, and in harmony with all the divine attributes and perfections. Through His sufferings and death He glorified the Father. He put away sin; He abolished death; He destroyed the power of the devil; and for Himself, and for all those who are His, 'He has obtained that high position in which, as the 8th Psalm testifies, all things are put under His feet; and not merely this, but He Himself has become a merciful and faithful High Priest, able to succor us who are tempted, and to sympathize with us in all our sorrow and in all our trial.

Now, the first truth which is brought before us in the verses which we have read is that Jesus, who is not ashamed to call Himself brother, and us His brethren, is one with us. We who are sanctified by Him, and He who sanctifies, are of one. Christ is He who sanctifies. The source and power of sanctification are in Jesus the Son of God, our Saviour. We who were to be brought into glory were far from God, in a state of condemnation and death. What can be more different than our natural condition and the glory of God which we are awaiting? Condemned on account of our transgression of the law, we lived in sin, alienated from God, and without His presence of light and love. We were dead; and by dead I do not mean that modern fancy which explains death to mean cessation of existence, but that continuous, active, self-developing state of misery and corruption into which the sinner has fallen by his disobedience. Dead in trespasses and sins, wherein we walked; dead while living in pleasing self. (Ephesians 2:1-2; 1 Timothy 5:6.) What can be more opposed to glory than the state in which we are by nature? And if we are to be brought into glory, it is evident we must be brought into holiness; we must be delivered and separated from guilt, pollution, and death, and brought into the presence of God-in which is favor, light, and life-that His life may descend into our souls, and that we may become partakers of the divine nature.

Christ is our sanctification. "By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." By the offering up of His body as the sacrifice for sin He has sanctified all that put their trust in Him. To sanctify is to separate unto God; to separate for a holy use. We which were far off are brought nigh by the blood of Christ. And although our election is of God the Father (who is thus the author of our sanctification, Jude 1:1-3), and the cleansing and purification of the heart is generally attributed to the Holy Ghost (Titus 3:4-5) ; yet as it is in Christ that we were chosen, and from Christ that we receive the Spirit, and as it is by the constant application of Christ's work and the constant communication of His life that we live and grow, Christ is our sanctification.

We are sanctified through faith that is in Him. (Acts 26:18.) By His offering of Himself He has brought us into the presence of God. By the Word, by God's truth, by the indwelling Spirit, He continually sanctifies His believers. He gave Himself for the Church, "that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word." (Ephesians 5:26.) "Sanctify them through thy truth." (John 17:17; John 15:3.) Through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 1:2.)

Christ 'Himself is the foundation, source, method and channel of our sanctification. We are exhorted to put off the old man and to put on the new man day by day, to mortify our members which are upon earth. But in what other way or method can we obey the apostolic exhortations, but by our continually beholding Christ's perfect sacrifice for sin as our sufficient atonement? In what other way are we sanctified day by day, but by taking hold of the salvation which is by Him, "the Lamb that was slain"? Jesus is He that sanctifieth. The Holy Ghost, the Comforter, is sent by Christ to glorify Him, and to reveal and appropriate to us His salvation. We are conformed to the image of Christ by the Spirit as coming from Christ in His glorified humanity.

"He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one;" namely, of God the Father. And here we are reminded of the teaching of Scripture that all things are of the Father, and to His glory. Christ is the vine, we are the branches; but the Father is the husbandman. Christ is the bridegroom, and we are the church, the bride; but it is the Father who is the King, which made a marriage for His Son. Christ is the Head ; we are the members ; but as we are Christ's so Christ is God's. "The head of Christ is God." (1 Corinthians 11:3.) "He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one." Christ is of the Father; we are of the Father. As the Lord Jesus Christ Himself says, "Thine they were, and thou gavest them me;" and as in the epistles of John, we are taught that we are of God, and the seed of God abideth in us. What a wonderful brotherhood is this, rooted in the mysterious election of eternal love! Christ, the only begotten of the Father, and we who by nature are children of wrath and disobedience, are eternally and indissolubly united with Him. Therefore He is not ashamed to call us brethren. As it is said also in the 22nd Psalm 22:1-31, in which the sufferings of Jesus upon the cross and His exaltation are described: "I will declare thy name unto my brethren : in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee." Notice how literally that was fulfilled; for it was immediately after His resurrection, and in reference to this Psalm, that Jesus said, "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God." The risen Saviour, as the first-born among many brethren, hastens to declare the name Father unto His disciples, and to assure them, that He who sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are both of one.

Christians, if Jesus is our brother; if Jesus and we are both of one; if Jesus says, "I will sing thy praise in the midst of the congregation;" if He is the leader of our prayers and praises before the throne of God, then we may approach the Father without fear and without doubt! Christ's peace is our peace, and our worship is the worship of perfect acceptance, of perfect trust and love in union with the Head of the Church, Jesus crowned with glory after His sufferings. Thus do we praise and pray in the name of Christ; thus does Christ Himself praise and pray in the midst of the congregation. Where is doubt now? For is Jesus in doubt of His acceptance with the Father? Is not His atonement upon Golgotha most glorious in the sight of God? It is Jesus who is our representative and spokesman. As on that night on which He was betrayed He sang the hallelujah with His disciples, so now He presents to the Father our sacrifice of thanksgiving, our adoration,

our petitions, and the Father hears the voice of Jesus in the voice of the church. The apostle illustrates the relationship which subsists between the Lord Jesus and His people by another typical prediction. The prophet Isaiah is not merely an eminent evangelist of the Old Testament, but his position in the important crisis of Jewish history is typical. The judgment which was then threatening Israel, the judicial blindness and hardness of heart which fell upon the great majority of the nation, was a type of that culminating sin and obstinate rejection of Jehovah which is described in touching and solemn words in Matthew 13:13-15; John 12:37-41, and Acts 28:25-27. But Jehovah promises protection and grace to those who trust in Him. The prophet by faith has his refuge in God, and looks with confidence to the future. He and the children whom God has given unto him are types of the Redeemer and His people. The children of the prophet are signs and wonders. The application of this typical prediction by the apostle to Christ and His people is bold, but beautiful, and in harmony with the whole spirit and scope of the prophecy. The Lord Jesus all the time He was on earth exercised faith in the living Father. Even His enemies bore witness at the crucifixion, "He trusted in God." All His lifetime He was one of those peculiar people who, instead of being guided by what is called "common sense," instead of being influenced by public opinion, prudence, and the power of the world, was always beholding Him who is invisible; was always walking with God and doing His will. "I am not alone; because the Father is with me." He was continually leaning upon the Father. Thus we understand these two quotations: "I will trust in Him," and "Behold I and the children whom thou hast given me." Christ is represented as Brother and as the everlasting Father. The promise was given to the Messiah:—"He shall see His seed. Who shall declare His generation?" Christ who sanctifies and we who are sanctified are both of one—the Lord Jesus, who is not ashamed to call us brethren, who hastened to declare to us the Father's name after His resurrection, who during His lifetime exercised to the fullest extent faith in God, at the last shall acknowledge us as the children given to Him of the Father. Brotherhood is now the relationship subsisting between Him and us, a relationship which can never be altered. We may lose friendship; but brotherhood is fixed and unchangeable. Thus our Lord Jesus and we are rooted and united in God the Father.

Christ is the Elect of God, and we are chosen of the Father in Christ Jesus. In Him we are predestinated unto the adoption of children. Of God are we in Christ; and of God Christ is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. God the Father gave us to Jesus, even as the Father gave Jesus to us. And because Jesus and the Father are one, the union between the Lord Jesus, given unto us by the Father and the children, given unto Jesus by the Father, can never be broken. The Son of God being appointed to be the Captain of our salvation, it was necessary that He should become partaker of flesh and blood. "Inasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same." What is the meaning of "flesh and blood"? The human race, in its creature dependence and weakness, is described in Scripture by "flesh." "O Thou that hearest prayer, unto Thee shall all flesh come." Christ said in His prayer, "As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh." "Flesh and blood" describe us in our present earthly condition. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." A change must take place to fit us for the heavenly region. The flesh and blood which the Lord Jesus Christ took shows that He became truly and really man. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." This seems a wonderful contrast. The Word, eternal, all perfect, all glorious, the Son of the Most High, who was with God from the beginning, and was God, He became flesh, He was born of the Virgin Mary. "The flesh" shows the weakness of which the Lord Jesus Christ

became partaker. It is written that He was crucified through weakness; that He came in the likeness of sinful flesh. When people saw Him, they did not notice in His outward appearance anything superhuman, glorious, free from earthly weakness and dependence. He did not come in splendor and power. He did not come in the brightness and strength which Adam possessed before he fell. "In all things He became like unto us." In everything; in His body, for He was hungry and thirsty; overcome with fatigue, He slept. In His mind, for it developed. He had to be taught; He grew in wisdom concerning the things around Him; He increased, not merely in stature, but in mental and moral strength. In His affections, He loved. He loved the young man who came unto Him, and was not willing to give up his riches. He loved Lazarus, Mary, and Martha-the disciple who leaned on His bosom. He was astonished; He marveled at men's unbelief, and said to the Syro-Phoenician woman, "O woman, great is thy faith." Sometimes He was glad, and "rejoiced in spirit;" sometimes angry and indignant, as when He saw the hypocrisy of the Jews, who accused Him of having broken the Sabbath. Zeal, like fire, burned within Him; "The zeal for the house of God consumed me ;" and He showed a vehement fervor in protecting the sanctity of God's temple. He was grieved; He trembled with emotion; his soul was straitened in Him. Some times He was overcome by the waves of feelings when He beheld the future that was before Him. In all things He was made like unto us. Do not think of Him as merely appearing a man, or as being a man only in His body, but as man in body soul, and spirit. He exercised faith; He read the Scriptures for His own guidance and encouragement; He prayed the whole night, especially when He had some great and important work to do, as before setting apart the apostles. He sighed when he saw the man who was dumb ; tears fell from His eyes when at the tomb of Lazarus He saw the power of death and of Satan. He wept over Jerusalem, as He foresaw the fearful results of their grievous sin. His supplications were with strong crying and tears; His soul was exceedingly sorrowful; He was sorely pressed, and He agonized in Gethsemane.

"He suffered being tempted." The temptation was a reality to Him. He felt most keenly and painfully the weight and the pressure of the test. His soul was full of love to Israel, and eager to gather children of Jerusalem. The broad road, easy and attractive to the flesh, would have led to immediate recognition and reception by Israel; the way of humility and obedience, of faith and suffering, was narrow to Jesus also. He felt hunger, reproach, hatred; Satan was permitted to test Christ's most sensitive heart, with the most penetrating and painful trial. When His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground, His soul was shrinking from the awful cup of Golgotha; and to strengthen Him in this most real, and to us unfathomable, conflict, an angel from heaven appeared unto Him. The world also was a temptation to Him. The spirit of the world was enmity 'against Him, and came into collision with Him every moment. His own brothers said, "Why do you not go up to the feast and shew yourself?" His own disciples said, "Far be it from thee to suffer, Lord." But He saw Satan in all this; and said, "Get thee behind me, Satan." Not for a single moment did He yield-erect He stood. But nevertheless, and by this very perfection of His victory, He felt every moment all the burden of the weight. If He had given in, that very moment the pressure would have been relieved. Because He remained without sin, He suffered being tempted. Jesus, as Messiah, felt the sorrow of love rejected, of instruction refused by the people to whom He came in mercy infinite; He felt keenly the pain of being called a blasphemer in His own beloved city. As the prophet describes it, He mourned and wept before God, that He had spent His strength and labor in vain. He felt that Satan could give unto Him the allegiance of the nations, if He would only yield to him on one point. The narrowness of the path He chose was a reality to Him. "He

suffered being tempted;" and His suffering was again a temptation to Him. "This," 'He said, "is your hour, and the power of darkness." In the garden of Gethsemane, and on the cross, He saw in His sufferings the power of Satan's temptation He felt the fearful strength of the adversary, endeavoring to make Him swerve from His loyalty to God. "He that sanctifieth, and they that are sanctified, are one." Mysterious brotherhood! "He became in all things like unto His brethren." "He suffered being tempted," and was tempted in all His sufferings.

Now we advance a step further. By death He took away the power of him who has the power of death, that is, Satan. We considered the expression, Christ tasted death,-that He did not merely die, as it were, in a moment of enthusiasm, as many a warrior has lost his life courageously. But, laying down His life, He came into contact with the whole sting of death; measured its length and breadth and intensity, the power of Satan, the wrath of God, the condemnation of the law. How clear it is from this passage what Jesus Christ suffered in death! But which death did He die? That death of which the devil has the power. Satan wielded that death. He it was who had a just claim against us that we should die. There is justice in the claim of Satan.*[!] He stands upon the justice of God; upon the inflexibility of the law; upon the true nature of our sin. But when Christ died our very death, when He was made sin and a curse for us, then all the power of Satan was gone. It was of the grace of God that He tasted death for every one. This is often set before us in Scripture, lest we should imagine that the Lord Jesus loved us more than the Father loves us, or that the Father did not love Him with the most intense love at the very moment He hid His face from Him as our Substitute. In the expiatory death of Jesus all the attributes of God are in sweetest harmony; but grace shines brightest through all. "By the grace of God He tasted death." And now what can Satan say? The justice, majesty, and perfection of the law are vindicated, more than if all the human race were lost for ever. In the sufferings of Christ there was not merely punishment endured, but there was faith and love; the highest and deepest obedience; the law was magnified. There was a burnt offering in this sin-offering. The penalty due to the broken laws Jesus endured, and now, as the law is vindicated, sin put away, death swallowed up, Christ has destroyed the devil. In connection with this word, I must refer to the extraordinary delusion of supposing that "destroy" means to annihilate. Christ did not annihilate the devil; Satan still exists, and will exist for ever and ever. But the Lord has taken his power from him: He "bruised his head." Satan, we are taught here, has the power of death, even as Satan introduced sin into the world. While we are without Christ we are under the power of darkness (Colossians 1:13); we walk according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. (Ephesians 2:3.) But when we come to believe, by Jesus we are delivered from the power of Satan, and brought into the liberty of the children of God. (Acts 26:18.) Only through the death of our Lord Jesus Christ upon the cross can men be delivered from Satan. As we are delivered from the dominion of Satan, who has the power of death, we are also delivered from the fear of death. And this is to some extent the special privilege of believers living in the new covenant. Now, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, we may serve God without fear. The children of God in the old dispensation had faith in God and the Messiah, and lived in the Hope of everlasting blessedness. They enjoyed the peace of God, yet it was natural they should be `afraid of the darkness and gloom of the grave; and many passages in the Psalms and prophets, referring to the realm of death before the advent .of Messiah, appear sad and mournful. This is natural; but when Messiah comes, they expected God would put all things under Him: joy will come in the morning, and Israel will then see the salvation of God. But the intermediate period was to them a time of

great darkness. But how different is it now that the true light shineth. Jesus has abolished death. He has the keys of death and of hades. In His resurrection we have obtained the victory. The Christian can look death in the face, and say, "O death," and ask the question: "Where is thy sting?" We know that to depart and to be with Christ, to die, is gain. Absent from the body, present with the Lord. "Are you afraid of death?" said a friend to a German pastor. "Which death do you mean?" replied the dying man. "Jesus my Saviour saith, 'He that believeth in me hath eternal life. He that believeth in me shall not see death.' Why should I be afraid of what I shall not even see? The real death is past. Outward death, separation of body and soul, we have to endure, and God gives us grace and strength in this last trial; but the sting of death has been taken away." The apostle now states the result and fruit of the Lord's condescension and work. The Son of God became man; He took hold of the seed of Abraham; He became in all things like unto us, He was tempted, He suffered, He died, He saved us; and now, by virtue of His incarnation, obedience, sufferings-through all the experiences of His earthly life, and perfected in His death-Tie has become "a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." In no book of the New Testament is our Saviour called the High Priest, except in the epistle to the Hebrews; not even in the book of Revelation, where the heavenly sanctuary and its worship are disclosed to us. How precious is this epistle to us in revealing the whole rich cluster of truths and consolations which gather round this central word, High Priest. In the 110th Psalm it is said, "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek;" and in the prophet Zechariah, Messiah, the Branch; that is, Jehovah's servant, who shall build the temple, is called a priest upon the throne. But the full exposition of the fulfillment of Levitical type, and of the eternal Melchizedek priest hood of the Lord Jesus, we possess only in this profound and precious portion of Scripture.

Believe then that Jesus, by His experience, by His sufferings, and above all by His death, has become a merciful and faithful High Priest. We are now on earth, in the flesh, sin around, and alas, within us. How can the Holy God look on 'us, and grant us blessings? How can there be communion between heaven and earth? Jesus is ascended, and having put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, presents us to the Father; and we are holy and unblameable before Him; and Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are able to send down the fullness of blessings, of grace and strength; to have communion with us. Not withstanding all our sin and defilement. Christ is a merciful High Priest; not merely full of pity, compassion, and grace, but full of sympathy. He knows what is in man, He understands fully all our sorrows and is able to measure the strength of all our temptations. He is most lovingly and earnestly anxious that we should always obtain the victory and suffer no injury; for having gone through all the conflict Himself, without a single moment's wavering or surrender, He wishes us to be found continually in Him, and to conquer continually. He is faithful in bringing down to us all the gifts of God; all the counsel, will, and blessings of the Most High; faithful in taking up to God all our need and trial; all our petitions, fears, and tears; all our sufferings and all our works. What deep and infinite sympathy is in Jesus! And how much we should dwell upon it, and strengthen ourselves in the Lord. For He wishes to succor us; to take us by the hand when we are sad, weary, and exhausted ; to help and encourage us; to cheer and gladden us who are still in manifold temptations and sufferings. He is Immanuel, God with us, as the Man Christ Jesus. We are comforted and upheld when we remember the humanity of Jesus now enthroned in glory, even as He in His dealings with us remembers what He endured upon earth. And thus we can say to Him, "O Thou, who art not ashamed to call us brethren, who Thyself

didst suffer in being tempted, fulfill in us the good pleasure of Thy will, that in nothing we may yield to the adversary; however heavy our trials, however overwhelming our afflictions, and however painful our experiences in a world of sin and unbelief, O do Thou grant of Thine infinite faithfulness that through it all we may be kept looking unto Thee and following Thee, that we may always have peace and joy in Thee, and never waver in our childlike confidence in the Father!

Now, dear friends, what else can I say in conclusion but what the apostle says, "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." Think of Him; gaze steadfastly on the Lord Jesus. Consider; ponder. Let your mind be filled with Christ. Make not your sanctification the object of your contemplation, the theme of your meditation. What is it? Do you wish to ornament yourselves, and to come before God beautiful, or as a sinner? Do you wish to say from time to time, I have made great progress; I have advanced many steps in my heavenward journey; I have got into the higher Christian life, as people call it? Do you wish to come before God beautified? or do you wish to humble yourself, and ascribe glory unto the Lamb that was slain? . . . Where do we see Christ? Are we beholding the image of Christ reflected in our own hearts, in our own dispositions, states, and phases of faith? Then it will be reflected in troubled and muddy waters; and unstable and uncertain shall be the features which meet our eye there. Or shall we behold Jesus in the glory of His excellence, in the perfection of His holiness, in the beauty with which God has adorned Him? Are we not to look off unto Him in heaven, and to know that we are seated together in heavenly places, and complete in Him? Shall we say, "Oh, if I was only more holy, less selfish, more patient! If I could only see more of Jesus reflected in me!" Or shall we say, "Oh, if I could always behold the Man who died upon the cross! if I could always see Jesus, the Lamb of God that was slain! if I could always remember that I am bought with a price; and that He was wounded for my transgressions, and bruised for my iniquities!"*[II]

I will ask you still further, Why do you wish to be holy? Is it to depend ore on Christ, or to be less dependent on Christ? To think more of the sacrifice which Jesus made upon the cross, and to know and feel "Nothing in my hand I bring, Simply to Thy cross I cling!" Have you not detected it in yourself, that sometimes, when you have given way to temptation, fallen into sin you wished to avoid-when you have in the performance of duty stumbled over the same difficulty as before, that a feeling of distrust, disappointment, and despondency comes over you, a feeling of wounded pride and vanity, of impatience and irritation, and you say, "I am not making progress; it is really too bad; I am always falling into the same low state?" And then the lowest depth of self abasement and humiliation is to go to God and to find no change in Him; the same Fatherly love, the same High Priestly compassion and grace, the same Comforter, patient and gentle, and you discover, that in your best moments as well as in your worst, you depend exclusively and entirely on the grace of God, which saves the chief of sinners. In fact, you have only stood by grace through the blood shed for vile sinners. How much we need to avoid the snare of cultivating vanity and self-seeking even in our sanctification! How apt we are to make a Saviour of self! I am anxious and troubled about the unscriptural view of the Christian life, of which we hear. Look at it. What was it in the Church of Rome that for so many centuries made the cross of Christ of none effect? They did not wish to ignore or reject Christ's salvation, and to make Christ of none effect. Do not imagine that grievous errors and heresies began as it were in a bad and wicked purpose. How was it for centuries in the Church of Rome? Christ was put in the background, and the Reformers had

to dig very deep, and put away a great amount of rubbish that had accumulated-the gold and silver and precious stones lay buried among wood and hay and stubble-till at last they found that Christ in whom alone we must rejoice. Look at the theology of such a book as, for instance, Thomas a Kempis, in which there is much that is excellent, but which suffers from the radical error of not distinguishing Christ for us, and Christ in us. These good men began to be exclusively thinking of Christ in them. All their attention was centered in that aspect of truth. They said, "It is true, Christ died for us; but now we must go higher; and according as we realize Christ in us, we rest and have peace." It was by this well meant praising of Christ in us that they forgot Christ for us. They saw that a hypocritical and superficial trust in the merits of Christ was a dead thing, which brought forth no fruit, which gained no victory over sin and the world. They therefore were anxious to see life and power. But they did not perceive clearly that our only power, peace, and life are in Christ, who died for us, and in whom we have perfection. By looking to their love to Jesus, to their imitation of 'His perfect example, to their resemblance to His holy image, they never could have true, perfect peace. As a Christian never loses comfort but by breaking the order and method of the gospel, looking on his own and looking off Christ's perfect righteousness, so he that sets up his sanctification to look at, sets up the greatest idol, which will ultimately strengthen his fears and doubts, though at first it may soothe his feelings and please his imagination. The young Christian is especially apt to fall into error. After his first zeal and love, after the spring and dawn of his spiritual life, when he is full of praise and strength, when prayer is fervent, when joy and praise abound, when love to the Saviour is ardent, when work for Christ seems refreshment, there generally succeeds a period of languor and of darkness, when he is led into the experience, painful but salutary, that even after his renewal, the old man, the flesh, is enmity against the Spirit, and that our all-sufficiency is of God. Now it is for him to enter more deeply into the valley of humiliation, to see more clearly the need and the preciousness of the blood of Christ, to ascribe more cordially and with greater contrition all glory to the God of salvation. He is, however, tempted to choose the path of what appears progress, victory, strength, and beauty; whereas God's saints say-Christ must increase; I must decrease. Christ is comely; I am black. Christ is strength; I am weakness. In Christ is all good; in me, that is, my flesh, there is nothing good. The saints of God find, that instead of progressing from one degree of perfection to another, they discover in themselves daily more that sin which is exceeding sinful; they behold them selves vile, and cling with all intensity of faith to Jesus, who saith unto them, "My grace is sufficient for thee." They are saved by grace; they know Christ only as their righteousness and perfection; and even at the end of their earthly journey, of their labors and sufferings, they grasp "the faithful saying, worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief."

Rest in the Lord, and in Him alone. Consider the Apostle and great High Priest, Christ Jesus. Place your confidence and have your joy only in the Lamb slain. Call Jehovah, Jehovah-Tsidkenu. Day by day you are a burden to Jesus, and His grace alone upholds you, while you stand only in His perfection. You would not have it otherwise. And while you are looking off unto Him, you will run with patience the race set before you. You will fight the good, but real and painful, fight of faith; you will crucify daily the old man, who to our last breath is enmity against God; you will have no confidence in the flesh, but rejoice in Christ Jesus; and your life will be hid with Him in God. And at last Christ will present His children unblameable in body, soul, and spirit. Then shall we be like Him; then shall we have no more conflict, and no more sin. Faithful is He who hath promised, who also will perform it. Amen.

[I] *It is quite true that Satan is only a usurper; but in saving men God deals in perfect righteousness, justice, and truth. According to the Jewish tradition the fallen angels often accuse men, and complain before God that sinful men obtain mercy. Our redemption is in harmony with the principles of righteousness and equity, on which God has founded all things. The prince of the world is judged; he is conquered not merely by power, but by the power of justice and truth. That Messiah is to vanquish the angel of death was held by the Jews, according to Isaiah xv. 8: "When Satan saw Messiah he was afraid, and fell upon his face and said, He is the Messiah, who shall cast me and all nations into hell; as it is written, The Lord will swallow up death for ever."

[II] * Gossner, in Berlin, wrote a beautiful tract: *Mir ist's, air ob's Charfreitag war-I feel as if it was Good Friday*; in which he shows that the one thing we ought to desire and aim at is to behold constantly Christ crucified for us.

07 Christ The Lord, and Moses The Servant.

CHAPTER VII.

CHRIST THE LORD, AND MOSES THE SERVANT.

Hebrews 3:1-6

WE commence the second section of the epistle to the Hebrews. It extends from the beginning of the third chapter to the fourteenth verse of the fourth chapter. The contents of this section may be stated briefly thus : That the Lord Jesus Christ, the mediator of the new covenant, is high above Moses, the mediator of the old dispensation, inasmuch as Jesus is the Son of God, and Lord over the house; whereas Moses is the servant of God, who was faithful in the house. And upon this doctrinal statement is based the exhortation that we should not harden our hearts lest we fail to enter into that rest of which the possession of the Promised Land was only an imperfected type. This section consists of two parts—a doctrinal statement, which forms the basis, and an exhortation resting upon it. The doctrinal statement, contained in the first six verses of the third chapter, is the subject of our meditation this morning.

Before the apostle advances in the argument, and shows the glory of the great High Priest by contrasting Him with the glory of Moses, the mediator of the old covenant, he recapitulates in an exhortation the teaching of the preceding chapters, and he admonishes the "holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling," to be continually, perseveringly, and earnestly looking unto "the Apostle and High Priest for their profession, Christ Jesus." He does not say my brethren, because in this epistle he keeps himself in the background; and when he speaks of them as "brethren," he evidently refers to the blessed truth just announced, that Jesus, the Son of God, is not ashamed to call us brethren. He means therefore those who by the Spirit of God have been born again, and who can call God their Father. He addresses those who of God are in Christ Jesus, who were quickened together with Him; for when He rose from the dead He was "the first-born among many brethren." He calls them "holy brethren," because upon this fact of brotherhood is based their sanctification. "He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one." Set apart by the blood of Jesus unto the service and love of God, they are sanctified for ever by that one sacrifice which Jesus offered upon the cross. He reminds them of the "heavenly calling" which they have received now, and of which the earthly calling unto Canaan was only a type; "heavenly" because God the Father and Jesus the exalted High Priest are in heaven, and because the Holy Spirit who brought the glad tidings of salvation came down from the heavenly sanctuary to dwell among men ; "heavenly" because the end of their calling is, that as the many children of God they shall be brought unto glory; "heavenly" because while waiting upon earth their citizenship is in heaven, and the whole spirit, character, and aim which characterize them is not according to this world, but according to that sanctuary and city where is their hope.

It is therefore for us to "consider" or (as the very expressive word implies), to look carefully unto "the Apostle and High Priest of our profession." This is the only Scripture in which Jesus is called

the apostle, yet, though the word is not used, the thoughts of frequent occurrence. Often Jesus testified that the Father sent Him, that He came obedient to the mission and will of His heavenly Father, that His whole life was only a fulfillment of the mission entrusted to Him; and as He was called in the Old Testament times "the Angel or Messenger of the Covenant," so it is in accordance with the whole teaching of Scripture that He is called here by the name "apostle."*[I] Of Christ the Head are all energies and ministrations in the body. If there are bishops, it is because Christ is the Bishop; if there are pastors or shepherds, it is because Christ is "the Shepherd of the flock;" if there are evangelists, it is because Christ came and brought to mankind the glad tidings; if there are apostles, it is because He is the Apostle, the head of all apostolic dignity and work. He is the Apostle sent by God to us men; the High Priest, as representing us before the Father.*[II] Him we are to consider in faith: for herein is all our safety: looking unto Jesus, we have peace and joy; for this is the joy of our life, that all perfection is in Christ. And in prayer; for can we see Him in His holiness without the petition rising in our hearts, "O that I might be conformed unto Him!" We are to look upon Him as a painter looks upon a model, with the full intention and desire of imitating Him. We are to keep constantly in sight of Him, as our only infallible Guide upon earth. All this is included in that one word, that one expression, "consider." Gaze up-on, meditate upon, "the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus."

Let us look at the word "profession." We are very apt to undervalue things with which abuse and danger are connected, and which may be easily counterfeited. There is such a thing as a mere outward, empty, hypocritical profession; but is that a reason why we should not attach importance to confessing Christ? Jesus says, "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess before my Father, and before the angels. And whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny." With the heart we are to believe unto righteousness, and with the mouth we are to confess that Jesus is the Lord. It may be merely an outward thing, a mere lip-utterance, to say, "I believe in Jesus;" it may be only a form to sit down at the Lord's Table; but as the outward expression of an inward reality, it is a great and blessed fact. Let us not be secret disciples; let us not come to Jesus merely by night, ashamed to bear testimony to the gospel. Let us not despise the outward and visible church, although, alas! There is much error and sin connected therewith. Our confession of Christ in the outward church, in the congregation of professed disciples, in the ordinances of Christ's institution, let us not undervalue it! Remember with gratitude that you have publicly professed Christ; that into the Church of Christ you have been received by baptism, and acknowledged at the Lord's Supper as a brother and partaker of the heavenly calling. Let the remembrance of this be to us continually helpful, and stimulate us to adorn the doctrine of the gospel by a Christ-like life and walk. The Hebrews are exhorted to look unto the Apostle and High Priest Jesus, to Him of whose glory (chap.Hebrews 1:1-14[.]) and of whose sufferings and death (chap.Hebrews 2:1-18[.]) they had been reminded; they are to look unto the Man Christ Jesus, the Son, who through His self-humiliation on earth be-came the merciful and faithful High Priest, having finished the work which the Father sent Him to do. And in order to show to the Hebrews the exceeding great glory of Jesus, who was faithful to Him who appointed Him*[III] Mediator of the new covenant, he contrasts the Lord with Moses, the servant of God.*[IV] To speak of Moses to the Jews was always a very difficult and delicate matter. It is hardly possible for Gentiles to understand or realize the veneration and affection with which the Jews regard Moses, the servant of God. All their religious life, all their thoughts about God, all their practices and observances, all their hopes of the future, everything connected with God, is with them also connected with Moses.

Moses was the great apostle unto them, the man sent unto them of God, the mediator of the old covenant; and we cannot wonder at this profound, reverential affection which they feel for Moses. You read in the gospels and in the book of the Acts with what joy and pride they said, "We are the disciples of Moses." It was their glory and boast; and we cannot wonder at this when we think of Moses, of his marvelous history, of his grand character, of the unique position assigned to him in the history of God's people, and the wonderful work given him to perform.

Think of the history of Moses. It was wonderful from the very commencement. Sheltered in his tender infancy from the cruelty of Pharaoh, courageously tended by his God-trusting parents, watched over by the angels and rescued from the persecution of his enemies, he was brought up at the very court of Pharaoh. Trained and educated by the Egyptian sages, he became learned in all the wisdom of the most advanced nation of the age. When he was a young man he was the only free man of his people; and of his own voluntary choice, by faith, he esteemed the reproach of Israel greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. And afterwards, when his fiery zeal, not yet chastened by the grace of God, brought him into conflict with Pharaoh, he was led into quiet and obscurity for forty years, that, leading a shepherd's life, he might learn the wisdom and patience of the saints. Then, called by the mysterious appearance of God in the burning bush, he was appointed to be Israel's deliverer, and endowed by God with power, he went forth. By faith he led his people out of Egypt, and through the Red Sea; and after ruling over the children of Israel for forty years, after a life of prayer and self-denial, of unparalleled trial and suffering, and of heroic patience and strength; after forty years of divine manifestations, blessings, and miracles, see him at last ascending mount Nebo; his eye was not yet dim, nor his natural force abated. He beheld the land, and died, and the Lord buried him, so that no man knoweth of his sepulchre. No doubt the angels who had watched him in his cradle on the waves of the Nile were there, ready to carry him into his place of rest, and with awe witnessing the conflict between Michael the archangel and the great adversary. (Jude.) What a marvelous history is the life of Moses! And look at his character. There is no man in the whole history of the Jews to compare with him, until you come to Him who is Lord of all, the Lord of glory, and to that chief of apostles, who was able to say, "Be ye followers of me, as I am of Christ." How wonderful is his faith in God! his zeal for the glory of God, and for the honor of Jehovah! his importunate prayer and wrestling with the Most High! his love for his nation, which makes him willing to die, and be blotted out of the book of life, rather than that Israel should be destroyed! his never-wearied patience and meekness! His whole life was a sacrifice of love and of obedience to the God of his fathers Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, who appeared to him in the burning bush; a life of self-denial and affection to the people of his choice.

Look at his peculiar position. He was mediator of the covenant, the ambassador (apostle) and plenipotentiary (as it were) of God. All God's dealings with Israel were transacted through him. He was a prophet, priest, and king in one person, and united all the great and important functions which had afterwards to be distributed among a plurality of persons. As a prophet he was different from all other prophets; for God spake to him face to face; and therefore he said, "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me." Jesus in His prophetic office is foreshadowed by all the prophets; but none of them except Moses could describe Jesus as a prophet like unto me. Through Moses the whole of the Levitical dispensation was instituted. The learned Bengel says-"While two chapters in Genesis are given to tell us how the world was created, there are sixteen chapters to tell us how the tabernacle was to be built. For the world was

made for the sake of the Church; and the great object of all creation is to glorify God in the redemption and sanctification of His people." It is frequently and emphatically stated that Moses obeyed God fully, and made all things as he saw the pattern on the mount. As a prophet, and in the priestly spirit of love and meekness, he ruled over Israel, and showed them God's mighty wonders.

Look again at the work Moses accomplished, at the great things which the grace of God performed through him. Through him God brought Israel out of Egypt and led them through the Red Sea; He gave the Ten Commandments and the whole law by him; by him the whole national life of Israel was organized; through him God laid the foundation of the theocracy, and all subsequent revelations of God have their root in the work which was wrought by Moses. Even in the future, restored Israel will remember and honor him, and be guided by the law given through him. God bears witness to His servant that he was faithful in all God's house. In every department of this great and complicated building Moses obeyed the Lord implicitly and fully; according to everything that God told him, he performed it. Faithfulness is what God marks, loves, and honors; a perfect, sincere, and constant desire to obey the will of God in all that is entrusted to our care. But after admitting fully the grandeur and excellence of Moses, the apostle proceeds to show the still greater glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. It must have struck you that in many respects Moses was a type of Jesus. Both were as infants threatened by cruel rulers, and both were marvelously sheltered by the living God. So in after life Moses was in some respects like Christ. Moses was the only freeman who espoused the cause of the nation; and Jesus was the only Free and 'Holy One who could take up the cause of the leper. But yet, what a difference! The zeal of Moses was not free from earth-born elements, and had to be purified. But there was nothing in Jesus that was of the earth earthy; no sinful weakness of the flesh was in Him who condescended to come in the likeness of sinful flesh. His love was always pure, His zeal holy, His aim single. Moses spake face to face with God, and was the mediator between God and Israel. The Lord Jesus is Prophet, Priest, and King in one person, but He is perfectly and eternally the true Revealer, Reconciler, Ruler, as the Son of God. Moses was willing to die for the nation; the Lord Jesus actually died, and not for the nation only, but to gather all the children of God into one. Moses wrought the law on tables of stone; the Lord Jesus by His Spirit, even the Holy Ghost, writes the law on our hearts. But notice the imperfection of Moses as a servant. The one sin of his life, which is mentioned as the cause of his not being permitted to enter the promised land, seems at first sight not to merit such a severe punishment. Moses was doubtless guilty of other sins; but why is this one sin singled out? Not merely because he was impatient, but because he did not sanctify the name of God among the people. Whereas God was willing to show pure mercy, Moses was not able to rise to the height of this great argument, and showed the vehemence of his anger and displeasure. How different was Jesus! He declared the full, perfect, and free love of God. He exclaimed on the cross: "Father, forgive them: for they know not what they do." And the message He now sends is nothing but salvation for the lost and guilty. The house, the building, means the children of God, who by faith, as lively stones, are built upon Christ Jesus the foundation, and who are filled with the Holy Ghost ; in whom God dwells, as in His temple, and in whom God is praised and manifested in glory. The illustration is very simple and instructive. We are compared unto stones, and as every simile is defective, we must add, not dead stones, but lively stones, as the apostle in his epistle to the Ephesians speaks of the building growing. The way in which we are brought unto the Lord Jesus Christ and united with Him is not by building, but by believing. The builders rejected the "chief

corner stone" (Psalms 118:22); but "coming unto Christ" (1 Peter 2:1-25.), simply believing, "ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house." When we go about the works of the law we are trying to build, and as long as we build we are not built. When we give up working, then by faith the Holy Ghost adds us to Christ, and grafts us into the living Vine, who is also the Foundation. We are rooted and grounded. The house is one, and all the children of God are united in the Spirit. Some are strong and are pillars, others are weak and rest upon those whom God has appointed to be strong, and to support and encourage the feeble. "None liveth unto himself;" and "if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it." If one grows and rejoices, it is for the good of the whole. The glory of the Lord is to show itself in the whole church, thus united by the indwelling Spirit. But not merely does God dwell in the church as a whole, it is the peculiarity of everything spiritual that every part of it is again a whole.*[V] Not only is it true, that "whosoever two or three are gathered together" in Christ's name, He is in the midst of them; but if a single person loves Him, the Father will love him, and will come and make His abode with him. An individual is thus also a temple, a habitation filled with the Holy Ghost. The Father and the Lord Jesus Christ dwell in him. Israel 'could understand this because it was symbolized .by the temple, and the reality and substance of the symbol was also promised to them in the days of the Messiah. For what was the promise of the new covenant? "I will dwell in them, and they in me." What a marvelous idea is here presented to us! A Christian is like the tabernacle; he is a sanctuary. There is the holy of holies, the holy place, and the outer court. But in all the glory of God is to be revealed; the holiness of God to be shown forth. His body is the Lord's; the members of his body are Christ's members. His eyes, his lips, his feet, all the physical energies which God has given unto him, are a part of the house in which the Father and the Lord Jesus? Through the Holy Ghost, take up their abode. His reason, memory, imagination, affections, will, conscience, all that is in him, behold, it is a house where God is to dwell. God is to walk in it, to dwell in it, to rest in it. He is to be not merely a visitor, but an indwelling guest, "abiding in him." Sometimes God will convert this wonderful dwelling-place into His temple, and there will be heard the voice of prayer and praise. Sometimes He changes it into a banqueting-hall, and there will be heard the voice of rejoicing and the melody of thanksgiving, the assurance of that love which is better than wine. Sometimes it becomes a battle-field, and the Lord is a man-of-war, and conquers the enemies of the worm Jacob, and succors the saint who is tempted.

How manifold are the mansions in which He dwells 1 As there are many mansions in the Father's house above, as there are many mansions in His Church below, so also are there many rooms in the spiritual house of the individual believer ; in various manifestations of grace, strength, and love, does God dwell in us.

You who believe in Jesus are His house, His own ; for as the Father appointed Him to be Mediator, as the Father laid the foundation in Zion, so Jesus the Lord bought you with His own blood, and sent into your hearts His own Spirit. We are emphatically Christ's. This is of God, and by the Spirit ; but Christ dwelleth in us ; we are His own house. But the apostle adds-shall I call it a condition? Shall I call it an encouragement? Oh, there is nothing hard in the exhortations of Scripture!-" If you hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of your hope unto the end." I do not look upon it as a condition in the sense of contingency. If it were possible that we who have come unto the Lord Jesus Christ, and who have loved and served Him, or rather let me say, have experienced His grace and faithfulness-if it were possible that, after all, we should forsake Him, and turn away from

the faith, oh, of all things this would be most fearful and of all prospects this would be the most wretched! What is the one thing which the Christian desires? What is the one great thing which he does? What is the one great secret which he is always endeavouring to find out with greater clearness, and grasp with firmer intensity? Is it not this: "My Beloved is mine, and I am His"? The inmost desire of our heart and the exhortations of the word coincide. To the end we must persevere; and it is therefore with great joy and alacrity that we receive the solemn exhortations: "He that endureth unto the end shall be saved;" No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." We desire to hear constantly the voice which saith from His heavenly throne, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my kingdom, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne." And with the exhortation is the word of promise: "Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." "They that trust in the Lord shall be like mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but standeth fast for ever." "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any one pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one."

Oh, blessed word and promise of God, that He will keep us unto the end! But how is it that we are kept? Through faith, through watchfulness, through self-denial, through prayer and fasting, through our constantly taking heed unto ourselves according to His word. " Hold fast," if you desire it to be manifested in that day that you are not merely outward professors, not merely fishes existing in the net, but the true and living disciples of the One Master, " Hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of your hope firm unto the end." Faith is the mother of hope; but how often is the mother strengthened and cheered by the daughter! There is first faith-" By faith are ye saved, not of works"-then hope. "For we are saved by hope," looking forward to the recompense of the reward. Do not imagine that hope is in any way inferior to faith and love. Some seem to think hope is of nature, a feature of our natural character, an element in our natural disposition. They would not be ashamed to say they had little hope, although they would not like to confess they had little faith or little love. Why? Because they take a perfectly erroneous view of what hope is. It is a gift and fruit of the Holy Ghost just as much as faith and love. As hope is an essential feature of the Christian character, so it is of grace, and not of nature. The lively hope which God by the Spirit gives unto us, comes through the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. It has not its root in the first creation, and is not strengthened by that which is of the flesh. The same apostle, who teaches us that we are saved by faith, declares that we are saved by hope. (Romans 8:24.) For though the grace of our Lord is exceeding abundant with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 1:14), yet we are still in conflict with sin and temptation, in a body of death and a world of evil. We hope for the full and perfect salvation; we shall see Christ as He is, and be like Him; we wait for the redemption of the body, and the regeneration of the world. Hence hope refers to the future, even to the coming of the Lord Jesus; and yet it possesses already the substance and earnest of the inheritance. For is not Christ, who is our hope, ours even now by faith and in love ? But hope, looking to the glory of Christ and to the transfiguration of our body, is the very strength, essence, and impulse of heavenly-mindedness. In proportion as we hope, we rise above the sins and vanities of earth.*[VI]

Cherish the hope which In Christ Jesus is given unto you who believe in the Saviour. Look for-ward to the coming of the Lord, to the joy and glory which He will bring unto His disciples. Be not afraid, for He will sustain you during all your difficulties and trials, and you will surely be kept unto that day. And be not afraid that the glory and brightness will overwhelm you ; for Christ the Lord will be glorified in you, and thus be your strength, and you shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of your Father. Hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of your hope. In calm and humble assurance, looking only unto Christ crucified for sinners, you cannot but rejoice in hope of the glory of God. As you trust in Jehovah your righteousness, so you look forward to Jehovah your glory. The God of hope (the source and object of hope) fill you with joy and peace in believing, through the power of the Holy Ghost. (Romans 15:1-33.)

What more suitable encouragement could we have at the beginning of the year than these words of the apostle? The end spoken of is nothing else but the appearing of the Lord Jesus, when hope shall be changed into sight. The day is approaching (Hebrews 10:25), and with it our glory. We look back on the years through which we have been led. On a day like this we feel as if we had come to a milestone, on one side of which we can read the inscription, telling us how many years and stages of our journey have been completed. But on the other side, where curiosity expects to find the number of years yet before, us, what do Faith and Love and Hope read ? What else but this-" Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life." And again-" Unto them that love God all things work together for good." And again-" Whose house are ye, if ye hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of your hope unto the end." We know how many years have elapsed since the First Advent ; but on the other side of the milestone we read, no date, but the words-" Watch, for ye know not the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cloth come." And we can also testify, " If you believe in Jesus, if you love and follow Him, if you abide in Him, then when the Lord comes again you will have confidence, and stand before Him."

Look unto Him, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth ; and you, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, oh, consider, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession-Jesus! Amen.

[I] * Compare Hebrews 2:3, where Christ is likewise represented as the Messenger, the Proto-Apostle : apostellein is applied to Christ's coming in Matthew 10:40; Matthew 15:24; Luke 4:18; John 3:17; John 4:9-10. Christ is the Messenger of the Covenant, Malachi 3:2; Exodus 23:2-3. The remark already quoted with reference to Hebrews 2:3-4 (page 15) is applicable to this passage also. The apostle Paul, if, as we think, he is the writer, sinks his own apostleship, and points the Hebrews to the One Lord and Head.

[II] (2)* According to Bengel's simple distinction apostolos, qui Dei causam apud nos agit; dpxtepeus, qui nostram causam apud Deum agit. But notice also the essential connection between the two ideas; He who was sent, Kai.' ezoxen, was sent in order by His sacrifice to become the High Priest. Lo, I come-(apostolos) to do thy will (apxiepeus),

[III] (3) * poiesanti, literally made. But not in the sense of created, but who appointed, ordained and furnished Him with all that was necessary to carry out His great mission. "A body hast thou pre-pared for me." (Hebrews 10:5.) Comp. also Mark 3:14, original.

[IV] (4)* "The servant of Jehovah, the King Messiah, will be greater than Abraham, more exalted than Moses, higher than all the an-gels of ministry." Ancient Synagogue's Comment on Isaiah 52:13.

[V] (5)* Oetinger.

[VI] (6)* Apostolic teaching on hope is both copious and unanimous. Romans 5:1-5; Romans 8:15-39, Romans 12:12, Romans 15:13; Ephesians 1:12-14; Ephesians 1:18; Colossians 1:5; Colossians 1:23; Colossians 1:27; 1 Thessalonians 1:3; 2 Thessalonians 2:16; 1 Peter 1:3; 1 Peter 5:14; 1 John 3:13. Beside the passages in this epistle, Hebrews 6:11; Hebrews 6:20; Hebrews 6:1, &C.

08 Unbelief In The Wilderness Heb_3:7-19.

CHAPTER VIII.

UNBELIEF IN THE WILDERNESS.

Hebrews 3:7-19. THE apostle has compared and contrasted Moses, the servant of God and the mediator of the old dispensation, with the Lord Jesus, the Messiah, the Son of the Father, and the mediator of the new and everlasting covenant. Great was the glory of Moses, and whether we think of his marvelous history, of his unique position as prophet, priest, and king in Israel, of his grand and deep character, or of the fundamental and mighty work which was accomplished through him, we can easily understand why it is written, that there arose not a prophet like unto him until He came who is above all, the Lord from heaven. We judge of magnitude by comparison. It is because the Jews had some idea and appreciation of the greatness of Moses that the apostle avails himself of this, to point out to them the far higher glory of the Lord Jesus. Though in the life and character of Moses there are many striking excellencies and virtues, the faithfulness of Moses is the feature on which the apostle dwells. It is, indeed, the most important feature in our character as servants of God. This is the one thing required of us, to be faithful. And well were it for us if we laid more stress on faithfulness, and thought less of gifts and talents, or of success and results. For while it belongs to God to appoint unto each of us severally our position, to distribute gifts according to His wisdom and good pleasure, and to reward us with results and harvests, hundredfold, sixtyfold, or thirtyfold, it belongs to us to be faithful to God wherever He has placed us, and in the gift and task which His love assigns. We see the summary and result of the true disciple's life in the decisive words of the Master: " Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things." Moses was faithful in all God's house. In every branch of the work with which he was entrusted he carried out the commandments of God. He added nothing of his own to the instructions which he received; he left out nothing, but ordered all things as he was commanded. And though sorely tried by Israel's ingratitude, rebelliousness, and stubbornness, his faithfulness never wearied nor wavered. But while Moses was faithful as a servant, Jesus was faithful as the Son. Moses, sinful and imperfect, was himself part of the house; Jesus the Holy One, the Son of God, is Lord over the house. The dispensation of which Moses was mediator was temporary, preparatory, and typical of the new covenant, in which all things are eternal, substantial, and heavenly. Moses, as the Saviour testified, wrote of Christ. The whole law pointed to the Messiah. Jesus fulfilled the law, because He was the Perfect Man, in whom alone the law in its depth and breadth was realized and manifested, and because He bore the curse and the condemnation which the law pronounces against transgressors. All the promises of salvation which the typical (or gospel) part of the Mosaic dispensation contained, all sacrifices, festivals, and priestly mediation, found its substance and fulfillment in Christ. How much greater then is He than Moses!

God spake with Moses face to face, yet is Jesus only The Prophet, for as the only begotten He declared the Father: we see the Father when we see Jesus. Moses was full of love and the priestly

spirit; but Jesus was not merely willing to die for Israel, but actually laid down His life, and not for the nation only, but that He might gather in one all the children of God. Moses ruled as king in Jeshurun; but Jesus is the true King, who by the Spirit can make His people willing in the day of His power, and renew their hearts into living obedience. Moses is the servant, but Jesus the Son is Lord.*[I] The glory of Christ that excelleth is described by the apostle Paul (2 Corinthians 3:6-12), a passage which should be studied in connection with our chapter. On this contrast between the Lord Jesus and Moses the servant of God, the apostle builds his earnest exhortation. Again he interrupts the course of his massive and sublime argument by most solemn and pathetic admonition. His great aim in this epistle is to exhort. He is bent, with all intensity of purpose and of watchful love, to beseech the Hebrews to be steadfast. He is moved with fear ; his heart trembles with anxiety, while he points to the glory of the great High Priest ; he is continually giving vent to the pent-up feelings of affection and solicitude with which he regards the dangerous condition of the Hebrew believers. Oh, it is so like Paul, the apostle of love! He seems to me to have had a thousand hearts. He loved each church as if it was the only one he possessed. He felt their burden, he rejoiced over their order, steadfastness, and gifts; he ceased not to give thanks for them, and to pray for the blessing and help which each of them needed; he remembered the names of their saints, he watched over them with the affectionateness of a tender mother and nurse. While he seems lost in the contemplation of divine truth, soaring like an eagle far above vale and mountain-peak, and gazing with steadfast eye into the brightness of the sun, he is always like his blessed and dear Lord, who in homely but most touching language compares Himself to a hen gathering her chickens under her wings. In all Paul's epistles we feel the warm breath of affection; we hear the voice, tremulous with emotion, we see the earnest and loving countenance of the fatherly man. Even when he writes to the Romans, whom he had never seen, he says, " I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, that ye may be established ; that is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me." What can exceed his tender love to the churches of Thessalonica and Philippi? or the soul-stirring expostulations which in anguish of mind he addresses to the Galatians, of whom he travails again in birth, that Christ may be formed in them ? How fatherly, how considerate, how exquisitely delicate and sensitive is he in his treatment of the Corinthian church. In all his epistles he continually interrupts the doctrine with the expression of his love, his anxiety, his joy and sorrow; we see his heart bound up in the churches. So in this epistle he constantly exhorts and beseeches the Hebrews (and us also) to abide in Christ, to take heed unto ourselves, to be faithful unto the end.

Thus is it in all Scripture. The love of God, seeking our salvation, pervades all its teaching. Do we not throughout the whole Scripture hear God, as it were, sighing, "Oh that they were wise; that they hearkened unto my voice!" Do we not hear the tearful voice of Jesus saying, "If thou hadst known?" Do we not throughout behold the loving arms of God outstretched to receive us? May we return love with love, so that Christ's joy may be full in us? The thought of Moses naturally suggests the Israelites in the wilderness. Faithful was the Mediator, through whom God dealt with them: but was Israel faithful? God spoke: did they obey? God showed them wonderful signs: did they trust and follow in faith? And if Israel was not faithful under Moses, and their unbelief brought ruin upon them, how much more guilty shall we be, and how much greater our danger, if we are not faithful unto the Lord Jesus? The history of the wanderings of Israel in the wilderness is most instructive. No Scripture is of private interpretation, but is catholic and eternal. Whatsoever things

were written afore-time were written for our learning. Of this history especially, the apostle Paul, who dwells on it in his epistle to the Corinthians, tells us that all these things happened unto them for ensamples ; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. (1 Corinthians 10:1-33) According to the solemn words addressed by the glorified Saviour to the church of Thyatira, Israel's experience is to be a warning to all the churches. The books of Moses are thus of permanent importance to God's children. Israel's history in the wilderness is typical throughout. It is a marvelous history from beginning to end. The exodus out of Egypt, the passage through the Red Sea, the giving of the Law at mount Sinai, the manna, the pillar of cloud and fire, the victory over Amalek, the rock that followed them, the garments that never became old ; all is miracle, full of the wondrous love and power of God, who is Israel's redeemer. Consider the Messenger, the Angel of the Covenant, Christ, who led them. Their whole life and history was a life and history by the word of God. Do you know this as a pre-sent experience?

It was a history of solemn and glorious privilege. God separated Israel unto Himself. They were shut up to God. Their daily need, their absolute dependence on divine help and bounty, the constant gift of manna, guidance and defense, which so visibly descended from the Lord, the giver of all ; the daily beholding of God's mighty and gracious works-all this was a marvelous privilege, the life of faith was made near and easy. Dependence on second causes is a great snare to man; for since the fall the tendency of man is to forget the Creator. Israel in the wilderness had to live daily and exclusively by God's power and goodness. How solemn, yet how glorious, to be thus constantly depending on God and constantly beholding His omnipotent love. Is this not a picture of the Christian's life?

It is a sad history from beginning to end : continual murmuring, doubt, ingratitude, idolatry, sin ; looking back unto Egypt and its pleasures, for-getting its degradation and bondage, doubting God's goodness and power, yielding to the temptations of lust and tempting the Lord Jehovah, the faithful and merciful Christ.*[II]

It is a sad history, full of fearful judgments. Long, dark years, of most of which we know nothing but the ominous allusions in the prophetic books to the worship of Moloch and Remphan. And yet the Lord was with them all the days, and every day, ready to bless and to gladden them. Do you understand the parable?

Yet was there in Israel also faith and love; and God remembers the time of their espousals, when they followed Him in a land that was not sown. There were not merely murmurings, but hymns of praise and thanksgiving; there were willing offerings unto the Lord of gold and silver, there was victory over the enemies, there were Joshua and Caleb, who followed the Lord fully. In the book of Psalms, which is to a certain extent a response to the five books of Moses, as well as the starting-point of the subsequent prophets, frequent reference is made to the history of the wilderness. It is remembered, first in order to ascribe glory to God, and to give thanks unto Him for His mercy and for His marvelous works. And secondly, to hold up the mirror to man, and especially Israel, that we may learn humility and faith. The apostle quotes Psalms 95:1-11, in which the exhortation, based upon Israel's disobedience and punishment, is peculiarly solemn and emphatic. You must have noticed how frequently the Psalms are quoted in this epistle. Our Saviour also singles them out as a special portion of Scripture. The church in all ages has honored and loved the Psalms. David was chosen to be the sweet singer of Israel, not merely the old covenant Israel,

but the whole Israel of God.

Here is perfect sympathy with all our weakness and fluctuating experience, and at the same time faithful and sure guidance ; here we find a perfect expression of feeling and soul-experience ; here are the deepest and truest utterances of repentance and of faith-of the soul's mournful complaints in darkness and sorrow, and of jubilant rejoicing and thanksgiving in the sunshine of divine favor ; here is a true analysis of the heart ; here we behold the doubts and conflicting thoughts, the fear and tumult of the soul-all that ever moves and agitates the saints of God. But the Psalter is not merely an expression of our feelings ; it guides, corrects, and elevates us. David prays with us according to the mind of God. He is not merely our brother, but he is also a type of Christ. In the Psalms we learn the mind of Messiah in His union with His people. Hence the Psalter is the incomparable and comprehensive manual and hymn-book of the saints.*[III] The quotation is introduced (like all Scripture quotations in this epistle) as the word of God, "as the Holy Ghost saith." Even the subjective lyrical portions of Scripture proceed out of divine depths, as well as depths of the human heart. Holy men spake and not merely spake, but sang with human, real music, in joy, in sorrow, in gladness and in tears, and yet as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. But in this quotation it is possible that the reference to the Holy Ghost has a special meaning and propriety ; for it is the office of the Spirit (in the divine economy of grace) to glorify the Father and the Son, to direct us to Christ's word, to cause us to listen to the Father's voice. As the Father says of Christ, "Hear Him;" and as the Son always magnifies the Father's word, so the Holy Ghost testifies not of Himself, but of the Father and the Son. The psalm begins with an exhortation to praise God. Joyous and festive is the tone in which it commences. It describes God in His greatness and power. It starts with the assurance that He is the Rock of our salvation. The Lord the Creator is also the Shepherd of His people. David calls on us to sing; and song is the expression of joy, peace, and love: " O come, let us sing unto the Lord : let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our salvation. Let us kneel before the Lord our maker. For He is our God; and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand." But with a sudden transition the psalmist, or as the apostle Paul prefers to say, the Holy Ghost exhorts us most solemnly not to harden our hearts as Israel did in the temptation.

Notice, (1) when we hear God's voice-and, oh, how clearly and sweetly does He speak to us in the person of His Son Jesus, the Word incarnate, who died for us in Golgotha !-the heart must respond. The assent of the intellect, the admiration of the understanding, the fervor of the imagination, and even the conviction of the con-science, do not suffice. God speaks to the heart of Jerusalem. (Isaiah xl., original) By this expression is meant the centre of our spiritual existence, that centre out of which thoughts and affections precede, out of which are the issues of life, that mysterious fountain which God only can know and fathom. Oh that Christ may dwell there!

God's voice is to soften the heart. This is the purpose of the divine word-to make our hearts tender. Alas! By nature we are hard-hearted; and what we call good and soft-hearted is not so in reality and in God's sight. God wishes us to be delivered from hardness of heart, that is, from dullness of perception of His love and beauty, from ingratitude and Luke warmth towards Him, from pride and impenitence, from self-seeking and unrest. When we receive God's word in the heart, when we acknowledge our sin, when we adore God's mercy, when we desire God's fellowship, when we see Jesus, who came to serve us, to wash our feet, and to shed His blood for our salvation, the heart becomes soft and tender. For repentance, faith, prayer, patience, hope of

heaven, all these things make the heart tender. Tender towards God, tender towards our fellow-men, tender -think it not paradoxical-towards ourselves; I mean that state of gentleness and meekness which David describes-" Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty. . . . Surely I have behaved and quieted myself as a child that is weaned of his mother." We live in the atmosphere of forgiving and merciful love, we become also tender and loving to our own true life, freed from that restless and feverish spirit of the worldly man who, indulgent to self, which is not his true and real self, rules harshly and impatiently over the desires and sorrows of the imprisoned spirit. Can we be hard -thinking much of ourselves, discontented with our lot, envious or unforgiving, worldly and restless-when we hear the voice of God : " I am the Lord thy God ; I have loved thee with an ever-lasting love ; thou art mine." "As I have loved you, love one another"? The road may be narrow, and the sun nearly set, but hearing the voice of Jesus, the heart burns within us in love and hope.

Notice, (2) all sin begins in the heart. In the epistle to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 10:1-33.) the apostle describes the rivers, the corrupt branches; there he speaks of Israel's murmuring, idolatry, and lust. Here the Spirit speaks of the fountain and root: "They do err in their hearts." And what is the error of the heart? What else but unbelief t God speaks, and the heart is to believe. If the heart is hardened, it believes not; and regarding neither the threatening nor the promises, it leans not on the strength and love of God: unbelief is the mother of all sin and sorrow. For (3) unbelief is departure from the living God. How simple is this! As long as you trust God, you are near Him. The moment you doubt Him, your soul has departed into the strange country. Faith is the link between God's fullness and strength and our emptiness and weakness. If the soul cries out, Abide with me, or Nearer to Thee, the answer of Jesus is, Only believe!

Unbelief cannot see and understand God.*[IV] Forty years Israel had seen the works of the Most High. Every day they beheld the manna and the pillar of His guiding presence. How many miracles they witnessed! At the end of this long period and these daily visitations the Lord says (in sorrow and disappointment, to speak humanly), "They do always err in their heart, and they have not known my ways." They do not understand me. They have no eye to see my face, no perception, no sympathy ; they do not understand my meaning, my thought, my character, myself, though I have been constantly speaking, revealing, manifesting, yet do they not perceive ; it is hidden to them.

They tempted God. By fear and murmuring, by presumption and lust, by disobedience and idolatry, ten times their evil heart of unbelief manifested itself in tempting the Lord. (Numbers 14:22.) Although they had seen the mighty works of God, and were continually experiencing His mercy, they doubted both His power and love; they cherished bitter thoughts against Him, they challenged Him, and demanded signs, as if He had never shown unto them the wonders of His goodness.*[V] The Lord was grieved, and after the tenth temptation-so great is His patience-swore in His wrath that they should not enter into His rest. Doubtless many of those who died in the wilderness turned to God in repentance and faith. We cannot but believe that many of them joined with heartfelt contrition in the prayer of Moses:

"We are consumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled. Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance ... O satisfy us early with thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days." But the generation as such, a warning for all ages, died

in the wilderness.

Again the apostle asks emphatically, Why did they not enter into rest? And the answer is, Because they believed not. He does not single out the sin of making and worshipping the golden calf; he does not bring before us the flagrant transgressions into which they fell at Baal-peor. Many much more striking and to our mind more fearful sins could have been pointed out; but God thinks the one sin greater than all is unbelief. We are saved by faith; we are lost through unbelief. The heart is purified by faith; the heart is hardened by unbelief. Faith brings us nigh to God; unbelief is departure from God. Does it seem strange? By faith we draw near and worship God ; by faith we receive God's love ; through faith the Holy Ghost is given unto us; by faith we obey and follow Christ. Yet is it so natural and so like the goodness of God that all should be by faith. For the Lord is our God; He is all. He is willing to be, to give, to do all; to be God for us, to us, in us. All He asks of us is to trust Him, to receive Him ; to open our empty hand to His kind and bountiful hand, and our cold and dead heart to His heart, that spared not His own Son, but gave Him up unto death. By grace are we saved through faith; and even this trust is the gift of His blessed Spirit. (Ephesians 2:1-22.)

Unbelief prevented Israel's entering into the Promised Land. Then it follows that faith enters into rest. Believe with thy heart is the great lesson of the chapter. If we trust in God, then the wilderness will be converted into the garden of the Lord. See the true Israel, Jesus our Lord, who was tested in the wilderness. God proved and tried the Righteous One; Satan tempted Him. Then it was made manifest what was in Him, even a meek and lowly heart, strong in faith, tender a meek and lowly towards His heavenly Father, learning obedience because He was Son. And though the wild beasts were with Him, and His body was exhausted and weary, and the tempter's voice cunning and subtle, yet no evil came nigh unto Him ; for He dwelt in the secret place of the Most High, and abode under the shadow of the Almighty. The wild beasts dare not touch Him, the exhausted frame is upheld by the indwelling spirit ; the Scripture is both the weapon with which He fights and a tent in which He dwells; the very angels of God come down and minister unto Him. Thus the Son of Man by faith converted the wilderness into paradise. He entered into rest, He enjoyed peace with God; and there was given Him power to tread upon the lion and adder, and to trample the dragon under His feet. Worshipping the Father He conquered; and the angels of God refreshed and gladdened His heart with their heavenly converse.

Such is to be your life. Only believe, only worship, only harden not your heart, when in the Scripture and in the Spirit's teaching and in God's daily dealings you hear God's voice, and though wild beasts, hunger and privation, weakness and temptation beset you, you are safe, you are blessed. God is with you; who can be against you? Angels are around you, and you can give thanks; for you are more than conquerors, through Him that loved you, and gave Himself for you.

Looking unto Jesus, I return to the commencement of the psalm, and end in praise. I will listen to its solemn admonition, I will stand in awe, when I see the carcasses of them that fell in the wilderness through unbelief ; I will humble myself when I think how often like Israel I have murmured and doubted, how often I have grieved and tempted the Lord ; but I will believe, I will cleave to Jesus, I will remember that oath which the Lord swore by Himself; As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the sinner, but rather that he should turn and live. And again, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel,

He confirmed it by an oath, saying, " Surely, blessing I will bless thee." Let us whom God hath redeemed out of Egypt, not with gold and silver, but with the precious blood of Christ as of the true Paschal Lamb without blemish and without spot ; let us who have been rescued out of death and the power of Satan by the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ; let us who have received the law of God, not as a letter which killeth, but by the outpouring of the Spirit and in the renewal of our hearts-oh, come, let us, remembering our pass-over, our resurrection-day, our Pentecost, let us sing unto the Lord ! Let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. But let us listen to the solemn exhortation of the Spirit. To-day harden not your hearts. Yesterday is the past of sin and misery. To-day is the present of divine grace and man's faith. To-morrow is eternity, full of joy and glory. To-day is the turning-point, the crisis, the seed-time. To whom can we go but unto Jesus Christ, with the past of our transgression, with the yesterday of the first Adam, with the to-day of our weakness and need, with the for ever of our endless destiny? He is Jehovah, the Saviour God, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Cleaving to Him we rest in mercy, which is from everlasting to everlasting. The apostle warns us : Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief. He is anxious that not one single member of the professing Church should be lost; as he expresses it in another Scripture-he preaches Christ, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. (Colossians 1:28.) The same spirit ought to animate the whole congregation. Each member has to take heed to him-self and the whole community, to care anxiously and earnestly for each member, that none may be lost.

Exhort one another daily; encourage, help one another by counsel, by example, by sympathy, by brotherly aid, by united prayer and praise. Walking together in peace and harmony, keep before your eyes and hearts the end of the journey.

Let us hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, let us keep our first faith, our first love, our first hope (1 Timothy 5:12; Revelation 2:4; Hebrews 3:6), that which was given unto us when the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant (1 Timothy 1:14), even when we were made partakers of Christ.*[VI] In humility and fear, in self-abasement and self-distrust, let us during our wilderness journey cry out of the depths, and yet rejoice and be at peace ; for we are in Christ, and the Lord for whom we wait is our light and our salvation.

[I] * "Moses was a type in the world. If any should say, What is the fulfillment and consummation? I answer, King Messiah : through Him such perfection will be produced as never existed hitherto throughout all generations." (Zohar.) Many passages in the Talmudic writings teach that the law shall be abolished in the days of Messiah, and that the light and wisdom of the Messianic age far exceed that of the Law of Moses.

[II] * Comp. 1 Corinthians 10:9, specially verse 9.

[III] * As Johann Arndt says: "The Psalter is a necklace, consisting of the gold of doctrine and salutary instruction, of heart-reviving gems of consolation, and precious stones of beautiful prayers ; a theatre of the unveiled great purposes and works of God ; a cheerful meadow end extensive garden of roses, in which the most beautiful and fragrant flowers delight us; an infinite ocean, in which those who experience many tempests of affliction find precious pearls ; a heavenly school, where we converse with God Himself, Our great Teacher; a mirror of divine mercies, in which the glorious countenance of our most compassionate Father shines forth; the most perfect anatomy of

our souls, showing not merely our inmost thoughts and passions, but their corrective and medicine."

[IV] * To know God is the source of life and the very substance of blessedness. All the gracious purposes of God are to this end, that we may know Him. Hence when the apostle John writes to fathers in Christ, he describes them thus: " Fathers, because ye have known Him that is from the beginning." (1 John 2:13-14.)

[V] *The following are the ten temptations according to the Jews : (1)Exodus 14:11, from fear ; (2)Exodus 15:24, murmuring ; (3)Exodus 16:2-3, murmuring ; (4)Exodus 16:19, so, disobedience ; (5)Exodus 16:27-28, Sabbath-breaking ; (6)Numbers 20:3], chiding ; (7)Exodus 32:1-35, idolatry ; (8)Numbers 11:1-3, complaining ; (9)Numbers 11:32], lust ; (to) Num. xiv., unbelief. The root of all sin is unbelief, as, beginning with Gen. iii., is taught throughout all Scripture. The two manifestations of unbelief are in opposite poles-presumption and distrust. The world is the wilderness; Israel's history a mirror of ours. The decision and victory must be in the heart. Christ dwelling in the heart by faith, we have peace and strength. Then can we imitate Jesus. (Matthew 4:1-25.)

[VI] (6)* Metoxoi gegovamen. We have become by grace, what we were not by nature, partakers of Christ ; since we have part in all that Christ is and has, at present by faith, and afterwards in actual possession, as joint-heirs with the Son. irr6oraets, confidence means sometimes substance (Hebrews 1:3) ; sometimes, as undoubtedly in 2 Corinthians 9:9; 2 Corinthians 11:17, confidence and assurance. In Heb. xi. the objective and subjective aspects are combined.

09 Fear and Rest Heb_4:1-11

CHAPTER IX.

FEAR AND REST.

Hebrews 4:1-11. THE two words which claim our special consideration in this section are, fear and rest. I. We know only in part, in fragment. It is difficult for us to combine different aspects of truth. When doctrines apparently contradictory are presented to us, we are apt to attach importance to one, and to leave the other in the background, treating it with indifference and cold neglect. We cherish some portions of truth; we look but rarely and hastily on others. In our choice we are influenced by our natural temperament and conformation of mind, by preconceived notions, by the type of religious teaching in which we have been trained, and sometimes by our sinful tendencies, which shrink from some portions of Scripture and some aspects of divine truth, which avoid and hide themselves from the corrective and rebuking influence of some part of God's message.

It is part of our imperfection here that we can-not see the whole truth simultaneously, that we see truth in fragments, and that, while our eye rests on one phase or side of the revelation of God, the other portions are comparatively hid from our view. In eternity we shall see and know the Lord as He is. We shall behold at a glance the whole counsel of God; our light and love shall be perfect. (1 John 3:2;1 Corinthians 13:12.)

It is salutary to remember our tendency to partiality and one sidedness in our spiritual life, in order that we may be on our guard, that we may carefully and anxiously consider the " Again, it is written;" that we may willingly learn from Christians who have received different gifts of grace, and whose experience varies from ours ; above all, that we may seek to follow and serve the Lord Himself, to walk with God, to hear the voice of the good Shepherd. Forms of godliness, types of doctrine, are apt to become substitutes instead of channels, weights instead of wings. Here is the most subtle danger of idolatry. Doc-trines and systems of doctrine are like portraits more or less faithful and vivid of a beloved and beautiful countenance. But they are necessarily imperfect. They recall some aspects, expressions, characteristics; they are helpful to recall the reality and fullness of which they are incomplete representations. But we must not substitute them in our minds and imaginations for the living face.

Doctrines and circles of religious thought and experience are like channels; but we must not breathe the limited air of an enclosed space, but keep our hearts in communion with God, that out of the ocean of light and life, out of the living fountain, we may receive constant renewal and revival. The exhortations of this epistle may appear to some difficult to reconcile with the teaching of Scripture, that the grace of God, once received through the power of the Holy Ghost by faith, can never be lost, and that they who are born again, who are once in Christ, are in Christ for ever. Let us not blunt the edge of earnest and piercing exhortations. Let us not pass them over, or treat them with inward apathy. "Again it is written." We know this does not mean that there is any real contradiction in Scripture, but that various aspects of truth are presented, each with the same

fidelity, fullness and emphasis. Hence we must learn to move freely, and not to be cramped and fixed in one position. We must keep our eyes clear and open, and not look at all things through the light of a favorite doctrine. And while we receive fully and joyously the assurance of our perfect acceptance and peace, and of the unchanging love of God in Christ Jesus, let us with the apostle consider also our sins and dangers from the lower yet most real earthly and time-point of view. The earnest counsel of the apostle in this chapter, Let us fear, may seem to be incompatible with his frequent and emphatic teaching that we have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; that he is persuaded that nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus ; that we are to rejoice in the Lord, and that always.

Yet a most superficial glance at the epistles, and at the Scriptures In general, will show that fear is an essential feature of the Christian. The worldly man neither fears nor loves God. - Be sometimes imagines he loves God, because he is not afraid, because he is not awed by the holy majesty of God, and does not tremble at the righteous condemnation of the law. He mistakes his feeling of ease for a feeling of love to God, of whose character he has a false and shallow view, Absence of fear he mistakes for presence of love. The soul which is roused and convinced of sin fears God, His displeasure and punishment; fears the future, with its darkness and misery. This fear, created by the Spirit, has in it already elements, though concealed and feeble, of trust and affection. There is in it, as there is in repentance, a longing after the peace of God, a desire to be brought into harmony and fellowship with Him. There is in this fear, although dread and anxiety about self may predominate, reverence, conviction of sin, sorrow, prayer. When Christ is beheld and accepted, there is peace; but is there not also fear? "With thee is forgiveness of sin, that thou mayest be feared." Where do we see God's holiness and the awful majesty of the law as in the cross of Christ? Where our own sin and unworthiness, where the depth of our guilt and misery, as in the atonement of the Lord Jesus? We rejoice with fear and trembling.

Thus the apostle Peter says, "If ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear. Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."

It is because we know the Father, it is because we are redeemed by the precious blood of the Saviour, it is as the children of God and as the saints of Christ, that we are to pass our earthly pilgrimage in fear. This is not the fear of bondage, but the fear of adoption;*[I] not the fear which dreads condemnation, but the fear of those who are saved, and whom Christ has made free. It is not an imperfect and temporary condition; it refers not merely to those who have begun to walk in the ways of God. Let us not imagine that this fear is to vanish at some subsequent period of our course, that it is to disappear in a so-called "higher Christian life." No; we are to pass the time of our sojourn here in fear. To the last moment of our fight of faith, to the very end of our journey, the child of God, while trusting and rejoicing, walks in godly fear.

Likewise does the apostle Paul say, "Because God worketh in you to will and to do, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." Not the fear of the self-righteous, who are under the law, without peace and strength, but the fear of those in whom the Holy Ghost dwells with His light and energy. Fear is therefore compatible with faith and assurance. The children of God, who cry Abba,

who praise the Lamb, who are sealed by the Holy Ghost, rejoice with fear and trembling.

Fear which is rooted in unbelief is evil; for it drives away from God. If we fear that God will not be faithful and fulfill His promises, if we doubt the efficacy of Christ's atonement, or the immovable firmness of His gracious word, we are sinning against God, and forsaking the Rock of our salvation. Looking to God, our loving Father, our gracious Saviour, our gentle and indwelling Comforter, we have no reason to be afraid. The only fear that we can cherish is that of reverence and awe, and a dread lest we displease, offend, and wound Him who is our Lord. But when we look at ourselves, our weakness, our blindness, our sinfulness ; when we think of our path and our work, of our dangers and enemies, we may well fear, we may well feel that the time for repose and unmixed enjoyment has not come yet, and that, though sure of our ultimate triumph, we must watch anxiously and constantly ; we must dread our own sinfulness and our temptations ; we must fear worldly influences and estrangements ; we must work out our salvation with fear and trembling. But even this statement is not sufficient, and does not cover the Scripture teaching. It is true the Spirit witnesses with our spirits that we are God's children. It is true the Saviour assures us that His sheep shall never perish; and, as the very expression implies, they who are born of in-corruptible seed possess life eternal; they abide for ever; they dwell in God, and He dwelleth in them. But why are there so many warnings and exhortations addressed to those who profess to believe in the Saviour? Why does the Lord say, "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit He taketh away"? Why does the apostle teach, " If ye live after the 'flesh, ye shall die"? Why does the apostle Peter say, "Give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall"? Some of the reasons are obvious; and if we are sincere and honest with ourselves, we must have discovered them. The absolute safety, the fixed and unchanging position of the chosen people of God, can never be doubted. From the eternal, heavenly, divine point of view saints can never fall; they are seated in heavenly places with Christ; they are renewed by the Spirit, and sealed by Him unto everlasting glory. But who sees the saints of God from this point of view? Not the world, not our fellow-Christians. They only see our character and walk. Not we ourselves, except in the moments when the Spirit beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God. True, we trust in Christ, we rejoice in His love, we lean on Him ; but to make our calling and election sure, to hear the voice of the Saviour, " Thou art mine ; " to see the seal, " The Lord knoweth them that are His ; " this is the secret, hidden, constant prayer, the concentrated work of the Christian. From our point of view, as we live in time, from day to day, our earnest desire must be to continue steadfast, to abide in Christ, to walk with God, to bring forth fruit that will manifest the presence of true and God-given life. Hence the apostle, who says to the Philippians, " Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ," adds to a similar thought in another epistle, " If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel." In the one passage Paul's point of view is the heavenly, eternal one; in the other he looks from earth heavenwards, from time to eternity. And in what other way could he think, speak, exhort and encourage both himself and his fellow-Christians but in this manner, which appears conditional, and as if it contradicted the fixed and eternal election, while to the conscience and heart of the saint there is no discord ? For it is by these very exhortations and warnings that the grace of God keeps us. It is in order that the elect may not fall, it is to bring out in fact and time the (ideal and eternal) impossibility of their apostasy, that God in His wisdom and mercy has sent to us such solemn messages and such fervent entreaties, to watch, to fight, to take heed unto ourselves, to

resist the adversary. The fight of faith is good; that is, beautiful (kalon), according to God's will, in God's strength, and of no uncertain issue: it must lead to victory. But it is a real fight. The enemy, the dangers, the wounds, the difficulties, the insidious and constant attacks—all are real. And can there be such a fight without fear? No: and even the fearful destruction which would follow, on our yielding to the enemy and forsaking our Lord, must be contemplated, that we may cleave to God. My soul followeth hard after thee; to keep within sight of my Guide, nay, leaning on my Beloved, this is my desire.

Yet the man who feareth always is blessed; for in the fear of the Lord, as the wise man saith, there is strong confidence. Strong confidence! For if you think that the Bible doctrine of the Christian's fear favors the notion that the child of God is not to have the knowledge of salvation, that he is not to be filled with joy and peace through believing, you are mistaken. All Christian life starts from faith, trust, and thanksgiving; not from doubt and suspense. Because Jesus the Son of God loved us and gave Himself for us, we live unto Him and serve Him. Moved with fear, like Noah, we enter into the ark, and we are safe, adoring the goodness and the holiness of our Lord and Redeemer. The fear which hath torment is that fear which turns its face from the light and love of God. And if any element of torment enters into our fear we are to turn to the Lord, and look at that perfect love which casteth out fear. Whatever time I am afraid, I will trust in the Lord, said David. When we feel our weakness, danger, and sin, we look unto the Lord Jesus, and hear His voice, "My grace is sufficient for thee."

II. But the believer has rest, now on earth, and hereafter in glory. Resting in Christ, he labours to enter into the perfect rest of eternity. The apostle returns to the quotation from Psalms 95:1-11, feeling that he has not yet exhausted the meaning of this important testimony of the Spirit. On account of unbelief Israel entered not into rest. The promise was theirs; they heard it, but they believed not what they heard. (Isaiah 53:1.)*[II] The word of God is addressed to the heart, and the heart receives it by faith. The understanding assents, the imagination admires, the memory retains, and yet there is no reception of the Word, no inward appropriation, and hence no life or growth. The rain which falls on a roof produces no real and lasting effect; but when it falls on good ground, it maketh it bring forth and bud.

Israel received the Word only superficially, and not mixing it with faith, the word did not profit them. The application is obvious. We have received the word of promise unless by faith we appropriate and assimilate it (mark and inwardly digest it), it will be of no use to us. By faith, then, we do enter into rest. But what did God mean by calling it His rest? Not they enter not into their rest, but His own. Oh, blessed distinction! I hasten to the ultimate and deepest solution of the question. God gives us Himself, and in all His gifts He gives us Himself. Here is the distinction between all religions which men invent, which have their origin in the conscience and heart of man, which spring up from earth, and the truth, the salvation, the life, revealed unto us from above, descending to us from heaven. All religions seek and promise the same things: light, righteousness, peace, strength, and joy. But human religions think only of creature-light, creature-righteousness, of a human, limited, and imperfect peace, strength, and blessedness. They start from man upwards. But God gives us Himself, and in Himself all gifts, and hence all His gifts are perfect and divine. Does God give us righteousness? He Himself is our righteousness, Jehovah-tsidkenu. Does God give us peace? Christ is our peace. Does God give us light? He is our light. Does God give us bread? He is the bread we eat; as the Son liveth by the Father, so he

that eateth Me shall live by Me. (John 6:1-71|.) God Himself is our strength. God Is ours, and in all His gifts and blessings He gives Himself. By the Holy Ghost we are one with Christ, and Christ the Son of God is our righteousness, nay, our life. Do you want any other real presence? Are we not altogether "engodded," God dwelling and living in us, and we in Him? What more real presence, and indwelling, awful and blessed, can we have than that which the apostle described when he said : " I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" ? Or again, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me"? Or as the Lord Himself in His last prayer before His crucifixion said to the Father, "I in them, and thou in me"?

Thus God gives us His rest as our rest.

It is written in the book of Genesis that God rested on the seventh day, and that thus (in His rest)*[III] all His works were finished. The rest of God is the consummation and crown of the creation. Without it the creation would not have been complete. In great condescension the loving God, by the Word and the Spirit, went out of Himself into the "all things" which He called forth. But they were created for Him and unto Him. Hence He returns unto Himself on the seventh day. Heaven and earth are to be filled with His glory. The rest of the seventh day declares the sovereignty, majesty, and blessedness of God, which. all things according to their capacity are to show forth and to rejoice in. Hence, if you will think of it, this Sabbath of God is the substratum and basis of all peace and rest-the pledge of an ultimate and satisfactory purpose in creation. Without this idea the world is nothing else but constant motion without progress, journey without end, toil without reward, question without answer. "Sabbathless Satan." In this word Milton expresses a great thought. But this rest of God in creation was disturbed and marred by sin. For the rest of God means not cessation from exhausting exertion - "He fainteth not, neither is weary." It does not mean cessation from work-" My Father worketh hitherto, and I also work"-but the joy and delight of God in His good and perfect work. God's rest is no longer in the first creation. It is in redemption's new creation, of which redemption Israel's deliverance out of Egypt and entrance into Canaan was a type. God said unto Israel, " Ye are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance, which the Lord your God giveth you. But when ye go over Jordan, and dwell in the land which the Lord your God giveth you to inherit, and when He giveth you rest from all your enemies round about, so that you dwell in safety, &c."*[IV] And referring to this promise, Joshua said unto the two and a half tribes, "Now the Lord your God hath given rest unto your brethren, as He promised." *[V] David said," The Lord God of Israel hath given rest unto His people, that they may dwell in Jerusalem for ever." In this beautiful expression David refers to God's rest, as it is written: "For the Lord hath chosen Zion; He hath desired it for His habitation. This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it."*[VI] When David looked back upon the past history of. His people, full of vicissitudes and troubles, war and conflict, bondage and chastisement, and now contemplated the prospect of peace and quiet, worship and praise, his soul was filled with gratitude and joy. Now the ark was deposited in a permanent abode. Solomon was to be a man of peace. God would rest in His people and they in Him: But these were only types. For if Joshua had given them true rest, if the rest which God gave to Israel was not a mere imperfect shadow and type of the future, why should the Holy Ghost say by David, "To-day if you hear His voice, harden not your heart" ? Why should God speak of entering into His rest? God rests in Christ as the Redeemer and Restorer of fallen man. The Father was pleased in Jesus His beloved Son, and the Lord de-lighted in Him as His elect Servant. Jesus was the Tabernacle where God dwelt and found His rest. For our sins this

Temple, holy and true, was broken; because of our justification it was built again. Now in the risen Jesus, the first begotten from the dead, Head of the church, Heir of all things, the Father beholds His glory and the fulfillment of His counsel. In Him, as our risen Saviour, dwelleth the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and where God's rest is, there also is ours. Hence Jesus promises to give unto all who come to Him rest and peace. (Matthew 11:1-30; John 14:1-31.) *[VII] Our souls long for rest. "Oh, that I had the wings of a dove!. Then would I fly away and be at rest I" is the sigh of every soul. And this rest is only in God's rest. Death brings no rest to our souls. It is Jesus Christ who alone can give rest to man ; for only in Him we are re-stored and brought into communion with God. The reason of our unrest is nothing else but our fall, our abnormal condition, our alienation from God. The centre of our life is not fixed in God, and therefore there is no harmony and no peace; there is no health in us. For rest is not in sloth or unconsciousness, or in a life of half-roused energies. When we have no light for our mind, no peace in our conscience, no love in our heart, then are we disturbed ; then there is no worthy central aim and guide of life. When we are wandering in the wilderness, without knowing the end or beholding the light to direct, then are we without rest. The great promise of Christ is rest. For He is the Restorer. He gives us light. Men of brilliant genius, extensive information, acute and penetrating intellect, have often no rest, because they see not the Light of the world, in whom alone God, immortality, and the way of peace and holiness are revealed. Men of piety and self-denial, who possess a high standard of morality, are not at rest, because they have not Christ, and in Him, the holy and righteous, yet merciful and loving forgiveness of God. The whole spiritual nature of man is without its centre until Christ is loved, and our life is a waiting for Him, and going forth to meet the Bridegroom.

We enjoy rest in Christ by faith. But the perfect enjoyment of rest is still in the future. *[VIII] There remaineth a sabbatism for the people of God.*[IX] Believers will enter into rest after their earthly pilgrimage, labor and conflict, and the whole creation will share in the liberty and joy of the children of God. The substance and fore-taste of this rest we have even now in Christ. In Him, as the glorified Head of the Church, the Father and the believers meet even now, and we have perfection and complete peace. But as Christ has entered into glory, we are to be glorified together with Him at His coming. Then will be perfectly satisfied the great and deep-seated desire of our heart for rest. By rest is not meant inactivity, but peace and harmony within and with all that is around us. We cannot conceive of God's children in eternity in a state of inactivity; for by reason of their union with Christ and with all angels, by reason of the central position given to the church, the glorified believers not merely behold and praise, but serve God day and night. Work is not opposed to rest. If we possessed perfect light, so that we saw clearly the end and the method of labor ; if we possessed a perfect medium of work, so that mind and body were perfect and efficient tools for the directing will, so that reason, affection, and all our energies, soul and body were willing, adequate servants of the spirit; if we were endowed with sufficient and unfailing strength, so that there could be no painful exhaustion or disproportion between the design and the power of execution ; and if the material to be worked upon was plastic and impressible, responsive to our thought, then work would be the greatest enjoyment, and in work would be a continued renewal of strength and an uninterrupted repose of thanksgiving. But all these conditions will be fulfilled in the renewed earth. The saints will be in light; seeing and knowing as they are known, they will possess minds and bodies, energies and powers, perfect and adequate instruments of their God-filled volitions, they will never be faint and weary, and all curse and obstructions will be removed. Thus while they praise and rejoice they will work, while they execute God's commandments they will behold His

countenance. They will both reign and rest with Christ. But the great contrast between the sabbatism we wait for and the present period is this. In the present life we are to work out according to God's energy within us; we are to sow, to lay up treasure, to grow, and make increase. We have talents entrusted, and we are to trade with them. Death stereotypes our character and ends our labors. It is here on earth that through sufferings and discipline we are conformed to the image of Christ. As we have been faithful, so shall we be rewarded. As we have been faithful, so are we; whatever meekness, patience, love, humility, we have learned on earth, we shall possess throughout eternity. It is true of all God's saints, from the least to the greatest, that, delivered from the body of death, they are also freed from sin and the old man; beholding the glory of Christ, they become like Him whom they see. Yet, without contradicting this comforting truth, the Scriptures constantly connect our faithfulness, obedience, and discipline on earth with our eternal condition and blessedness, with the reward which sovereign grace will assign to the heirs of life. They who sow sparingly reap sparingly; they who sow abundantly reap abundantly. There is no sowing after death, no more laying out our talents on usury; no more development or growth. According to our life in the body is our glory; work therefore while it is day. (2 Corinthians 5:10; John 9:4.)

While this is a very solemn truth, stimulating us to diligence and watchfulness, we must ever hold fast the blessed assurance that all believers will be glorified with Christ. Believers differ in glory, and in this diversity and gradation there will be harmony and the exercise of love and enjoyment of communion. For they who are nearest Christ, and possessed of the highest glory, are most fully conformed to the image of Him who is meek and lowly in heart, and their delight is to enrich all their brethren out of the abundance of their knowledge and joy. Have I brought before you apparently contradictory doctrines? Fear and the assurance of God's salvation, rest and labor? In Christ Jesus all contradictions are solved. Let us learn Christ. Look unto Him, and you will fear lest you displease and grieve Him, lest the heavenly Bride-groom should discern in you the heart of unbelief and the love of the world. And this very fear will draw you to lean on Him and to abide in Him, who is your only life and strength. Rest in Jesus, and resting in Him you will labor, you will serve Christ in the Church, and you will look upon duties and trials as heavenly discipline to make you Christ like, as precious seed which will bring plentiful harvest. We can take nothing out of this world but Christ formed in us. And what-ever may have been our calling and occupation, the only question is, Has it been made subservient to the formation of the Christ-man? Earthly things are to be viewed in their relation to spiritual and eternal realities. The sum and substance of all our experiences, actions and trials in time must needs be the character, the attitude of the heart, the strength and affection of the soul. If a Christian is in business, if he has many and complicated transactions, many difficult and important duties, in which the welfare of others is concerned, large and complicated responsibilities, the question is, Has he learnt faithfulness, justice, kindness, self-restraint, generosity? Has he been a steward of God's gifts? Has he been heavenly-minded, fervent in spirit while not slothful in business? Then all his earthly work has been spiritual work, and his labor in time has wrought out eternal results.

Whatever our duties, trials, social position, our mental attainments may be, the Christian's one aim is, that through them all Christ should be formed in him. Thus the Christian is always feeding upon Christ, he is always eating and drinking spiritual nourishment; all things work together to promote his growth and his conformity to the Saviour. As we speak of making flesh, so we may speak of the

Christian making Spirit; doing all things to the glory of God and in the name of Christ: he is continually laboring for the meat which endureth for ever. Though engaged in what is secular, temporal, and apparently transitory, his spiritual, eternal man is forming; he is preparing his everlasting and peculiar mansion and harvest. Christ is the Vine, and we are the branches; but the object, fruit, and glory of the vine is to produce wine. No emblem can set forth the truth fully; for as Christ is the Vine, so the love of Christ abiding in the heart and trans-forming the soul is also the ultimate blessedness and glory of believers. Even now we possess and enjoy this love; hence our labor is full of rest ; and when at last we enter into the perfect rest, we shall be satisfied with His likeness when we behold His face in righteousness.

[I] * The patriarchs are often commended because they feared God. (Genesis 31:42;Genesis 31:54;Genesis 22:12;Genesis 13:18.) Theirs was especially a dispensation of faith and love. There was as yet no law, and they walked in simplicity before God, trussing in His goodness, and depending on His guidance. It is never said in Genesis that they loved God; but their fear of God is mentioned, their reverential and confiding sense of the holy and loving presence of God.

[II] (2)* Comp.Romans 10:16-17. "Report," or literally that which is heard, is the same as preaching; the word of God heard is to produce faith. The prophet asks, Who hath believed that which through us was heard?

[III] (3)* In considering the "rest of God" inGenesis 2:1-25, we should dismiss from our minds the questions concerning "Sabbath and Lord's-day," which are apt to narrow and cloud our view of this great subject.

[IV] (4)*Deuteronomy 12:9-10 [V] (5)*Joshua 22:4.

[VI] (6)*1 Chronicles 23:1-32;Psalms 132:13-14

[VII] (7)* The Hebrew word for peace (Shalom) implies' restoration to perfection, to the state of normal and complete being.

[VIII] (8)* In like manner salvation and adoption are spoken of as future. (1 Peter 1:5;Romans 8:23-24.)

[IX] (9)* Sabbatismos (in our translation rest) is used here, and not katapausis, as inHebrews 3:11;Hebrews 3:18;Hebrews 4:1;Hebrews 4:3;Hebrews 4:5;Hebrews 4:10-11; into God's rest we enter by faith when we trust in Jesus; into the Sabbatismos we enter when our day-work is finished and we rest from our labours (Revelation 14:13), and still more fully when Christ shall make all things new, and rest in the full enjoyment of His redemptive work.

10 The Word of God, Judging The Christian Below

CHAPTER X.

TILE WORD OF GOD, JUDGING THE CHRISTIAN BELOW; THE GREAT HIGH PRIEST'S SYMPATHY AND HELP ABOVE.

Hebrews 4:12-16.

RESTING by faith in Jesus, and laboring to enter into that perfect rest which remaineth to the people of God, the Christian, during his pilgrimage through the wilderness, is guided by the word of God, which is in his hand, and upheld and encouraged by the intercession and sympathy of the great High Priest above. The apostle, having based his earnest exhortation on the Scripture, on what the Holy Ghost saith in Psalms 95:1-11, naturally confirms it by reminding the Hebrews of the majesty and power of the word of God. They who are under the influence of the divine word must be decided, earnest, whole-hearted. For God's word is perfect; it enters into the inmost depths of the heart, it searches out every secret thought, and judges our life from its hidden root to all its manifestations. You who are in contact with the word of God, with the mind of Christ, with the depth-searching Spirit, are you more real and thorough than others? Does God find in you the truth He desires in the inward parts?

We are familiar with the word of God. 'Like Israel, we possess this treasure in our country, in our families. It is in our homes and schools. We know it from our childhood. The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth. How often have our lips uttered the very words of the living God. But, thankful as we ought to be for this great privilege, do we know also the majesty and the power of the word of God? Do we know that, in possessing, reading, and knowing the Scripture, we are under a mighty, solemn, and decisive influence, and that this word judges us now, and will judge us at the last day? Do we tremble at the word of Jehovah? Does the word judge and decide, mould and govern, guide and comfort? What are and do ye more than others, who know only human words and opinions, to whom Scripture also is but the word of man? Is it evident, from the effects the word has produced in you, that it is the word of the living God? Oh, blessed are they who, like the author of Psalms 119:1-176, can give to the word more than a hundredfold praise! The expressions which are used here of the word of God are all applicable to Christ Himself ; for He is living, He is the power of God, He came for judgment into the world, He is the Searcher of hearts, His eyes are like a flame of fire. But the reference is to the spoken and written word. For in this epistle the Lord is never called the Word, as in the gospel of John and in the book of Revelation. We know how intimate and essential is the connection between the eternal, living, personal word and the Scriptures. The Son is the Word, the revealer of God, the expression of His thought, the manifestation of His light and love. Christ is the Word of God, and therefore Christ is the sum and substance of Scripture. Of Him testify Moses and the prophets. The Spirit of Christ did signify, both in the types of the law and the prophecies, of His sufferings and glory. The Scripture, as the written word, is according to Christ and of Christ; and by it Christ is heard, received, and formed in the soul. Of this written Word, of which Christ is centre and end, as well as author and method, which

is inspired by the Holy Ghost and sent by God, the gospel message is the kernel. And hence it is this gospel which especially is called the Word. "All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away; but the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the Word which by the gospel is preached unto you." And is not all Scripture gospel? For even the law, convincing of sin and declaring condemnation, is only sent to prepare the heart for the reception of Christ's grace and salvation. And blessed are they who are wounded by Moses, for Jesus shall heal them. The Word is living (zwn). (Revelation 1:18, Greek.John 5:26;John 5:21;John 5:24;John 6:63;John 6:68|.) God is called the Living One; and Christ the Lord calls Him-self the Living One. He is the life, He has life in Himself, and He came to quicken and to give unto us life abundantly. And the Word which proceedeth out of the mouth and heart o God, the Word of which Christ is the substance, and which is given and watched over by the Spirit, is also living ; for God's words are spirit and life. The Word is the seed, which appears insignificant, but which if received in good ground shows its vitality. Hence it is by this Word that souls are born again unto eternal life. They who receive the word of God (not texts and sermons) experience that this Word does not remain within them as a dead and inert mass, a mere addition to their previous knowledge, but that it produces within them life. All words, to a certain extent, may be compared to seed; but they cannot produce new, spiritual, divine, eternal life. They may add to the knowledge, excite the emotions, stimulate the energies, rouse the conscience of the old man; they cannot create the new life. The word of God quickens the dead. As the Word, applied by the Spirit, produces, so it also sustains and promotes life. " As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby." The Saviour, who is life, calls Himself not merely bread, but living bread ; so the word of God, by which our life is sustained, is a living Word. The living Word is powerful or energetic (enepges). It is compared to the seed which possesses vitality and power. It springs up and grows while men are asleep and unconscious of its operation. First comes the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. The word of God is continually active; it grows and energizes in our thoughts and motives, it brings forth fruit in our words and actions, it impels to exertion, it sustains in trial. We can see the power or energy of the Word when it fills those that hear and receive it with strong emotions, filling them with fear and terror, with grief and contrition; we can see its power in the sudden and striking changes it produces, when the thoughtless and worldly, the selfish and depraved, are arrested and quickened by its mighty power. But while the earthquake and the fire declare the approach of the Lord, it is in the still small voice that the Lord at last appears to take up His permanent abode. There are the hidden flowers of humility, of forgiving love, of patience and meekness; there are the unseen and unknown daily conflicts and victories; there is the crucifixion of the old man, and the constant renewal of the resurrection-life; and these are especially the triumphs of the power of the Word. The Word cannot be loving and energetic with. out being also a sword, dividing and separating with piercing and often painful sharpness that, which in our natural state lies together mixed and confused. The Word of God, by which all things were called forth, divided and separated darkness from light, the waters above from the waters below, the dry land from the sea. The Word of God, which came unto the fathers, tried and proved them; it was a heart-searching Word, which called forth conflict, and commanded separation from all ungodliness and all trust in the flesh. The Word of God, incarnate, was declared from His infancy set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. For before life enters into the soul, there is no separation, division, warfare; all things are chaotic, without form and void. The soul, or the lower

intellectual and sentient life, is not distinguished from the spirit and the higher God ward and eternal life. We do not discern the inner man delighting in the law of God and the other law striving in our members. We call evil good, and do not know that there is only one good, even God. We savour the things that are of man and not of God ; and while we think ourselves disciples, Jesus calls us Satan. We do not know nature and grace, flesh and Spirit, earth and heaven, self and Christ, Adam and the Lord, the quickening Spirit. We sing, but it is not the melody of the heart; we pray, but it is not in faith ; we read the Scripture, but it is not hearing the voice of God ; we preach, and visit, and work, as we call it, for Christ, and it is not as the servants who do not their own will, seek not their own glory, and rely not on their own strength. We imitate Christ, but not the real Christ, who sought only to please and honour God, who walked in love, who came not to do His own will. Oh, when the whole life of Jesus stands before the eyes of our heart, when we behold ourselves in this mirror, how deeply humbled do we feel! I think of the singleness of His aim, " I came to do not my will, but the will of Him that sent me ;" I think of the uninterrupted calmness and fervour of His faith in God ; I think of His absolute and inexhaustible love, which gave expecting nothing again, which was always ready to forgive and to bless ; I think of Him as walking in love, love surrounding all His footsteps, love (and that in a sinful world which hated Him) the atmosphere in which He breathed, the constant manifestation of His heart, "And when mine eye seeth Him, I abhor myself. (Job 42:5-6.) The word of God comes as a sword, and separates and analyzes; it comes not to flatter and to soothe ; it comes not to encourage us with half-true, half-false encomiums ; it does not call the flesh Spirit, but condemns it as flesh and enmity against God. It leads you into the lower Christian life (John 3:30) ; it discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart, the hidden self-complacency, the hidden ambition and self-will ; it enters into the very joints and marrow, the energies and sentiments, the motives and springs of our actions, the true character of our rejoicing and mourning, our elevations and depressions ; and then you say with the apostle : I have no confidence in the flesh, in my old nature, in me, body, soul, and spirit as I am of Adam. I dare not trust the sweetest frame. I cannot call my "holy things" holy, for they are full of sin. The word of God enters into my inmost soul and heart-life, and as a judge both unveils and condemns ; what hitherto was hidden, is uncovered ; what was disguised, unveiled ; what was falsely called good and spiritual, appears now in the bright light of God's countenance; the thoughts and intents of the heart are discerned,

Thus am I brought into God's presence, as when I first was convinced of my sin and my guilt ; but I feel more abased, and with a deeper knowledge and sorrow I exclaim : I am vile, and abhor myself in dust and ashes. Oh, where is Christ? I wish to be found in Him. I wish Him to live in me. What is there in me pleasing to God? Oh that Christ would sing, pray, love, live in me! When the Word thus dwells in us, we give glory to God, and we are spiritually-minded. We live not on mere notions and impressions; we begin to apply our knowledge to our actual state and to our daily walk; we are delivered from hypocrisy, which is since the fall the great disease of mankind, especially those who enjoy the privilege of belonging to the congregation of God. What is hypocrisy but as the word signifies, living in a vain show, the semblance of things? As actors on a stage, who pretend they are kings, and possess power and large armies, who speak and demean themselves with great dignity; so men professing faith and godliness rest satisfied with a form and outline, without substance and fullness? The word of God suffers not such a semblance and shadowy deception. It brings us into the presence of Him who desireth truth in the inward part. The Christian, who is judged, chastened, and corrected, who is wounded and killed by this living and powerful Word,

prays : "Search me, and try me, and see if there be any wicked thing in me, and lead me in ..he way everlasting."

Here alone is peace. Without this solemn awe and trembling at the word of God, there is no true rest in Christ. There may be much talk about peace and assurance, expressions which are exuberant, but proceed not out of a full heart, which sound strong and courageous, but are not of the Spirit, in whom alone is might. He who has confidence in the flesh does not rejoice in Christ Jesus. And to have no confidence in the flesh is the result of the pain-inflicting judgment of the Word. When we judge ourselves, we are not judged. When we confess our sin, He is faithful and just to forgive our sin. When we admit that we have denied Him thrice, we can say: "Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee."*[I] The Word judger, us on earth, and we are humbled; the Lord Jesus represents us in heaven; He intercedes for us, He sympathizes with us. We look from earth and self to the sanctuary above, and find there nothing but love, grace, sympathy, and the fullness of blessings. He is our great High Priest. Israel in the wilderness, though full of sin, was brought nigh to God through the priesthood, and especially through the High Priest. We have the substance, of which tabernacle and priests were types. Christ is our great, eternal and all-sufficient High Priest in heaven. We must lift up our eyes and hearts to heaven in order to find peace and consolation. Jesus the Son of God (Hebrews 1:2), who by His sufferings and death became a merciful and faithful High Priest (Hebrews 2:17), has, according to the will and word of the Father (Hebrews 1:3; Hebrews 1:13); He is called great, for Aaron and Melchisedek are but types, while He is the true and eternal Priest. The throne on which He is seated is the same throne which is called the throne of the majesty. But unto us it is now a throne of grace. The Father, the Lamb, and the Spirit, are One, the God of salvation. We who are justified by the blood of Christ are now in the presence of the Father. All divine attributes and perfections are now full of peace and consolation; we behold the throne of God as a throne of grace. As forgiven, accepted, nay, as the righteousness of God in Christ, we are before God. Beholding Jesus as our great High Priest, we shall have strength to hold fast our profL notwithstanding all our difficulties and sins, and we shall have boldness to go to the throne of grace, to obtain mercy and help in the time of need.

Judged and humbled by the word on earth, we are strengthened and comforted by the great High Priest in heaven. Through suffering and temptation, through infirmity and conflict, the Son of man ascended high above all principalities and powers, thrones and dominions; high above all heavens, into the very presence and glory of God. He has entered into the holy of holies; He possesses now, as the Son of man, the glory which He had with the Father from all eternity. Far above all created heavens, far above all created angels, we behold now Him who first descended into the lower parts of the earth. Our Lord Jesus, who hungered and thirsted, who lived in the weakness and infirmity of the flesh, who sighed and wept, who prayed and agonized, who was tempted of the devil, who died on the cross, who was buried and descended into Hades, He is now in the most excellent glory, and He is there as our High Priest, Representative, and Head. " Glory to God in the highest," sang the angels; and in that highest region-if we may so call that which is above space as eternity is above time-lives now our Lord, with whom wq are one.

Think not of the quiet resting-place of the saints who, free from sin and toil, are asleep in Jesus-think not of the heavens of angels, who in strength and love execute God's commandment -but high above them, in the sanctuary, in the palace, in the very throne of the glorious and ever-blessed Godhead, is the Man Christ Jesus. And we who were co-crucified with Him are there

in Him. The Father beholds us in Christ; we are whiter than snow, and the beauty of the Lord shines on us. In that sanctuary of blessedness and glory Jesus, who was tempted in all things as we are, apart from sin, is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. He remembers His earthly experience. He knows our frailty, the painfulness of the conflict, the weakness of the flesh.

"Where high the heavenly temple stands, The house of God not made with hands, A great High Priest our nature wears, The Guardian of mankind appears.

"He who for men their surety stood, And poured on earth His precious blood, Pursues in heaven His mighty plan, The Saviour and the Friend of man.

"Though now ascended up on high, He bends on earth a brother's eye;

Partaker of the human name, He knows the frailty of our frame.

"Our fellow-sufferer yet retains A fellow-feeling of our pains ; And still remembers in the skies, His tears, His agonies, and cries."

He knows our danger, and that Satan hath desired to have us, that he may sift us as wheat. While the Saviour thus regards us with compassion and with sympathy, He has no lower standard for us, no lower aim, than He had for Himself. We are to be in the world as He was, to overcome as He overcame, and to end even where the Lord is; it is Christ's will, that where He is we who believe in Him should be likewise. As He was in heaven, even while He lived on earth, so He desires that, even while in the wilderness, we should have our citizenship in heaven. And as He overcame, and is set down on His Father's throne, so He desires that we should overcome and share His throne and dominion.

Remember both the tenderness of the High Priest's heart, and the comprehensive scope of His intercession. This indeed is true sympathy, not with the sin, but with the sinner. The perfectly holy and victorious One alone can give true sympathy, seeking our real, our highest good. Sympathy comes to us from the "very highest" heaven. His intercession is perpetual, unceasing; it is sovereign, and part of the divine covenant-gifts. Even as He died for us, and rose again, and ascended into heaven for our salvation, so He ever liveth to intercede. It is not in answer to our prayer, it is not according to our works and merits, that He died for us. Even so is His intercession His own divine, gracious, sovereign gift. As His infinite and inexhaustible love brought Him from the throne of His glory to live and die upon earth, so the same love is now the source of His constant care and faithfulness, and of His never-ceasing intercession. We are upheld according to His loving-kindness, according to the multitude of His tender mercies. Justified by His blood, we are now much more abundantly saved by His life. And having such a High Priest in heaven, can we lose courage? can we draw back in cowardice, impatience, and faint-heartedness ? Can we give up our profession, our allegiance, our obedience to Christ? Or shall we not be like Joshua and Caleb, who followed the Lord fully? Let us hold fast our profession; let us persevere and fight the good fight on earth. Our great High Priest in the highest glory is our righteousness and strength; He loves, He watches, He prays, He holds us fast, and we shall never perish. Jesus is our Moses, who in the height above prays for us Jesus our true Joshua, who gains the victory over our enemies. Only be strong, and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed. In that mirror of the Word in which we behold our sin and weakness we behold also the image of that perfect One who has passed through the conflict and temptation, who as the High Priest bears us

on His loving heart, and as the Shepherd of the flock holds us in safety for evermore. Boldly we come to the throne of grace. In Jesus we draw near to the Father. The throne of majesty and righteousness is unto us a throne of grace. The Lord is our God. In one aspect Christ tells us that He does not pray to the Father for us, because the Father Himself loveth us. We behold in Christ's intercession the Father's love, even as in the death of Christ we recognize the love of God. Our God then is enthroned in grace. There is not merely grace on the throne, but the throne is altogether the throne of grace. It is grace which disciplines us by the sharp and piercing Word; it is grace which looks on us when we have denied Him, and makes us weep bitterly. Jesus always intercedes; the throne is always a throne of grace. The Lamb is in the midst of the throne. Hence we come boldly.

Boldly is not contrasted with reverently and tremblingly; boldness is not contrasted with awe and godly fear. It means literally "saying all," with that confidence which begets thorough honesty, frankness, full and open speech. "Pour out your heart before Him." Come as you are, say what you feel, ask what you need. Confess your sins, your fears, your wandering thoughts and affections.

Jesus the Lord went through all sorrows and trials the heart of man can go through, and as He felt all affliction and temptation most keenly, so in all these difficulties and trials He had communion with the Father. He knows, therefore, how to succour them that are tempted. How fully and unreservedly may we speak to God in the presence and by the mediation of the man Christ Jesus. The Lord Jesus is filled with tender compassion, and the most profound, lively, and comprehensive sympathy. This belongs to the perfection of His high-priesthood. For this very purpose He was tempted, He suffered.-Our infirmities, it is true, are intimately connected with our sinfulness; the weakness of our flesh is never free from a sinful concurrence of the will; and the Saviour knows from His experience on earth how ignorant, poor, weak, sinful, and corrupt His disciples are. He loved them, watched over them with unwearied patience; prayed for them that their faith fail not; and reminded them the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. He remembers also His own sinless weakness; He knows what constant thought, meditation, and prayer are needed to over-come Satan, and to be faithful to God. He knows what it is for the soul to be sorrowful and overwhelmed, and what it is to be refreshed by the sunshine of divine favor, and to rejoice in the Spirit. We may come to Him expecting full, tender, deep sympathy, and compassion. He is ever ready to strengthen and comfort, to heal and to restore. He is prepared to receive the poor, wounded, sin-stained believer ; to dry the tears of Peter weeping bitterly; to say to Paul, oppressed with the thorn in the flesh, " My grace is sufficient for thee."

We need only understand that we are sinners and that He is High Priest. The law was given that every mouth may be shut, for we are guilty. The High Priest is given that every mouth may be open, for Jesus receives sinners. He saves and upholds all who put their trust in Him. It is by reason of that secret pride and self-righteousness, which Satan as a subtle poison infuses into the human heart, that when we feel our sinfulness and transgression we do not go boldly to the loving and compassionate High Priest, to the throne of grace. And this latent self-righteousness often expresses itself in such regretful phrases as, Well, I must just depend on the mercy of God ; as if the mercy of our God and Saviour was a last resource when other and better things have failed, as if it was not our only peace, joy, and glory, as if it was not the best robe and the unspeakable gift, as if Jesus was not all in all, as if our song in time and eternity were not-" Worthy is the Lamb that was slain. He loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood."

We come in faith as sinners. Then shall we obtain mercy ; and we always need mercy. As pilgrims on earth we always need mercy, to wash our feet, to restore to us the joy of salvation, to heal our backslidings, and bind up our wounds. We shall obtain help in every time of need. For God may suffer Satan and the world, want and suffering, to go against us; but He always causes all things to work together for our good. He permits the time of need, that we may call upon Him, and, being delivered by Him, may glorify His name. He will send timely (eukaipon BoeQeian) help before we succumb to the infirmities and temptations which beset us. For He, who will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able, will send deliverance at the right moment, when all the purposes of grace and chastening discipline have been secured. All the help we need-wisdom, patience, strength, daily bread, all is treasured up for us in the heavenly places ; the sanctuary is also the treasury; the High Priest is also King. From the throne of grace God will send it. Come boldly.

Jesus belongs to the sinner. From His infancy in Bethlehem's manger to the garden of Gethsemane, and from His agony on the cross to His ascension high above all heavens, He belongs to us, poor, guilty and helpless sinners, who trust in Him. He is altogether ours. He came to seek and to save us who were lost. His obedience, His life of sorrow and love, His prayers and tears, His sacrifice on the cross, His resurrection, all is ours, because we are the wayward and help-less sheep who went astray, and whom He found. And in the heavenly glory He is ours, and His love, sympathy, faithfulness and power, give unto us in our need and misery, all things which pertain unto life and godliness. It is with us sinners that the glorified Saviour is now constantly occupied. We are His thought, His care, His work, and-oh that it were so more abundantly I-His joy, His garden, His reward. In Jesus God is ours. In the ocean of His love, in the fullness of infinite covenant-grace, we can rejoice. The God with whom we have to do seeth and knoweth all things ; He is a consuming fire-and yet is He our God, Father, Saviour, indwelling Spirit; His throne is the throne of grace; nay, our very life is hid with Christ in God ; we are in the bosom of Jesus, who is in the bosom of the Father. Hold fast, brother, and come boldly Amen.

[I] (1)* The expression, "two-edged sword," is used Proverbs 5:4; Psalms 149:6; and Revelation 1:16; Revelation 2:12. In the prophet Isaiah the Messiah saith : "He hath made my mouth like a sharp sword " (Isaiah 49:2) ; and in the days of His flesh He declared, "The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. (John 12:48.) They who are pierced by the word, and wounded in their inmost heart, are also healed and comforted, and shall not enter into the judgment of condemnation. The sword is bitter, but the land that wields it is sweet and loving. The dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow: mueloi, organs of thought and sensation; apmoi, those of motion and activity; yuce and pneuma, according to the Scripture, refer to the lower and higher spiritual life of man. This thought is more clearly expressed: xpruc6r; that is, discerns and judges of the desires (soul) and thoughts (spirit) of the Use, in which both soul and spirit centre. Thus the heart by tilt word is brought into the presence of God, with whom we have to do, and before whom all things are open (tpacelicein, expose to view). The intimate relation between the personal word of God and the written word is evident. Now what is said of the latter always points to its source and fountain, the Lord Himself. The following remarks of Otinger are practical: "The word of God in the Spirit separates soul and spirit out of a state of confusion; as often as I conquer myself by recollection of Scripture passages, by spiritual thoughts, which lie already prepared in my mind, this separation takes place; the affections, prejudices, and complicated departures from the truth, which arise from below, are corrected and judged by the

spirit above. Our lower mind has many preconceived ideas, which are full of distrust, doubt, and hypocrisy, as regards the gospel. To distinguish these from the enlightened thoughts of the heart is the redemption through faith. Spiritual we call the mind, which is planted in us through the heavenly doctrine of the gospel; when this mind is established in us and confirmed, the apostle Peter calls it the incorruptible essence of a meek and quiet spirit. It expresses itself in thoughts which are true, and which continue solid and steadfast, and in a wisdom which pervades all our actions, not in optical, unsubstantial thoughts (that is, mere theoretical, shadowy notions and images). As soon as by grace this mind is planted in us, the separation spoken of in Hebrews 4:1-16 Commences. To know this is a matter of experience. If we find that we ourselves experience the effects of the word which we expect it to exercise on others; if I know from Rom. vii. that there are two wills in me, the one out of the truth, the other out of the imagination (God-estranged), the one of God, the other of self, the Holy Ghost assists me in an indescribable manner to discern what is in me, to distinguish between the spiritual inner man and the lower carnal. Thus the Spirit leads me into truth. To be spiritually-minded is life eternal and liberty. If I allow the word of God to exercise its separating power (according to the true method of the Scripture and the sacraments), I am brought into the true spiritual condition and understanding ; the more faithful and patient I am in my reception of the most delicate words and operations of the Spirit, of all the sayings and commands of Jesus, the clearer and freer becomes my mind, and flesh and spirit are separated, so that I am no longer in the flesh (Rom. vii.), but in the Spirit (Romans 8:1-39.; Galatians 2:1-21), although I still live in the flesh. (2 Corinthians 10:1-18.)"

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