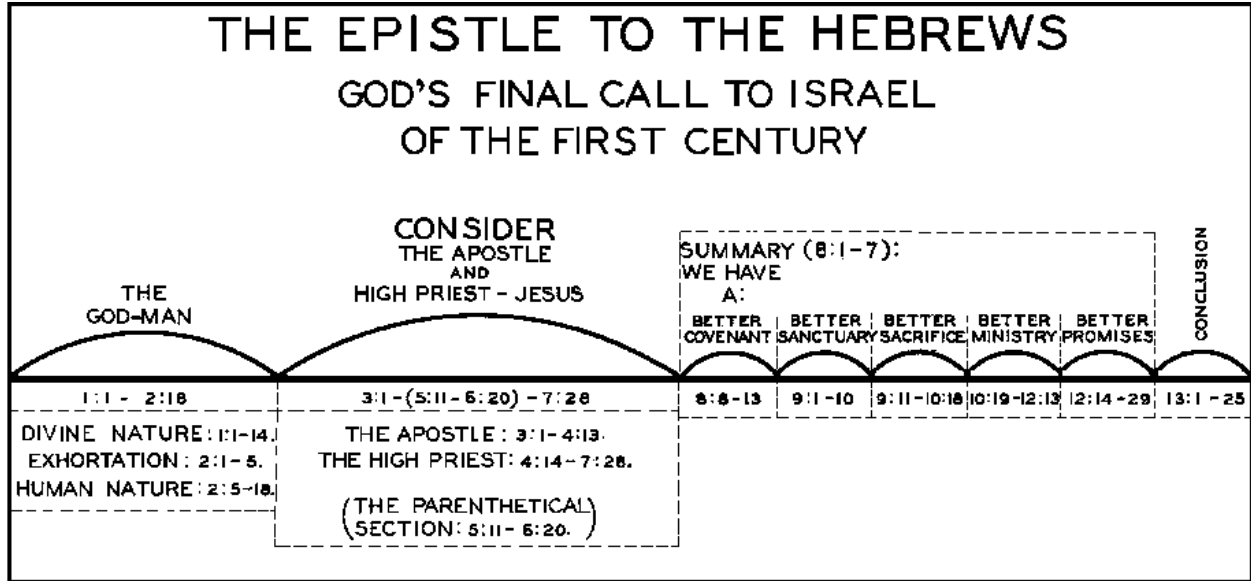


A STUDY IN THE BOOK OF HEBREWS
 Biblical Research Monthly,
 August, 1942—July, 1944
 By Dr. David L. Cooper



Index

Installment 1	The Background for the Epistle	<i>Page 3</i>
Installment 2	Who wrote the letter to the Hebrews? To whom was it addressed?	<i>Page 5</i>
Installment 3	An Analysis of the Epistle	<i>Page 8</i>
Installment 4	Hebrews 1	<i>Page 10</i>
Installment 5	Hebrews 2:1-4	<i>Page 13</i>
Installment 6	Hebrews 2:5-18	<i>Page 17</i>
Installment 7	Hebrews 3:1-6	<i>Page 21</i>
Installment 8	Hebrews 3:6-11	<i>Page 24</i>
Installment 9	Hebrews 3:12-19	<i>Page 27</i>
Installment 10	Hebrews 4:1-13	<i>Page 30</i>
Installment 11	Hebrews 4:14-16	<i>Page 33</i>
Installment 12	Hebrews 5:1-10	<i>Page 36</i>
Installment 13	Hebrews 5:11-6:20	<i>Page 39</i>
Installment 14	Hebrews 7	<i>Page 42</i>
Installment 15	Hebrews 8:1-7	<i>Page 46</i>
Installment 16	HEBREWS 8:8-13	<i>Page 49</i>
Installment 17	HEBREWS 9:1-10	<i>Page 52</i>
Installment 18	HEBREWS 9:11-22	<i>Page 55</i>
Installment 19	HEBREWS 9:23-28	<i>Page 58</i>
Installment 20	HEBREWS 10:1-18	<i>Page 61</i>
Installment 21	HEBREWS 10:19-31	<i>Page 66</i>
Installment 22	HEBREWS 11	<i>Page 71</i>
Installment 23	HEBREWS 12	<i>Page 75</i>
Installment 24	HEBREWS 13	<i>Page 79</i>

THE BACKGROUND FOR THE EPISTLE (Installment 1)

The Book of Hebrews is one of the most profound sections of the Word of God. In it we get a glimpse of the Lord Jesus Christ as the God man more clearly than we do in any other portion of the Scriptures. Moreover, we understand by a study of this epistle that He is God's Apostle to the human family and our great High Priest. Because He is what He is and has done what He has accomplished for us, we have a covenant better than that of Israel; a sanctuary better than that of the Hebrews; a better sacrifice than the blood that flowed on Jewish altars; a better ministry than that conducted by the Aaronic priesthood; and better promises than those made to the Jews. In every way we have things better than those enjoyed by the Israelites.

The Book of Hebrews reaches to the loftiest heights and the greatest depths, and covers, possibly, more territory than any other one letter of the New Testament. No Christian can afford not to have an adequate and clear conception of this marvelous portion of the Word. In this article therefore we shall begin a study of this most precious message from God.

In order that we might appreciate it, we must first see the background lying behind it. Without a knowledge of these facts, one cannot comprehend fully the great message contained in the epistle. We must also, if possible, learn by whom the letter was written and to whom and for what purpose it was sent. The data on these things we shall glean from a study of the letter itself.

One fundamental principle which a person must grasp, if he is to understand the Hebrew epistle, is that of the solidarity of the Hebrew race. God created Isaac by a biological miracle and thus brought the Hebrew race into existence for a definite and specific purpose (Isaiah 43:1-7). Israel was forbidden to intermarry with the nations. She was to be in the world but not of it. When these foreign marriages were contracted, the leaders of Israel strenuously opposed them. This is especially seen in the Book of Ezra and Nehemiah. The prophets likewise denounced such alliances. These facts show the Almighty's intention to keep His Chosen People separate and apart from the nations. This conception has dominated Jewish thinking throughout the centuries to the present day. The people of Israel, therefore, are bound together both by racial and religious ties. The student must keep this fact in mind.

The first sermon preached after the Holy Spirit came to the apostles resulted in the organization of the church of Jesus Christ in Jerusalem on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of our Lord (Acts 2). According to this passage, the believers continued to assemble in the Temple for fellowship and worship. Though they had accepted Christ, they still had their connection with the Temple and likewise with the synagogue. As late as 50 A.D. we see that the Jerusalem church was still maintaining a very close connection with their unbelieving brethren. When the gospel was preached among the Gentiles, as we learn in Acts 11, there was a certain element in the Jerusalem community which insisted that the Gentile converts had to submit to the right of circumcision and accept the Law in order to be saved. In other words, these brethren insisted that the formula for salvation was the Law plus Christ. Some may have worded the thought differently, by saying, "Christ was the Law". Nevertheless, it was insisted upon by them that the Law must be observed. These brethren from the mother church went as far as Antioch insisting that the Gentile converts must submit to the Law of Moses and thus enter into the body of Christ through the back door of Judaism, so to speak. This situation called for the convening of the first

church conference in Jerusalem about 50 A.D. In this convention the apostles and elders, guided by the Holy Spirit, ruled against such a formula for salvation. Thus Gentile liberty in Christ was preserved.

At this time, we see that Hebrew believers were still maintaining their connection with the synagogue. This appears in James 2:1.

Another fact that we must remember as we approach the study of Hebrews is that the apostles always went to the Jewish synagogue when they visited any given community. Though Paul knew that the Law was terminated in Christ and that salvation is by grace through faith, yet, he, together with others, still maintained connection with the synagogue, sufficiently to warrant their preaching in those meetings.

When Paul went up to Jerusalem at the completion of his third missionary tour, there were certain brethren who had a vow upon them. He went with them to the Temple and was "at charges for them." (See Acts 21:17f.) This incident showed beyond a doubt that the connection with the synagogue and Jewish worship was still maintained, at least by a portion of the church in Jerusalem.

When Paul arrived in Rome, he studied with the leaders of the Jewish community who told him that they had not received any evil report concerning him by any method of communication. They, however, stated that they had heard of the sect (of Christians) concerning whom they wished to learn more. They considered Christianity just another division or sect of the Jews. This fact shows that the breach between the church and the synagogue had not occurred—at least to any marked degree.

When we reach Hebrews 13:13, we shall see that the writer urged his readers to go without the camp and worship and serve the Lord Jesus Christ. When this statement is taken in the light of all the facts of the context (both immediate and in a large connection) one concludes that still there was no breach separating the church from the synagogue.

It is true that after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., the rift became more and more pronounced, but even in the second century of the Christian Era, we find echoes in the Jewish Talmud of the fact that there were believers still maintaining their connection with the synagogue; however, they were under suspicion of the Jewish leaders.

WHO WROTE THE LETTER? (Installment 2)

In this article I shall endeavor to answer the two following questions: Who wrote the letter to the Hebrews? To whom was it addressed?

Various opinions are held by conservative scholars as to who the human author of this epistle was. Some think Paul wrote it, but others are of the opinion that Barnabas did it. Still others think that Apollos was the author. No one can be dogmatic on this point. For years I was in a quandary as to who the human author was. Of late, however, I have arrived at what I think is the correct conclusion.

I am now of the opinion that the Apostle Paul was the author. There are two reasons which have led me to this decision. The salutation of the recognized Pauline epistles is practically the same in each letter. The Book of Hebrews ends with a similar salutation.

My second reason for believing that Paul probably was the author is found in Peter's statement (II Peter 3:15), in which passage the Apostle said that Paul had written a letter to those to whom he sent his epistle. From II Peter 3:1 we see that this is a second epistle sent to this group. From I Peter 1:1,2 we learn that the Apostle's first epistle was sent to Hebrew Christians in the Dispersion scattered throughout certain provinces in central Asia Minor. We therefore know that Peter's epistles were sent to these Hebrew believers.

Peter says that the Apostle Paul wrote in an epistle to these same people things that were hard to be understood. From this statement, we see that Paul wrote a special letter to the Hebrews and that these Jewish believers to whom Peter wrote likewise were the recipients of an epistle from Paul. Everyone who studies the letter to the Hebrews knows that it contains many things hard to be understood. All of the Pauline epistles were directed to certain definite groups or persons concerning whom we have definite knowledge. Since the Lord sent an epistle through Paul to the Hebrews, since our present epistle contains things that are hard to understand, since it was written to Hebrews, and since there are no other known epistles of the Apostle that would meet these conditions, I conclude that the Holy Spirit chose Paul to write this one. Though the evidence is not absolute and positive, it is very strong; and, in the absence of negative evidence, one can entertain logically the thought that probably the Apostle Paul wrote this letter.

After all, it does not matter so very much as to who was chosen by the Spirit as the human author (though we do like to know). When we know that a document was written by the Holy Spirit, as we are confident this one was, we receive it with all gratitude and endeavor by God's grace to understand its message.

TO WHOM WAS THE LETTER ADDRESSED?

To whom was the letter addressed? This question is answered differently by various scholars. The consensus of opinion, however, so far as I am able to ascertain is that it was sent to a given community of Hebrew believers who were discouraged and who were at the point of abandoning Christianity and going back to Judaism. There is much in the epistle that favors this view. On the other hand, there is

much evidence which points to a different conclusion. There are those who are of the opinion that the epistle was addressed to the entire Jewish nation in the late sixties of the first century and constituted an appeal to the Jewish race to accept Christ immediately. There is much in favor of this position. All the evidence which I have been able to gather seems most positively, to me at least, to point in this direction.

There can be little doubt that the epistle was sent directly by the Apostle to a given community of Hebrew Christians who needed encouragement. While they were the immediate recipients of the message, God used them to start the epistle on the way to the entire nation of Israel. This was the regular way God started the books of the New Testament on their historic missions. For instance, the Roman letter was written by Paul to the church in the city by that name. By it the epistle was given circulation among all of the churches throughout the world of that day and time. What was true of the Roman epistle is also true of the other epistles and letters of the New Testament. In the same manner we can logically conclude that the Hebrew letter was sent first to this community of Hebrew believers and thus was started on its way to the entire nation and to the church of God.

Let us remember that the gospel was preached first in Jerusalem, next in Judea then in Samaria; and finally it went forth to the four corners of the globe. The apostolic preachers, following the instructions of our Lord, thus went forth and gave the gospel to the world in the first generation of the church, proclaiming it first to the Jews and then to the Gentiles of each community. For proof that it was preached to the entire world, see Romans 10:18 and Colossians 1:6,23.

In Acts 3 the Apostle Peter called upon the nation of Israel to repent of their rejection of Jesus and to accept Him personally in order that God might send the seasons of refreshing from His presence, and that He might send the Messiah to them, even Jesus. But the nation did not heed. In the late sixties of that century, it seems that God gave the final call to the race—It went forth in the form of this epistle (Let us in this connection remember the facts that were presented in the former article of this series). The Hebrew believers were in very close and intimate connection with unbelieving Hebrews; thus the message of the epistle would go immediately from the believers to the unbelievers of the given locality to which the epistle was first sent; and from them it would go forth unto the whole Jewish race, as the Hebrew Christians were zealous to make the message known to their unbelieving brethren.

In chapter 1 the Apostle presented the divine nature of the Lord Jesus Christ. Then he urged them to give the more earnest heed to the things which had been heard lest haply they might drift away from them. We should notice the fact that the message had been heard but presumably not heeded, because there was a great possibility of their drifting away, as a ship, that is not anchored. Further confirmation of this position is seen in the participle of the original text rendered in verse 3 as, "if we neglect so great a salvation." The verb from which this participle is derived literally means "it is a care." Later the verb took on a personal character and was used as other verbs in the various persons. This word is here prefixed by the negative and, of course, indicates the opposite from caring for. It therefore came to mean "not caring for; not being interested in; not paying attention to." In Matthew 22:5 it is rendered "they made light of it." The guests invited to the marriage feast of the king did not care for the invitation. On the contrary, they made light of it. This very word is used in this passage to indicate such an attitude. In Hebrews 8:9 God said that He regarded Israel not, because she refused to walk in His

ways. The word under discussion is in this latter passage rendered "regarded not." In view of the fact that those to whom the epistle was written had heard but were in danger of drifting away, and in view of the further fact that they were not concerned with the message especially, which they had heard, I come to the conclusion that it was written to the entire Jewish nation, all of which had been evangelized at the time of the writing of the epistle. Only a few had accepted.

In 3:1 the Apostle urged his readers to consider Jesus as Apostle and High Priest of the Jewish faith—"our confession." The readers had heard the message, had not been interested in it; had neglected considering it. The Apostle therefore urges them to consider Jesus in two aspects: First as Apostle sent from heaven by the Lord to them, and secondly as Jewish High Priest. This language would not have been appropriate if addressed to Hebrew believers, for they could say that they had considered and had accepted Jesus as God's Apostle and their High Priest.

AN ANALYSIS OF THE EPISTLE (Installment 3)

In the former installments of this series we arrived at the conclusion that Paul was the author of the Hebrew Epistle and that it was God's final call to Israel of that generation to accept Jesus as Lord and Messiah. As we shall see in this study, Jewry of the first century was divided, in this epistle, into three groups: first, the great majority who were not interested in the gospel message; second, the Hebrew Christians, who had made little progress in spiritual development; and third, the apostates, mentioned in chapters 6 and 10, who had sinned against light and rejected the evidence presented to them although it was overwhelming.

As we shall see in a later study, the gospel, when this epistle was written, had been preached to the entire nation of Israel. But only a very small group had accepted the message.

The epistle divides into three major sections, and concludes with the appeal in chapter 13. The first portion consists of chapters 1 and 2 and presents Jesus of Nazareth to His brethren according to the flesh as the God-man. In chapter 1 His divine nature is set forth and is proved by quotations from the Old Testament. In the second chapter His human nature is set forth.

The second great division of the epistle consists of chapters 3 to 7 inclusive. The Apostle begins his discussion of this phase of his subject by appealing to his brethren in the flesh to "consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, *even Jesus*." As has been noted in the former study, the "holy brethren" are the Jewish people who are in the Old Testament called "the holy people." Even though they are, figuratively speaking, on the siding (I am thinking in terms of a railroad track), they are called "the holy people" in Daniel 12:7, which passage is discussing unbelieving Israel in the time of the Tribulation.

In 3:1-4:13 Paul presents the claims of Jesus as the Apostle of our faith. This term simply means, "one who is sent." Christ was sent by the Father to become the great Missionary to the world in order that He might obtain man's redemption and announce the same to all nations.

In 4:14-7:28 he sets forth Jesus to His brethren as the High Priest of the Hebrew faith. In his discussion of this point, in (Heb. 5:11-6:20), he leaves his main theme and briefly discusses the lost condition of the apostates to whom special privileges and enlightenment had been given and who had willfully sinned against such light and advantages. A glance at this section will show that 7:1 takes up the thought dropped in 5:10.

The high-priestly office and the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ are set forth in a most forceful manner in this major section, which we are noticing. The Lord Jesus, unlike the Aaronic priest, is a Priest-King after the order of Melchizedek. He is able, therefore, having an everlasting priesthood, to save unto the uttermost all who come to God by Him.

The third section of the epistle consists of chapters 8 to 12 inclusive. Chapter 8:1-7 constitutes a summary of the results and advantages which have been procured for us by Jesus in His becoming the Apostle and High Priest of our confession. Since there has been a change in the priesthood, there had to

be, of necessity, a change in the entire spiritual administration and setup. Since Christ is what He is and has accomplished what He has wrought, we have a better covenant, a better sanctuary, a better sacrifice, a better ministry, and better promises.

In 8:8-13 appears a quotation from Jeremiah 31 relative to the new covenant which God promised to make with Israel nationally. At the time of the writing of the epistle, the Sinaitic Covenant was waxing old and becoming aged (vs. 13). As we shall see in the exposition of this epistle, this promised new covenant is to the entire nation of Israel. Speaking figuratively, God wrote out the covenant and Christ signed it; but Israel has refused to do so. She cannot, therefore, enjoy the benefits thereof until she affixes her name to it. The believers, however, who accept Jesus as Messiah anticipate in a limited degree the blessings promised in the covenant.

The sanctuary in which we now worship is in heaven where Jesus is functioning as the High Priest. The tabernacle and later the temple were simply patterns of the true tabernacle which is in heaven. It is in this sacred place that our worship is completed and presented to the Almighty. The discussion at this point is found in 9:1-10.

The Hebrews, from the Exodus to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., conducted the sacrifices of animals as commanded by Moses. These offerings were of a temporary nature and could never take away sin. They could, however, on account of their typical character, roll the sins of the people forward one year. Such offerings manifestly could not make atonement for sins and blot them out. These were only typical of the blood of Christ, which alone can cleanse from all sin. The development of this glorious doctrine is seen in 9:11-10:18.

Because Jesus is our great High Priest and is perfectly presenting our worship and praise to God in the heavenly sanctuary, we have a better ministry as is set forth in 10:19-12:13. The keynote of this section is faith which does not shrink back but presses forward to the goal that is before. Christians are, therefore, urged by the Apostle to fix their eyes perfectly upon Jesus and run the race set before them.

From the very nature of the case we have better promises than those offered to Israel. This hope is presented in 12:14-29. A careful examination of this section shows that the Apostle was looking at the great Millennial Age when Jerusalem will be the capital of the world and the glory of God will envelop the earth as the waters cover the sea.

The epistle closes with a passionate appeal for the Jewish nation, which had already been evangelized, to leave the camp of Judaism and to accept Jesus as Lord and Messiah. Naturally such a stately document as this one is closes with a doxology such as is found in 13:20,21. Appended to it is the salutation and greetings.

"Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep with the blood of an eternal covenant, even our Lord Jesus, make you perfect in every good thing to do his will, working in us that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen" (Heb. 13:20,21).

THE DIETY OF CHRIST (Installment 4)
Chapter 1

In the former installments of this series we have briefly prepared ourselves for the study of the Epistle to the Hebrews. As noted in the preceding article, chapters 1 and 2 deal with Christ as the God-man. Chapter 1 gives an exposition of His deity, whereas chapter 2 presents the human side of His nature.

Someone has correctly said that the statement, "God spoke," is the greatest utterance ever made. The fact that the Almighty has spoken to man shows that He is intensely interested in him and his well being throughout both time and eternity.

God spoke unto the fathers—the patriarchs and the Jewish fathers—through the prophets, using various methods and speaking more at length through certain ones than He did through others. For instance, He gave the fullest message through Moses; through Isaiah He delivered the most glorious predictions to be found in the Old Testament; but through such a prophet as Obadiah He gave only one short chapter.

But "at the end of these days" He had spoken unto us, Christians, in the Son. The phrase "at the end of these days" in the original Greek is the translation of the Old Testament Hebrew expression rendered "in the latter days." This Old Testament term is acknowledged by the best authorities to carry a messianic import. From a study of Jacob's prophecy in Genesis 49:10 viewed in the light of the entire prediction, we see that messianic times began with the first coming and will continue so long as the earth stands. This phrase must not be confounded with the New Testament expression, "the last days," which refers to the closing days of the Christian Dispensation.

According to verse 3 Christ is the "effulgence of his [God's] glory, and the very image of his substance." The word rendered *effulgence*, is an astronomical term and signifies that Christ is of the same divine nature and essence as God the Father. This truth is graphically set forth by the fact that the rays coming from the sun are of the same essential character as that body itself. Christ, therefore, spoken of in such an astronomical way, was the sunbeam of God's glory sent to lighten man's path in the earth. The accompanying thought that "He is the very image of His substance" is an additional affirmation of this same truth. The word in the original is brought over into English and appears as our term, "character." In the light of these statements we see that the Lord Jesus Christ was of the same divine nature and essence as God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. The Apostle John in chapter 1 and verse 1 of the gospel made the same affirmation: "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." The New Testament writers generally lay emphasis upon the fact that Jesus of Nazareth was God manifest in the flesh. He was therefore the God-man.

According to verse 2 Christ has been appointed heir of all things because it was He "through whom also he [God] made the worlds." This note is sounded in many passages of Scripture. The word rendered "worlds" primarily means *ages*. Here, however, as in 11:3, it is used in a secondary sense, referring to the material universe. Nevertheless, the general idea of the ages during which the physical universe is in existence is quite prominent in the statement.

Christ is, according to verse 3, upholding all things by His powerful word. The term, upholding, may be properly rendered "bearing" or "carrying" all things by His powerful word. There is a goal toward which He is directing and carrying all things. The time which Paul has specifically in mind appears to be referred to in Ephesians 1:10: "unto a dispensation of the fulness of the times to sum up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens, and the things upon the earth," etc.

When Jesus offered Himself as a sacrifice for man's redemption, He returned to glory and sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on High—in fulfillment of the prediction found in Psalm 110:1-2. According to oriental customs no monarch, seated on his throne, would invite anyone other than a fellow sovereign to sit at his right hand. God used this current language, with which the people were familiar, to convey the thought that the man Jesus of Nazareth was His equal.

In verses 5 to 14 Paul piled up argument after argument from quotations taken from the Old Testament to prove the divine nature of King Messiah.

It is most important, whenever one finds a quotation in the New Testament taken from the Old, to study the context from which it is taken in order to see the exact thought of the original writer. By so doing one will get the full force of the passage. He should then study this citation in the light of its New Testament application. If the thing to which it is applied fills out the picture as found in the original passage in the Old Testament, we may be certain that it is the fulfillment of the prophecy. On the other hand, if the facts of the New Testament connection do not complete the Old Testament forecast, we may be certain that the thing to which it refers in the New Testament is but a partial, limited, and incomplete fulfillment of the original utterance and that it awaits its ultimate fulfillment.

In verse 5 appears a quotation from the second Psalm, which passage is a forecast of a forthcoming international, atheistic, anti-Semitic anti-Christian convention. This prediction will be completely fulfilled by the Antichrist and his cohorts in the middle of the seventieth week of Daniel. In verses 7, 8, and 9 is a quotation taken from a speech made by the Father to the Son relative to His reign upon the earth. In that portion quoted by Paul reference is made to the incarnation. Jesus of Nazareth in entering the world by miraculous conception and virgin birth was the exact fulfillment of this passage. Being God's Son, He naturally falls heir to the Father's estate. At the second coming He will ask for that which is coming to Him. Immediately world dominion will be turned over to Him and He will reign from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth.

In verse 6 is a prediction of the second coming of Christ and the worship that will be ascribed to Him at that time. Psalm 97 is the passage which is here quoted. The Revised Version makes it quite evident that Paul was talking of the second coming, for it renders the original statement thus: "And when he again bringeth in the first born into the world he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him." In the light of this Revised Version rendering, it is evident that verse 5, as stated above, refers to the first coming of the Messiah whereas verse 6 deals with His return. When He came the first time, only a small band of angels announced to the shepherds His birth; but, when He returns, all the angels will join in a great halleluiah chorus, praising God and ascribing glory to the Lord Jesus.

In contrast to what God has said relative to the Son, Paul quotes from Psalm 104, language spoken by God to the angels: "Who maketh his angels winds, And his ministers a flame of fire." The angels therefore are indeed inferior to the Son in every respect—they are simply ministers assuming various forms in order to accomplish the work of God.

Once again Paul shows the deity of the Lord Jesus by quoting from Psalm 45, in which passage the Messiah is addressed as God whose throne shall stand forever and whose sceptre is the symbol of righteousness and justice.

Continuing his line of argument, the Apostle quoted once more from the Book of Psalms, Psalm 102, in which passage the material universe, created by the Son, and its transitory nature are thrown over against the eternal existence of the Son.

He concludes his argument by asking the question: "But of which of the angels hath he said at any time, Sit thou on my right hand, Till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet?" This rhetorical question demands a negative answer. To no one has God spoken this language except to the Son.

The Apostle concludes his discussion of this point by showing us that the angels are simply ministering spirits whom God uses to serve those who shall inherit salvation. On account of the abuse to which the doctrine of the ministration of angels has been put by certain groups, we often have refrained from acknowledging the service which they render to the people of God. Let us be thankful to the Lord for all His gifts and the assistance which He renders to us along life's path.

AN EXHORTATION TO ISRAEL TO ACCEPT MESSIAH (Installment 5)
Heb. 2:1-4

In the preceding articles of this series, we have discussed the divine nature of the Lord Jesus Christ, proof for which is found in chapter 1 of the Epistle to the Hebrews. In the present study, we shall devote our attention to the exhortation which is drawn from the facts thus far presented and which is found in 2:1-4.

"Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard, lest haply we drift away *from them*." The Greek idiom used implies the logical necessity which is expressed by the word "ought". In view of the overwhelming evidence proving the deity of the Lord Jesus and His coming into the world to deliver the message of salvation to men, those to whom the Apostle wrote are urged in the strongest manner possible to give heed to the message which they had heard. Note this strong language: "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed..." This matter of accepting or rejecting Jesus as Lord and Saviour is the most serious consideration in life. One's welfare for both time and eternity is wrapped up in one's accepting or rejecting Jesus.

The Hebrews were urged to give heed to "the things that were heard." The writer did not say, neither did he imply, that those addressed had ever accepted the message. We are sometimes told that the epistle was written to Hebrew Christians who were on the verge of turning back to Judaism. This hypothesis does not seem to be in keeping with this exhortation. If these people had already accepted Christ and the gospel message, this exhortation would have been inappropriate; for the people thus addressed could have said that they had already accepted the message. We will do well to take the position that these people had heard the message but had not received it.

The recipients of the epistle were urged to accept the message which had been heard by them "lest haply we drift away *from them*." If these people had accepted Christ—had, in the language of the passage, let down their anchor—there would have been no need for the Apostle's warning them of the danger of drifting away. The facts are that these people had been brought up to a clear understanding of the message of the gospel like a ship brought into port but had never anchored their souls by a personal acceptance of Jesus. There was, therefore, a grave danger that they would drift away.

Emphasizing the necessity of their accepting the message, Paul calls attention to the fact that the words spoken through angels had proved steadfast and that every transgression and disobedience to the law had been punished.

The reference to the word spoken through angels points to the law of Moses, which according to Stephen was "ordained by angels" (Acts 7:53). This law was perfect. In fact, everything which God does and gives is perfect. Nevertheless, it was "the ministration of death" (II Cor. 3).

This law was perfect and adequate for the purpose for which it was given; namely, to show the exceeding sinfulness of sin (Romans 7:13). It could and did reveal the sinful character of those under the law, but it could not remove the guilt and stain of sin.

Nevertheless, this law was steadfast. The reason for this fact lay in the further fact that this was God's Word and that the Lord watches over every utterance of His to fulfill it. "Moreover the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Jeremiah, what seest thou? And I said, I see a rod of an almond tree. Then said Jehovah unto me, Thou hast well seen: For I watch over my word to perform it" (Jer. 1:11,12). The word of God is backed up by His omnipotence, "For no word from God shall be void of power" (Luke 1:37).

The writer asks his readers, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation" since every transgression and disobedience of the law was punished? He reasons that, since God was strict and commanded absolute obedience to the law—though perfect, yet an inferior revelation to the gospel—how can anyone escape who ignores the gospel call. We must understand that Paul, though he used the plural pronoun "we", did not include himself. He simply spoke as any evangelist does to his audience. In the original text the word rendered "if we neglect" is a participle and literally means "not being concerned or interested." The same word—in the exact form—occurs in Matthew 22:5: "But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his merchandise." In this passage our word is rendered "made light of it," the invitation to the wedding feast. Literally, the original text declares that these invited guests were not concerned about accepting the invitation and attending the festivities. This usage is the exact parallel to that of Hebrews 2:3— "if we neglect." This word shows most clearly that those who are addressed in this portion of the epistle had heard the gospel call but had been indifferent toward it. They, therefore, passed by without any consideration of the claims of Christ.

This great salvation concerning which these Hebrews were not interested was that which was first spoken by the Lord Jesus himself. Paul speaks of it as "so great salvation." Salvation literally means *deliverance*. One must consult the context to determine from what the deliverance is. For instance, Moses, as he and Israel stood on the banks of the Red Sea, urged the people to stand still and to see the salvation of God. He explained what he meant by telling them that the Egyptians whom they saw that day they would never again see. The salvation, therefore, to which he referred was deliverance from the armed forces of Egypt. The salvation, on the other hand, which was spoken first by Jesus is deliverance from eternal death and the granting to such life eternal and bliss with God forever.

One of the earliest sermons preached by the Apostle Peter was delivered to the household of Cornelius, the record of which is found in Acts 10:34-43. This sermon sets forth before the audience the plain straightforward facts relative to the labors and preaching of the Lord Jesus during His personal ministry. In this early account, we see most clearly the distinctiveness of the Gospel of Christ—the gospel of the grace of God. Especially does this appear in the concluding statement of the record. "To him bear all the prophets witness, that through his name every one that believeth on him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts 10:43).

Paul, the author of this epistle, states that this gospel which Jesus first proclaimed was confirmed "unto us by them that heard." Paul, as all who are acquainted with the biblical account know, was not in the original apostolic company. Here he speaks, however, of the preaching of Jesus as being confirmed unto him and his readers, who had not enjoyed hearing personally the messages of Jesus by those who had had this privilege and who had passed on to them the message of this great salvation.

The Lord Jesus selected certain ones of His disciples and appointed them to be "the apostles," the exponents of the gospel message. These the Lord Jesus trained during His personal ministry of three and one half years in order that they might proclaim to the world the message of truth. There were others who had accompanied Jesus from the baptism of John to the resurrection, as we learn in Acts 1. The personal ministry of Jesus, though a soul-saving campaign, was primarily designed to train the disciples to carry on the work which He had begun. They were, however, to await the coming of the Holy Spirit who would bring to their remembrance the teaching which Jesus had given them and who would bring to them additional revelations.

The apostles were charged by the Lord Jesus to preach the gospel first in Jerusalem; next in Judea; then in Samaria; and finally to the uttermost part of the earth. These instructions they carried out to the very letter. Since Paul declared that the gospel was to the Jew first (and still is), and since he in every place preached first to the Jew and then to the Gentile, we may be certain that the rest of the apostles followed the same method. By the year 58 A.D. when Paul wrote the Roman letter, the gospel had been preached to the entire world: "But I say, Did they not hear? Yea, verily, Their sound went out into all the earth, And their words unto the ends of the world" (Romans 10:18). This quotation from Psalm 19 was used by the Apostle to convey the idea that the gospel message had by that time been given to the whole world. From this fact we may be certain that the entire Jewish nation had been evangelized, but the great majority of that people, being indifferent toward the claims of Christ, had rejected it.

By general consent among conservative scholars, the Hebrew epistle was written in all probability in 68 A.D.—two years before the fall of the Jewish nation and its world-wide dispersion. Let us remember that at this time—68 A.D.—the same gospel message, which was preached by Jesus and, after His ascension, by the apostles was still the gospel that was being proclaimed and that men had to accept in order to be saved.

These facts refute the position taken by certain excellent men that there was a change in the message and a new order introduced at the time of Paul's imprisonment in Rome. See Acts 28. By these brethren it is argued that the proclamation of the gospel during the first generation was largely by the Jews and was designed to call out the Jewish Bride of Christ. When, however, Paul reached Rome, he officially turned from the Jewish nation to the Gentiles and then was revealed to him in the prison epistles (Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians) what is termed "body truth." According to these expositors, a different message was given and another spiritual setup was inaugurated. Now, as these brethren see it, God is taking out from among the Gentiles a people for His name. In the close of the present dispensation, according to these interpreters, the Lord will resume His program of completing His Jewish Bride. The fact that five years after Paul had made his speech to the Jews at Rome, as recorded in Acts 28, he is in the Book of Hebrews insisting that the Jewish nation should accept the same message which Jesus during His personal ministry proclaimed is proof that the position under consideration is not in accordance with the teaching of the Word of God. The facts are that there has been no change in the spiritual setup since Pentecost. In harmony with this position is Paul's statement to Timothy, about the same time: "If any man teacheth a different doctrine, and consenteth not to sound words even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; he is puffed up ..." (I Tim. 6:3,4). There is but one Gospel. Dare any man to proclaim a different one.

God confirmed the message of those who were proclaiming the gospel by "signs and wonders, and by manifold powers, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will" (Heb. 2:4). Thus by divine manifestations, the gospel message had been confirmed in the first century to the entire Jewish nation.

THE HUMAN SIDE OF OUR LORD'S NATURE (Installment 6)

Heb. 2:5-18

Thus far in this series we have seen, from chapter 1 of the Epistle to the Hebrews that God has in these last days spoken to us in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Moreover, by quotations from the Old Testament Paul, in this chapter, has shown that Christ, being God, is superior to all the angels. In order to demonstrate this fact, he quoted from certain passages statements that prove the deity of Christ, His authority, and His functions. In contrast with them he has given different quotations from various sections of the Old Testament which show the position and duties of angels. In this way he has proved beyond peradventure that Christ the Son is superior to all created beings.

Verses 1 to 4 of chapter 2 constitute an exhortation to the Hebrew nation to accept Jesus as their long awaited Messiah. In 2:5-18 Paul sets forth the human side of our Lord's nature.

As we have already seen, God has spoken to us in His Son. In what sense was Christ the Son of God? No one will ever be able to fathom the depth of this mystery. The theologians speak of the "eternal generation of the Son." This expression is so very indefinite that even those using it are unable to explain what is meant by this phraseology. Regardless of its import, we know from Psalm 2 that God the Father said to God the Son: "Thou art my son; This day have I begotten thee" (Psa. 2:7). This verse is Hebrew poetry, the fundamental principle of which is "Hebrew parallelism." The second statement of this verse is a commentary upon the first. Christ's being the Son of God is explained, therefore, by the statement that God had begotten Him. This declaration from Psalm 2 undoubtedly refers to the incarnation, as we have already seen in chapter 1. We are safe in concluding, therefore, that, regardless of the depth of the meaning of the terms Father and Son as applied to two of the personalities of the Holy Trinity, these terms have a very definite bearing upon the relationship existing between these two Personalities after the latter assumes human form.

The Lord has not subjected the inhabited earth to come to angels but has put it under man as is shown in Psalm 8. Since therefore the Son is the one to whom all authority in heaven and earth is given and since man, according to this prediction, is to rule the world, it was necessary that the Son take the form of man in order that He might carry out this purpose. Such is the reasoning of the Apostle as he passes from the discussion of the divine nature of the Son to the human side of His being. The writer tells us that God did not subject "the world to come" to angels. On the contrary, He has turned it over to man. As proof of this position, he quotes from Psalm 8 the following verses:

"But one hath somewhere testified, saying,
 What is man, that thou art mindful of him?
 Or the son of man, that thou visitest him?
 Thou madest him a little lower than the angels;
 Thou crownedst him with glory and honor,
 And didst set him over the works of thy hands:
 Thou didst put all things in subjection under his feet ..." (Heb. 2:6-8).

An examination of this passage and the Psalm from which it is taken shows that David was speaking of what we call the millennial reign of our Lord when God subjects the animal creation to man. Paul's applying this passage to "the inhabited earth to come" shows that this portion unquestionably refers to the millennial kingdom of Jesus Christ.

According to Genesis 1, God gave man authority over the earth, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air. By yielding to Satan's subtle temptation, man forfeited to him this delegated authority and power. God will not be outdone by the devil and his machinations. He therefore, through David in Psalm 8, foretold the time when He will come back to His original plan and purpose by placing men over the works of His hands. God has made His promise to mankind in general and will fulfill it at the proper time. At the present, however, we do not see this prophecy fulfilled. Has God's Word failed? Never!

After giving this quotation from Psalm 8, the Apostle Paul asserted that all things have not as yet been subjected to man—the reason being that the time has not yet arrived for the fulfillment of the prophecy. But we do, as he asserted, see the prediction fulfilled in the case of *one* man—the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus was every whit a man. He was the God-man.

Jesus tasted death for every man. No one will be lost because of Adam's sin. Those who are eternally rejected seal their doom by not accepting the full and free atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Saviour of all men, especially of them that believe (I Tim. 4:10). All were made sinners through the one act of disobedience of Adam. All are made righteous by the one act of obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ (See Romans 5:12-21).

Christ took the form of man in order that He might by His sacrificial death make atonement for the human family. He was the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. His death was real, actual. He poured out His blood for the remission of the sins of the world. Since He has wrought redemption for every man and since He offers this salvation full and free to every one who believes, all who accept Him will be saved. On the other hand, those who will not avail themselves of His atoning death must suffer the consequences of their unbelief and rejection of His atonement.

Since Christ suffered for the redemption of the world and has commissioned us to proclaim this glad message of salvation to all nations, a grave responsibility rests upon us and, at the same time, a wonderful privilege of service is granted to us. May we, while we have time and opportunity, proclaim the truth from the housetop!

According to the tenth verse of this chapter it was proper and fitting that God should make Christ—the God-man—perfect through suffering in order that He might bring many sons into glory—the glory of the millennial kingdom and of eternal redemption. Was Christ imperfect in any part of His being? The suggestion that He was is repulsive to those who know the scriptural teaching regarding our blessed Lord. No! He was in no wise imperfect. Being God, He was perfection itself on the divine side of His nature; on the human side, He likewise was perfect. There was nothing the matter with His human nature. It was doubtless as perfect as was Adam's before he fell through transgression and disobedience. It is quite possible that even His human nature was in a more perfect state of condition than was that of Adam. On this point, one cannot be dogmatic since the evidence which we have is so

very slight; but regardless of all considerations we are positively right in saying that Christ was absolutely perfect in both His human and divine natures. Notwithstanding this fact, He was made perfect through suffering. In ordinary usage the correlative to perfection is imperfection; but the idea that there was something lacking in our Lord's nature is contrary to the facts. Thus when Christ was made perfect, no imperfections were removed. He must have been made perfect in a sense different from that with which we are acquainted. We must conclude that the perfection of Christ here noted was His advancing to a higher state or condition.

But since He was God, it was impossible for Him to advance to a higher plane as to His Deity; this development must therefore be connoted of His fleshly nature. A simple little illustration might set forth the truth that is asserted in this verse. The soot that is deposited on the chimney of an oil lamp when it is turned too high is of the same essential nature as the diamond. The chemists tell us that this precious gem is pure carbon. There is positively no difference, chemically speaking, in the two substances. Nevertheless there is a vast difference in their appearances: Carbon becomes a diamond when it has been subjected to intense heat and very great pressure. The atoms are thus forced together and appear as if they were a different substance. In the terms of the illustration, I would say that Christ's body and human nature were in the carbon state when He was upon the earth prior to the crucifixion. He was subjected to the fiery trials of sufferings and death. Thus the pressure of the sin of the world was laid upon Him. He passed through this ordeal and rose from the dead with a glorified, immortalized body, which we may compare to the diamond. Thus by His death, burial, and resurrection He passed out of the carbon state of His human existence into the diamond state of His glorification. Christ therefore reached the state of perfection, from the standpoint of His human nature, by the suffering which He underwent for our redemption.

In Paul's day incipient Gnosticism had arisen. Those holding to this philosophy were bothered about the human nature of our Lord. There were those who insisted that He simply *appeared* to have a human body whereas He did not. They were known as the Docetic Gnostics. It seems probable that Paul was refuting this type of false philosophy. In verses 11-13 of this chapter, he affirmed that Christ who sanctifies and His followers who are sanctified are all of one; that is, of one nature. Of course, he was speaking of the human side of our Lord's nature and asserted that He was of the same nature as we are. From this statement one is not to infer that Christ had what is known as "sin in the flesh," for He did not. He knew no sin. He was apart from sin. He committed no sin. Being God He could not sin. Nevertheless from the human standpoint, He and we are of one nature.

In proving this point Paul quoted from Psalm 22 these words: "I will declare thy name unto my brethren. In the midst of the congregation will I sing thy praise."

When this verse is studied in the light of the context from which it is taken (Psalm 22), it will be seen that David was speaking of Christ's acknowledging His brethren—the redeemed—in the millennial kingdom when the nations are gathered together at Jerusalem to worship Jehovah of hosts, the great King. At that time Christ will acknowledge us as His own brethren. By so doing He will be identifying himself with us from the standpoint of His human nature.

Once more the Apostle showed the human side of Christ's nature by giving us a quotation from the oracles of God which is: "I will put my trust in him." The speaker is Christ. He states that He will put His trust in God. Jesus lived by faith the same as the saints of God throughout the centuries. Once again our Lord's unity with mankind, from the human standpoint, was asserted by the Apostle when he quoted from Isaiah these words: "Behold, I and the children whom God hath given me." An examination of the original text from which this quotation is taken will show that these words primarily referred to Isaiah and the children whom God gave him, for they were a sign to their own generation. The names of each of them had a spiritual significance and were given them in order to convey certain definite ideas. The prophet and his children were therefore for a sign to their generation; but they were also typical of Christ and the children whom God has given Him, that is, the believers. Again, by this quotation, the unity of Christ with His brethren is re-affirmed.

In recent years Christ's Jewish ancestry has been questioned in certain quarters. The universal testimony of the Scriptures is that He partook of the nature of Abraham. When God wanted Christ to come into the world, He selected a Jewish maiden—Mary—to become the mother of our Lord. This fact was foretold by Isaiah in chapter 7, verse 14, which speaks of His virgin birth.

Christ thus took the form of the seed of Abraham in order that, by His death, suffering, and resurrection from the dead, He might bring to naught him who had power of death, that is, the devil. Christ went to the lower regions, fought with Satan, and conquered him, thus delivering all who trust Him from the fear of death. Since His resurrection, our Lord constantly exhorts us, "Fear not." He has conquered and we can be victors through Him.

Since our Lord partook of human nature in order to suffer and die for us, He is a merciful high priest who can be touched with the feelings of our infirmities. He is therefore eminently qualified to be a high priest in things pertaining to God in order to make propitiation for our sins. Satan approached Him from every conceivable angle. The temptation of our Lord, of course, was from without and not from within. Jesus repelled every attempt of Satan and was triumphant in His fight against the devil. Having fought and won He is able to succor all those who are tempted. Let us therefore come with boldness to the throne of grace upon which Jesus is seated and obtain mercy and grace to help in every time of need.

JESUS, THE APOSTLE AND HIGH PRIEST (Installment 7)
Hebrews 3:1-6

In our study of Hebrews we have reached the third chapter. Broadly speaking, chapter 1 sets forth the divine nature of King Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. Chapter 2 presents His humanity. These two chapters constitute an enlargement of the prologue of the Gospel of John—John 1:1-18. In connection with them one would do well to study Philippians 2:5-11 and Colossians 1:13-17.

The Son took on human nature and thus became the God-man in order that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for every man, might bring to naught him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and might deliver all those who through fear of it were all their lifetime kept in bondage. Christ thus opened up a new and living way and made possible our entrance into eternal life and glory with Himself and God the Father.

Having introduced us to the Lord Jesus Christ—the God-man—who has wrought redemption through the new and living way and has become a merciful and faithful High Priest to intercede in behalf of those who approach God through Him, Paul in chapter 3:1 made the following appeal to the Jewish nation—his brethren according to the flesh: "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, *even* Jesus ..." In former articles of this series I have called attention to some of the evidence that leads to the conclusion that Hebrews was written to the entire Jewish nation, which had at that time been evangelized. The expression, "holy brethren," was appropriate as a designation for the Jewish nation because this race is called "a holy people." God in speaking of them in the time of the Tribulation designates them as "the holy people."

The Apostle asked his brethren to focus their attention upon Jesus Christ and view Him in two different capacities; namely, as the Apostle and the High Priest. His language would have been inappropriate to those who had already accepted Him, for they could immediately retort by saying that they had already accepted Him, having considered Him and His claims. The natural meaning of the word *consider* in this connection is that it was an appeal to those who had been evangelized and had been given the gospel, but who had not accepted it.

Jesus is called "the Apostle." The word means *one sent*. In the middle of the great Galilean ministry, as we learn in Luke 6, Jesus, after a night of prayer, called His disciples and chose twelve of them whom He named "apostles." These constituted the original band. When Judas fell by transgression, someone had to take his place. The one qualification of the candidate for this office was that he had companied with the apostolic band "all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and went out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto the day that he was received up from us ..." (Acts 1:21,22). There are no successors to the apostles, for they could qualify on this point only by having accompanied Jesus and His followers throughout His personal ministry. There are no successors to eyewitnesses. Messengers of the churches are sometimes called in the New Testament "apostles" but it is clear that the original ones whom Jesus appointed were not in mind in such passages. They were apostles only in that they were selected to travel for certain local churches.

Jesus is called in our verse "the Apostle." He was an apostle in the sense that He left heaven, being sent by the Father (John 3:16), and came to this earth as the first great missionary. Though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor in order that we through His poverty might become rich (II Cor. 8:9). In this sense, therefore, He is called an apostle, and the Hebrew people were urged to consider Him in that light.

He is also set forth as "High Priest" of the Jewish confession. In this epistle Paul calls the Jews attention to the fact that the high priest in Jerusalem was not the real high priest of the nation. On the contrary, the Lord Jesus Christ who at that time was in heaven was indeed and in truth the great High Priest. He was the one who was typified by Melchizedek, the king priest of Salem. Later in the study of Hebrews we shall see the typical significance of this lone character as he appears in the historical record in Genesis.

In Hebrews 3:2-6, the Apostle compares and contrasts Moses with the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us remember that the Hebrew people looked up to Moses as their great lawgiver and authority. They still do. Unfortunately they have exalted the writings of Moses to a position higher than any other portion of the Sacred, Holy Word. The writings of Moses today are considered infallible by them. The rest of the Old Testament is not, according to their way of thinking, on the same high level as the books of Moses. Paul said that, as long as they thus look upon Moses as the final authority, a veil is over their eyes; and they cannot see the truth as it is.

Moses was faithful to God in all his house. He indeed stands head and shoulders above all the Old Testament characters as a faithful and true servant of God upon whose shoulders great and mighty responsibilities rested. Only on one occasion did he flicker. Paul could therefore call attention to the fact that he was faithful to Him who appointed him "in his house." In whose house was Moses? This expression is an echo of Numbers 12:7. A glance at this chapter shows that God was the one who used this expression; the pronoun "his" has "God" as its antecedent. The nation of Israel whom Moses led, to whom he gave the law, and whom he served during the last forty years of his life constituted at that time the house of God. Stephen, in his indictment of the Jewish nation, called it "the church in the wilderness" (Acts 7:28). Moses gave his very life for the Children of Israel. He is therefore said in our passage to have been faithful to God in all things.

Paul asserts that Christ was just as faithful as was Moses. In fact, he could have put this in the superlative degree, for undoubtedly our Lord Jesus surpassed Moses in every particular although Paul does not emphasize that point in this connection. But he does show Christ's superiority by saying that, "For he hath been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, by so much as he that built the house hath more honor than the house" (Heb. 3:3). Moses was simply a servant in the house. The Lord Jesus Christ was the Son over the house of God. Our Lord was as much superior to Moses as the builder of a house is superior to the edifice which he constructs. In chapter 1:2 the Apostle has already told us that it was Christ through whom God created the world. He is the one who has built the house. He is therefore on the highest plane possible. In comparison with Him Moses dwarfed into insignificance.

Moses and the house of God as it existed in his day, were "for a testimony of those things which were afterward to be spoken" (3:5b). The entire Levitical system and the set up of the old economy were

typical of the realities which we have in Christ. He is the Son, the Creator of all things John 1:3, who is now over God's house (Heb. 3:6).

What is meant by God's house today? The generation of Hebrews of Moses' day, who had been evangelized by him and Aaron, constituted God's house then. The Hebrew nation of the first century which had been evangelized before this epistle was written (Rom. 10:18) is the house to which reference is made here. Some students, however, think that Paul was speaking of the Hebrew Christians as constituting the house of God or the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Will this theory stand the acid test of facts? I am confident that it will not. The Apostle furthermore in speaking of this house said, "... whose house are we, if we hold fast our boldness and the glorying of our hope firm unto the end" (Heb. 3:6).

There are four classes of conditional clauses in the Greek language. The third class condition indicates a doubt. This fact is well known to Greek grammarians. The Apostle used this type of condition with the subjunctive mood and indicated grave doubt as to whether those to whom he spoke really were a part of the house of God. If we assume that the letter was written to Hebrew Christians—saved, regenerated people—then there is a doubt concerning their being a part of God's house. In other words, if this letter was addressed to saved people and presented as a warning against the possibility of backsliding, one may be saved today and lost tomorrow. This teaching, however, is contrary to many clear, unmistakable passages of the Word. For this and many other reasons I am of the firm conviction that this letter was written to the entire Hebrew nation and not simply to Hebrew Christians only, who were on the verge of going back to Judaism.

What the Apostle was saying was simply this: Israel, you have heard the message, having been evangelized. This generation will constitute the house of God now, just as the people of Moses' day did, if you hold fast to the messianic hope to which your ancestors have clung through the centuries, notwithstanding persecution, fire and sword. You have gloried in the hope of Messiah's coming. Rather than give up this hope many of you have suffered and died. If you will grip this hope and glory in it as you have in the past, it will lead you to Him who is the realization of it. Thus coming to Him, you Jews will still constitute the house of God today just as the Hebrews of Moses' day were then His house.

In order to enforce his exhortation that they consider Jesus our Lord in these two capacities and in order that they might continue to hold to this messianic hope and not give up, the Apostle quoted from Psalm 95 which foretold the coming of Messiah and His revelation to the people of Israel; but this portion of the message must be left to the next installment of this series.

GOD'S WARNING TO ISRAEL (Installment 8)

Heb. 3:7-19

In our discussion thus far we have come to the point where we are to study the quotation found in chapter 3, taken from Psalm 95. In the first six verses of this chapter the Apostle compared Moses with Christ and the children of Israel of that day with the Jews of his own time. The nation at the time of the Exodus was God's house; the Jews of Paul's day were told by him that they would constitute the house of God "... if we hold fast our boldness and the glorying of our hope firm unto the end" (vs. 6). There are four classes of conditional sentences in the Greek. The third one always expresses doubt, with the possibility of accomplishment. This type of a condition Paul used on this occasion. He therefore expressed doubt regarding their remaining the house of God. In this connection let it be said that nowhere did any sacred writer ever express doubt concerning the salvation of one who was really and truly born again—a member of the household of God at the present time. The fact that he expressed doubt in the sentence just quoted shows that he was not speaking to the house of God today which is the church of the living God but was addressing the Hebrew nation of his time.

After throwing out the warning mentioned above, Paul reinforced his exhortation by quoting from Psalm 95. This appeal begins with an exclamation which in and of itself implies grave apprehension and doubt: "Today, oh that ye would hear his voice!" Both David and Paul indicated that the nation as a whole would not receive the admonition and harken to the voice of the Lord.

In order for us to get the real message of this quotation, we must examine Psalm 95 from which this quotation is taken and study it in the light of related predictions and historical facts. We must always bear in mind that there was always an historic occasion which caused God to give forth any portion of His Word. If we can thus orient any passage to its original setting, we can then the more easily understand its import.

In this connection let us always bear in mind that the Old Testament saints were urged to look forward to the appearance of Jehovah upon the earth. This expectation of His presence is set forth in Genesis 3:15 and is echoed in many passages following it. Repeatedly in the Psalms we see the exhortation, "Wait for Jehovah." David was sustained by the hope that possibly Jehovah might appear in his lifetime: "I *had fainted*, unless I had believed to see the goodness of Jehovah in the land of the living. Wait for Jehovah: Be strong, and let thy heart take courage; Yea, wait thou for Jehovah" (Psa. 27:13,14).

Again, we see the same thing in Psalm 37. In this passage David gave the spiritual content of the law under which Israel was living. He therefore urged (them) not to fret themselves because of evildoers. On the contrary, they were to trust in Jehovah, and do good, dwelling in the land—Palestine, which God gave to them—and feed upon His faithfulness. They were to delight in Him and commit their way to Him. As an encouragement to such a life of consecration, the Psalmist spoke of the glories of the Millennial Age and Israel's place in God's plan at that future time: "And he (God) will make thy righteousness to go forth as the light, And thy justice as the noonday" (Psa. 37:6). In the following verse he urged them to rest in Jehovah and to wait patiently for Him.

This appeal appears again in verses 9 and 34. Throughout the psalm the unstable condition of the wicked is set forth. At the same time promises are made to the righteous and to those who are perfect and who are waiting for Jehovah. From a study of this passage we can see that the Old Testament saints were urged to look forward expectantly to the appearance of Jehovah during their own lifetime. When the Lord announced to Hezekiah that he was to die and that he was to set his house in order, he lamented the fact that in the noontide of his days he was to go down to the gates of Sheol and would be deprived of the residue of his life. Furthermore, he wailed that he would not see Jehovah, "*even* Jehovah in the land of the living" (Isa. 38:10,11). Thus the Israelite was urged to look forward to the appearance of Jehovah upon earth to establish His reign of righteousness. He did not know when the Almighty would appear. He was therefore to regulate his life with this possibility in view.

In the exhortation for the Hebrews to look forward to Jehovah's coming, nothing is said regarding which appearance was in view. Such exhortations are to be studied in the light of those predictions that foretell the entire redemptive career of Messiah, which consists of His first coming, His rejection by His own people, His death, burial, resurrection and ascension to the right hand of the throne of God where He is to remain throughout the present dispensation, and at the close of which He will return to the earth and reign here for one thousand years. The Old Testament saint who understood the passages which thus outlined Messiah's redemptive work would instantly know that such exhortations referred to His first coming.

When we study Psalm 95, we see that David pleaded with his brethren to come before Jehovah—their Creator, God, and King—and worship Him. Moreover, when the first seven verses of the passage are read in the light of other predictions that Messiah would come and call the nation to repentance, it becomes evident that this psalm records a vision which was granted David, and in which he was projected into the first century of the Christian Era. In it he saw Messiah's first appearance upon the earth; he therefore pleaded with his brethren to come and accept this Lord and to harken to His voice.

The second half of verse 7 gives the plaintive wail of the writer: "Today, oh that ye would hear his voice!" This utterance shows that the Lord revealed to David the fact that the people of Israel would not harken to the voice of King Messiah when He would make His appearance upon the earth.

Following this exclamation is an earnest appeal in verses 8 to 11, urging the people to profit by the experience of the Jews of Moses' day and not to do as they did. They hardened their hearts and rebelled against God in the wilderness. They therefore were not permitted to enter the Promised Land. David accordingly pleaded with His brethren to accept Messiah whenever He would make His appearance upon the historic scene.

When one remembers that in Hebrews 3:1 the Apostle pleaded with his Jewish brethren to "... consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, *even* Jesus," one sees that he was making the same appeal that David did in Psalm 95. When we read Hebrews 3:7-11 in the light of 3:1, we see that the Apostle Paul was accurately applying this prediction of David to the Jewish people to whom Christ came.

In the preceding studies we have seen that the indications thus far lead to the conclusion that the Epistle to the Hebrews was addressed to the entire nation of Israel, which at that time had already been

evangelized. A very small minority had accepted the message. The great bulk of the nation had been indifferent to it and had refused to consider the claims of Jesus. The use to which the Apostle put Psalm 95 shows conclusively that this interpretation is the correct one. As we proceed with the exposition, we shall receive further absolute and conclusive proof establishing the thesis that the Epistle to the Hebrews was written to the entire nation, and that it was God's call to the Hebrews of the first century to accept the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

WARNINGS AGAINST APOSTASY (Installment 9)

Heb. 3:12-19

The last installment brought us to the exhortation found in Hebrews 3:12. In that discussion we saw that the quotation from Psalm 95 was an appeal which David, who was granted a vision of the days of Messiah, made to the Jews of the first century, urging them to accept Jesus of Nazareth as their long looked for Redeemer. The Apostle Paul by this quotation strengthened his appeal found in 3:1 to the Jewish nation to accept "the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, *even* Jesus" as Lord, Messiah, and Deliverer. Seeing the connection, we shall proceed with the further exposition of the rest of this chapter.

"Take heed, brethren, lest haply there shall be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief, in falling away from the living God: but exhort one another day by day, so long as it is called To-day; lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin: for we are become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end: while it is said, To-day if ye shall hear his voice, Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation" (Heb. 3:12-15).

Verse 12 contains a warning to the Jewish people against apostatizing from the living God. The word rendered "falling away" in this verse is the regular term in the original Greek which means to apostatize or forsake—to leave one side and go to another. As has been pointed out in these studies, the real believer may backslide but he never apostatizes. There was a danger that those to whom this portion of the epistle was addressed might apostatize from the living God. This same word occurs in Luke 8:13, in that portion of the parable of the sower which speaks about those who are represented by the seed falling on stony ground. They hear the Word, with joy receive it for the time being, but in time of testing they fall away—apostatize.

Luke, in speaking of John Mark's having left Paul and Barnabas and returned to Jerusalem, said that Paul did not consider it expedient to take him who forsook them from Pamphylia and did not go with them unto the work. Mark had started out with Paul and Barnabas but in the face of danger turned around and returned to Jerusalem. This action is expressed by the word which Paul used in Hebrews 3:12. Of course, no one thinks that Mark apostatized in the spiritual sense. It is clear from the context that the word under consideration means fundamentally to leave one group and go to another place.

These Jews who had heard about Christ but who would not consider Him and His claims would by their refusal to accept Jesus be falling away or apostatizing from the living God. They had had the light but had refused to accept it. Thus in turning away from Jesus Christ as their Messiah and Saviour they would be apostatizing from the living God.

Paul, in verse 13, urged his Jewish brethren to exhort one another day by day during the period that is called "To-day" (Heb. 3:13-15). His urging them individually to exhort one another shows that he was very eager for the entire nation to reconsider the claims of Jesus and, as a body of people, to accept Him.

He was eager for them as a race to come to Jesus during the period that is, in Psalm 95, called "To-day." According to verses 14 and 15 they would become partakers of Christ if they would hold fast the beginning of their confidence firm unto the end while it was being said, "To-day" if ye shall hear his voice, Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation." A thorough knowledge of Psalm 95 and of Paul's use of it in Hebrews 3 and 4 show that he was drawing a parallel between the generation of Hebrews of Moses' day and the generation of contemporary Jewry of his time. The Hebrews of Moses' day had been evangelized, had been delivered from their bondage, had been given the law of God, had been led during the wilderness wanderings for forty years, and those who had refused to enter Canaan at Kadesh Barnea had perished in the wilderness. In the language of the older theologians, we would say that the Israelites of Moses' day had "sinned away their day of grace."

The generation of Hebrews of Paul's day had heard the gospel because it was first preached at Jerusalem, then in Judea, next in Samaria, and finally unto the uttermost part of the earth. All the Jews, therefore, had heard the message which had come to them not in word only but in power and in demonstration of the Holy Spirit (See Heb. 2:1-4). The nation as a group of people had been indifferent toward the claims of Christ. The period designated by the Psalmist David when Jehovah the God of Israel would speak to them was called "To-day." Paul urged his contemporaries to put aside their indifference, to consider Jesus as the Apostle from heaven and as High Priest of the Jewish nation and to accept Him then while it was being called "To-day."

This language implied that this period of opportunity would not continue always and that, after it passed, dire consequences would come upon those who did not accept Him. When we read the history of the Jewish nation from 30 A.D., when Christ was crucified, to 70 A.D.—just forty years later—when Jerusalem fell and Israel was carried captive among all the nations, we conclude naturally that the period designated "To-day" by the Psalmist was the forty years from the crucifixion to the fall of Jerusalem. We likewise come to the conviction that the Lord extended to Israel the opportunity of accepting Him nationally during this time.

In the second recorded sermon preached after the ascension of our Lord and recorded in Acts 3, the Apostle Peter pleaded with his brethren to repent of their rejection of Christ and to turn to Him personally in order that God might send seasons of refreshing—a heaven sent revival to the nation—and that He might send the Lord Jesus, the Messiah appointed for them, who would usher in the days of the restoration of all things spoken of by Moses and the prophets. This sermon of the Apostle Peter was indeed God's first call to Israel of the first century to accept Jesus as Messiah.

The Book of Hebrews, written probably 68 or 69 A.D., was His final appeal to the nation to accept Him during the period designated "To-day" by the Psalmist David. Since they did not heed the admonition, the year 70 A.D. came when, by Divine Providence, the stroke of judgment fell upon Israel, her national life became extinct, and she was taken captive among all the nations. This judgment without question was God's punishment upon her for not having accepted her Messiah and Lord.

A second warning given to Israel in these verses is found in these words: "Lest anyone of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin" (vs. 13). Sin has a hardening, deadening effect upon any one who embraces it. One must respond to every good impulse which comes to one's own heart; otherwise one

receives a positive injury by suppressing a good and holy desire, or by refusing to heed its call. The effect of the hardening of the heart is spoken of as producing the deceitfulness of sin. Whenever sin and disobedience come into the life, it is impossible for one to see things as they really are. Hence he becomes deceived. Knowing the inworking of sin and disobedience, the Apostle urged his brethren not to lay themselves open to such an influence. On the contrary, he exhorted his brethren, promising them, "... we are become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end" (vs. 14). Here again the Apostle used a third class conditional sentence which expressed uncertainty—grave doubt—concerning their accepting Jesus nationally. But he declared that they would become partakers of Christ if they would hold on to the boldness which they had exhibited through the centuries. Unfortunately they did not hold on to that and did not earnestly desire the truth; they therefore did not become partakers of Christ. On the contrary, the wrath of God fell upon them as a nation because of their rejection of Him.

In the last four verses of this chapter the Apostle called attention to Israel's experiences and showed that those who did not believe died in the wilderness, not being permitted to enter into the Promised Land. The reason of their being rejected was that they refused to believe. These people upon whom the judgment of God fell are held up by the Apostle as a warning, which fact shows the dire results that come from unbelief and the rejection of the truth.

May you and I, dear friends, have open hearts to receive any and all truth that God has spoken. May He give us strength to take our stand upon that which we believe to be His will and to stand for the same—to His glory and honor.

ONLY BELIVERS ENTER INTO HIS REST (Installment 10)

Heb. 4:1-13

In our investigation thus far we have reached chapter 4 of the Epistle to the Hebrews, which we shall now examine.

"Let us fear therefore, lest haply, a promise being left of entering into his rest, any one of you should seem to have come short of it" (Heb. 4:1). The background for this appeal to the Jewish nation is found in the preceding paragraph (3:12-18). The generation of Moses to whom the original promise was made had refused to enter into the rest which God had promised. Because of this rebellion all those of age of that generation, with the exception of Joshua and Caleb, fell in the wilderness, through their unbelief. The Apostle Paul therefore urged the Jews of his generation to make certain that they did not fail to enter into the promise that had been left open to them, but to accept it without any hesitation.

The promise being left of entering into His rest is the one that was, as we have already seen, found in Psalm 95. Since the generation of Moses failed to enter into that rest, David, something like five hundred years after Moses, by the Spirit of God looked forward into the future and spoke to his brethren, exhorting them to accept and give heed to the Lord whenever He should make His personal appearance upon earth. This we have already seen in a former study of this series. The promise therefore here referred to as having been left is the one mentioned by David.

The matter of accepting God and entering into fellowship with Him is such a very important matter that the Apostle urged his brethren to be absolutely certain that none of them should come short of the grace of God in failing to take hold of this promise. As we have already noted, they had to accept the promise while it was still being called "To-day," which period of time, as we have already seen, ended with the downfall of the Jewish nation in 70 A.D. There was therefore very little time of this period remaining since in all probability this letter was written in 68 or 69 A.D.

As further explanation of the urgency of the matter, the Apostle in verse 2 of this chapter declared that the nation of Israel had been evangelized in the same manner that the generation of Moses' day had received its message. In our usual translation we have these words, "For indeed we have had good tidings preached unto us, even as also they ..." A better rendering of this statement would be, "For indeed we have been evangelized even as they also ..." When Moses went to Israel, he appeared before the elders of the nation and informed them that God had appeared to him and commissioned him to deliver them from Egyptian bondage. The message was thus given to the entire nation of Israel and its divine character was demonstrated by various miraculous occurrences as we read in the Book of Exodus. In the same manner the entire nation had been evangelized by 60 A.D. The message had come to them not in word only but in power and in demonstrations of the Spirit (See Hebrews 2:3,4).

The trouble with the people of Moses' day was that, though they had received the message, it was not mixed with faith on the part of those who heard it. One must believe and act upon the truth if he is to receive the blessing and benefit of it. In the same way the generation of Israel in the Apostle's day had heard the message but had not acted upon it. The proclamation of the truth began first at Jerusalem and then spread throughout Judea. Next it went to Samaria and from there to the uttermost part of the

earth. As we have already learned, the gospel had been preached to the entire world by the time Paul wrote the Roman epistle in 58 A.D. (Rom. 10:18).

According to verse 3 of our chapter, believers are entering into the rest promised by the Lord, "For we who have believed do enter into that rest ..." This is a categorical statement and must be accepted at its full worth.

But what is meant by "rest" here? Note the fact that the Apostle spoke of it as "that rest." This definite language shows that the Apostle was speaking about the rest which God had promised to Israel. What rest was that? An examination of Leviticus 26:1-13 shows that unmistakably it was residence in the land of Palestine where God would give them the rains in their proper season and abundant crops. Moreover, He would not allow the diseases of Egypt to come upon them but would keep them in good health. Furthermore He would protect them from invasion by a hostile army. Thus the land of Palestine would be to obedient Israel "Paradise Regained" or a modern Utopia. This same promise made to Israel at Sinai was also renewed to the generation which arose in the wilderness and is recorded in Deuteronomy 28:1-14.

The Apostle declared that those who believe are entering into that rest. All of the circumstances in the case show that the Hebrew believers were not entering into any such modern Utopia. The language therefore cannot be taken literally as referring to them since they were not entering any such paradise. Since, however, the language is so very definite—"that rest"—"it is altogether possible that the Apostle was not speaking of their entering literally into that rest at that time but that they would at the proper time enter into it. Such a usage of language is common in the Scriptures. For instance, the Lord spoke to Joshua when he was reconnoitering around Jericho in words like these words, "See, I have given into thy hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valor" (Josh. 6:2). The Lord had not literally and actually delivered the city into Joshua's hand, but in purpose and plan He had. This usage is what commentators call "the prophetic perfect." The Lord knew that He at the proper time would deliver the city of Jericho into the hand of Joshua. He therefore spoke of it as an accomplished act. The facts in the case demand this interpretation.

Since the believers in Christ have not entered into any such modern Utopia, since the language is so very definite and specific, and since we have this type of "prophetic perfect" usage of language, the conclusion is irresistible that the Apostle was referring to the ultimate entering of the believer into this perfect rest, first promised to Israel at Sinai, but in the days of David promised to those who accept the Lord Jesus. This promise will materialize in actual experience for those who enter the Millennial Kingdom, to which without doubt this promise refers.

But believers even now in a spiritual sense do enter into peace, joy, rest, and contentment whenever they accept the full and free salvation offered to them through Christ and appropriate it by yielding completely to Him and trusting Him.

The reason for Israel's not entering into the rest when she came to the border of Canaan was not that the work was incomplete; for God completed His work and rested on the seventh day. The trouble lay

with Israel and her unbelief. Without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing to God (Heb. 11:6). Those who come to Him and receive His blessing must trust Him implicitly.

According to verses 6 and 7 of our chapter, since the Israel of Moses' day refused to enter into the rest, the Lord, through David, made the same promise to a future generation.

Not even the generation which arose in the wilderness and which entered with Joshua into Canaan did enter into that rest which God promised. An examination of the history during the time of the Judges and the Monarchical Period shows that Israel had anything else but rest. There was trouble and disaster coming upon the nation, one after another. This fact is shown in verse 8.

Since neither of these generations—the people of Moses' day and those of Joshua's day—did enter into the rest offered, there remains, according to the Apostle, a sabbath rest for the people of God (verse 9)—to be realized in the Millennial Age. Nevertheless, the one who in a spiritual sense has entered into complete fellowship with God has likewise entered into that rest which is typical of the complete rest at the second coming of our Lord.

In verses 11-13 the Apostle appealed to his brethren to profit by the experience of their brethren of Moses' day. The latter failed to enter in because of their stubbornness and unbelief. The Jews of the first century as a nation who had been evangelized are here urged to enter into the rest offered by Christ.

In strengthening his appeal to his brethren to take this stand, the Apostle called their attention to the fact that they were dealing with Christ—the Word of God who is living and active—who would understand each case and would deal with it on its own merits. John's calling Christ the Word in his Gospel (1:1-18) is in keeping with Paul's language in Hebrews 4:12. Everything is manifest and open before Christ. One may be able to deceive man, but he cannot deceive the God-man, the Lord Jesus Christ.

JESUS CHRIST, THE GREAT HIGH PRIEST (Installment 11)

Heb. 4:14-16

In our discussion we have examined chapters 1:1-4:13. In chapter 1 we have seen the picture of Jesus as the Son of God. In chapter 2 we observed Him as the Son of man. The writer, the Apostle Paul, urged his brethren in the flesh to give heed to the things which they had heard—the gospel. In 3:1, he exhorted them to consider the Apostle and High Priest of the Jewish confession. In 3:1-4:13, he insisted that the nation should accept Jesus as Apostle and High Priest while it was being called To-day, which period, as we have already seen, terminated with the destruction of Jerusalem and the overthrow of the nation in 70 A.D.

In this section he has presented Jesus as the Apostle from God—the God-man, and urged his readers to accept Him as such. In 4:14-7:28, he pictured the Lord Jesus as the High Priest of the Jewish nation. In effect, he declared that the high priest who was then living at Jerusalem and heading the nation religiously was not God's high priest, for they had a genuine one in the person of the Lord Jesus. It is our privilege now to study Him as High Priest. "Having then a great high priest, who hath passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession" (Heb 4:14).

It was God's original design that Israel should constitute a theocracy—a people governed by the Lord himself. In this economy the high priest was to be the head of the nation—and its approach to God through him and the services which he performed for the nation as a whole. In the days of Samuel, however, a situation arose which gave rise to a clamor for a king who would head the nation like those of their surrounding neighbors. This clamor for a human monarch was tantamount to the rejection of God's plans and the substitution of human ways for them. The Lord at their continued insistence gave them a king. Under this regime the high priest was a secondary figure, being divested of practically all his authority and power so far as control of the nation was concerned.

The Lord through David promised to raise up a High Priest after the order of Melchizedek (Ps. 110). Jeremiah also foretold this one in 30:21,22. Paul, in Hebrews, called Israel's attention to the fact that she now had the real High Priest who was sent to her from God in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

Concerning our Lord, the Apostle asserted that He had passed through the heavens. The word "heavens" in the Hebrew is in the dual number but is rendered by the plural in English. In the Greek it is usually put in the plural number. This fact may be an echo of that which Paul referred to in the following passage: "I know a man in Christ, fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I know not; or whether out of the body, I know not; God knoweth), such a one caught up even to the third heaven". (II Cor. 12:2). We usually think of the first heaven as being the atmosphere, which surrounds the earth; the second, the starry heavens; and the third, the immediate presence of God. This place where the Almighty sits enthroned is in a position north of this earth and is referred to in several passages of scripture.

In this heaven of heavens—the third heaven—is the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man (Heb. 8:2). It is referred to in Revelation 11:9 and is spoken of as the temple of God in heaven.

After the Lord Jesus made His sacrifice for the sins of the world, He went with His blood into the true sanctuary to accomplish the atonement for those who accept Him. Thus Paul in the verse under consideration referred to Jesus as having left this earth and having passed through the first and second heavens into the very presence of God, appearing in the temple of God in heaven for His people.

Having spoken of this great High Priest, the Apostle called Him by name—Jesus. This is His human name. The angel told Joseph to call Him Jesus, "for it is he that shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21). The word "Jesus" means *Jehovah's Salvation*. This word in Hebrew is rendered "Joshua". This same idea was expressed by good old Simeon when he came to the temple and the Baby Jesus was placed in his arms. Looking up toward heaven, he blessed God and said, "Now lettest thou thy servant depart, Lord, According to thy word, in peace; For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples (Luke 2:29-32).

This High Priest is called the Son of God. David spoke of Him as the Son of God in Psalm 2. He is also referred to as God's Son in Proverbs 30:4. While the various synoptic writers refer to Christ as the Son of God only occasionally, John is the one who dwells upon this thought. Jesus is the Son of God par excellence. We are children of God by faith in Christ Jesus; but He was *the* son of God in a special and unique sense—that is, in the sense that He was God in human form Who entered the world by virgin birth.

The Apostle urged his readers saying, "let us hold fast our confession." This rendering would imply that they had already taken hold of Christianity, having accepted Christ, but that the apostle was urging them to hold on to Christ tenaciously. If this rendering is correct, then all which we have seen heretofore concerning the exhortation for the readers to give heed to the things which they had heard and to consider Jesus as Apostle and High Priest is erroneous. But this supposition is certainly far from facts. In order to get to the heart of this difficult question, it is necessary for us to notice the word that was employed by the Apostle and that was rendered "hold fast." This term in the original Greek has three distinct meanings: first, to have power, be powerful; second, to get possession of—that is, to become master of, to obtain; third to hold—that is, to hold in the hand, to hold fast to, not to discard or let go. We must select the meaning of any word which accords with the facts of the context. The first meaning is out of harmony with the data of this passage. The second one, to get possession of, that is, in the sense of obtaining or taking hold of, accords with all the facts of this context. In view of these things, I suggest that we accept that definition of the word and render the exhortation something like this: "Let us take hold of our confession." The Apostle is here using the word "confession" in the broad sense of the religious system—somewhat as we use the term when we speak of the "Christian confession." Christianity is Jewish and the Apostle could properly urge those addressed to take hold of Christianity by saying "take hold of our confession."

In verse 15 the Apostle showed the qualifications which this High Priest has. In the first place, he made a statement relative to Him, using the double-negative: "For we have not an high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities." This statement is equivalent to the assertion that Jesus was touched with all of the feelings of our infirmities. He knows our frame. He knows that we are dust. He is sympathetic with us, and we can come to Him with perfect confidence and assurance. In the second place, He has been tested in all points like as we are. Never has any man been subjected to a temptation

that is different from those which were presented before the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus He knows from experience all of our external temptations. In the third place, He was without sin. He did not have a fallen, depraved nature as human beings do today. Moreover, because of His sinlessness, he did not yield to sin or commit any wrong. Such is the force of our language in the verse under consideration.

In the sixteenth verse the Apostle urged his Jewish brethren with boldness to draw near to the throne of God which is the source of all grace, since we have such a High Priest sitting thereon and ministering in our behalf.

People are to come, not with fear and dread, but with boldness. The word rendered "boldness" means, telling everything. Come, he tells them, making a clean breast, a complete confession, throwing yourselves upon the mercy of the Lord and looking to Him for peace and pardon.

People are to come to this great High Priest in order that they might receive mercy—mercy for the past and also grace to help in every time of need. We need both grace and also mercy. Especially do we who have accepted Christ need grace to help us in every trying hour. The words rendered "to help us in time of need" literally means, "answering a cry." No one who will come to the Lord Jesus in faith will be rejected. He who comes to Christ will in nowise be cast out. We can there find grace and mercy for every time of need. Praise God for such a High Priest as He is!

Heb. 5:1-10 (Installment 12)

As noted in the last installment, in Hebrews 4:14-7:28, the Lord is presented as the High Priest of the Jewish nation. In 4:14-16, as we saw last month, the writer urged the Jewish people to accept Him as their rightful High Priest. By doing so they would receive mercy for the past and grace for every time of need.

In order to strengthen his appeal to his brethren to accept Christ, he showed that under the old dispensation, the high priests, the sons and descendants of Aaron, were men who were compassed about by infirmities and who could sympathize with them in their troubles and difficulties. No one is able to be a true servant of God, ministering to the spiritual needs of men, who has not a kind, sympathetic heart, and who can not enter wholeheartedly into their trials and difficulties.

A survey of Old Testament history shows that some of the high priests were self seeking and not interested in the welfare of the people. Unfortunate is any generation who must be led by such incompetent guides. The writer of Hebrews lays great emphasis upon the fact that Jesus, our great High Priest, is one who is in touch with all the feelings of our infirmities, having been tempted in all points like as we, yet without sin. He therefore has every qualification of a faithful minister who can meet all our needs and sympathize with us in the fullest manner possible.

The high priest in Israel offered both gifts and sacrifices for sin. A study of the Levitical system of sacrifices and offerings shows that there were various ones which were commanded to be offered in regard to different types of sin and transgressions. Of course, there were the daily morning and evening offerings. There also was the Passover which was offered at the proper season. Moreover, at the Feast of Weeks, Pentecost, certain offerings were made. But the great national offering for sin occurred on the Day of Atonement—the tenth day of the seventh month. In addition to these there were the whole burnt-offerings, the meal-offerings, the peace-offerings, the sin-offerings, and the trespass-offerings. These were presented to the Lord by individuals whenever they had sinned or done wrong and were guilty of certain offenses, in order to make atonement for their souls. These sacrifices and offerings set forth various aspects or phases of the complete and perfect sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, whose atonement was foreshadowed most graphically in Isaiah 53.

The high priest had to make offerings first for himself and then for the people, all of whom were guilty of sins of ignorance and of erring through the weakness of the flesh. Let me hasten to call attention, however, to the fact that there were no offerings prescribed in the Levitical system for presumptuous, or deliberate, willful sinning. (See Numbers 15:30,31.)

In regard to the special offering which each individual Israelite had to bring when he was guilty of various sins, the reader should study carefully the first seven chapters of Leviticus and also chapter 16.

The writer of Hebrews was very careful to call attention to the fact that no man rushed into the priestly office to assume the grave responsibilities of that position. On the contrary, those who officiated were those who were called of God as was Aaron. He was not self seeking. God looked into Aaron's heart, knew what was there, and called him, bestowing upon him that honor. The high priesthood remained,

by the choice of God, in the Aaronic family. The Lord guarded very carefully this office with its honors and taught Israel to respect it. An excellent example of such a demonstration is found in Leviticus 10 in the case of Nadab and Abihu, sons of Aaron, who offered strange fire upon the altar. Again, the Lord taught the lesson concerning the sanctity of the priestly office in His smiting with leprosy King Uzziah when he forced himself and burnt incense to the Lord (II Chron. 26).

In the days of the Maccabees, however, the moral and spiritual condition of Israel was at a very low ebb and there were those in Israel who liked the preference and the honors bestowed by the people. Hence there were connivings and schemings, plottings and counter-plottings on the part of certain unprincipled men in order to obtain the priesthood. These efforts to seize this honorable office on the part of these unscrupulous men brought countless disasters and troubles to the nation.

The sacred writer called his reader's attention to the fact that Christ did not glorify Himself by rushing into the high priestly office. He cared nothing for the adulation and praise of men. Throughout His entire ministry He constantly called attention to the fact that He came not to do His own will but the will of Him who sent Him. He did not seek the applause of the people. He was not caring for the praise of men. One thing only He sought and that was to do the will of God and to bring the truth of the Almighty to lost humanity in order that they might be saved.

But God the Father appointed Christ the High Priest, even though He was not of the Aaronic order. But no Hebrew should have been surprised at that, for David, in Psalm 110, had foretold that the Messiah would be not only King but also Priest of the Hebrew nation. In support of this proposition our writer quotes from Psalm 2 these words: "Thou art my Son, This day have I begotten thee." An examination of the passage from which this quotation is taken shows that this psalm gives a conversation between God the Father and God the Son, which was held in the council chambers of eternity with reference to the great plan of redemption. Looking forward to the time of the Incarnation, the First Person of the Holy Trinity declared to the Second, "Thou art my Son, This day have I begotten thee." Since this one, the God-man, is God's Son, all He has to do is to ask of the Almighty to give Him His rightful inheritance. The Father will then turn over all the nations to Him, and He will reign in Mount Zion, Jerusalem, for a thousand years.

Having quoted from Psalm 2, the writer then gave these words from Psalm 110: "Thou art a priest for ever After the order of Melchizedek." In order to see the force of this statement, one must study Genesis 14, where appears the account of the mysterious priest-king, Melchizedek, who was king of Salem and priest of God Most High. Like a lone mountain in a plain stood this priest-king in the ancient world. He had no connection with the Aaronic priesthood nor with the Davidic line. Nevertheless, he was king of Jerusalem and priest of God Most High. King David in Jerusalem, by the spirit of God, looked forward to a time when God would raise up one to reign as King in Jerusalem and to officiate as His High Priest. This one was typified by Melchizedek. Thus our writer called attention to the fact that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Son of man, was the one who was raised up of God to be this Priest-King "After the order of Melchizedek."

In speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ, our writer then called attention to the prayer life of the Son of God who, during the days of His flesh engaged much in prayer and supplication, together with strong crying

and tears to God who was able to save Him from death. An examination of the Gospel of Luke shows the prayer-life of Jesus as does none of the other records. Of course, His weeping, praying, and crying to God reached its highest point in Gethsemane just before the arrest. To the Father the Lord Jesus said, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matt. 26:39). He came into the world to lay down His life for our redemption. God did not cause the cup of death and suffering to pass from Him. He drank it to the very last bitter drop—for your redemption and mine.

In Hebrews 5:9 we are told that our Lord, the Son of God, was made perfect through sufferings (cf. Heb. 2:10). He was perfect in every respect. He knew no sin. He was sin apart. He never had to make any offerings or sacrifices for sin. He never confessed any sin. He challenged his opponents to point to one sin of which He was guilty. He was pure, spotless, without blame, without guile. Nevertheless, He was made perfect. He was very God and at the same time perfect man. As the God-man He was perfected. He reached His goal by wading through the turbulent waters of sufferings.

Having been made perfect He became the Author of eternal salvation unto all who obey Him. He brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. He offers salvation full and free to all. It is to be had for the asking. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

Having reached the end by suffering and having become the Author of eternal salvation, He was addressed or saluted by God as a High Priest "after the order of Melchizedek." Doubtless when He ascended after His resurrection and sat down with the Father on His throne, the Almighty saluted Him as the King Priest after the order of Melchizedek.

MAKING GREATER PROGRESS IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE (Installment 13)

Heb. 5:11-6:20

In our exposition of Hebrews we have arrived at the great parenthesis in the book, 5:11-6:20. Let us remember that, as we have repeatedly seen, the Epistle to the Hebrews was written to the entire Jewish nation and constituted the final appeal to the generation of the first century to accept the Lord Jesus Christ. The writer urged his brethren to consider Him as their Apostle and the High Priest of their confession and to accept Him as such. In 3:2-4:13, he appealed to them to receive Jesus as their great Apostle, but in 4:14-7:28, he presented the Lord as the great High Priest of the Jewish nation, who is Israel's great Priest King after the order of Melchizedek, as was promised in Psalm 110.

That one may see that 5:11-6:20 constitutes a parenthesis, let him read 7:1 after having read 5:10. He will see that this verse takes up the thought dropped with 5:10.

This parenthetical portion deals with the spiritual growth of the believers (5:11-14); with the apostates who rejected the marvelous light given to them and who could never be brought to repentance (6:1-8); with the faithfulness of the believers among the Hebrews (6:9-12); and with the steadfast hope of the believer (6:13-20).

In Hebrews 5:11-14, the apostle upbraided the believers among the Hebrews for not having made greater progress in their Christian life and experience. He desired very greatly to speak to them concerning our Lord, but could not because they were unable to comprehend the deep things of God in regard to Christ. If they had grown and developed in spiritual life and knowledge, they could have understood what the apostle wished to tell them. Their difficulty was that they were dull of hearing. The Greek expression is very graphic. It has properly been rendered, "Ye have no push in your ears." They were mentally lazy and would not concentrate their minds to study the deep things concerning their adorable Lord. Thus by their mental and spiritual laziness they deprived themselves of the great riches of the deep things regarding Christ.

They had been Christians long enough to be teachers of others. Nevertheless, they had sat and taken in and had never given out anything. Whenever one is constantly learning and never giving out that which is taught him, he will never make any progress. People are saved for service. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10). When Andrew learned that Jesus was the Messiah, he went immediately and got his brother. We should do the same today. When we are babes in Christ, let us feed on the sincere milk of the Word; but let us go on, advance, and become accustomed to the strong meat of the Word. It is the will of God that we thus advance and become teachers of the Word. Such is the message to the Christians, Hebrew believers, in this section.

In order to enforce the lesson of going on in the Christian life upon the minds of the Hebrew believers, the apostle urged them in 6:1-3 to lay aside their continual wrangling and discussion about the first principles of the oracles of God and exhorted them to go on unto perfection. They had, humanly speaking, understood accurately the first principles of the oracles of God, the fundamentals of the Christian faith. They were satisfied with that, but cared nothing about going on unto perfection. The

writer, however, said that they would do that if God permitted them to do so, that is, if God allowed them the time and opportunity. Thus he encouraged them to follow his lead.

Following this exhortation he showed that there is danger in one's not taking advantage of his opportunities and going forward, walking in the light as God gives it. He emphasized this point by calling attention to a certain class of people "who were once enlightened and tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the age to come, and *then* fell away." Of these the apostle said, "... it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame." Who are these apostates? My answer is this: There were certain ones in the Jewish nation who, doubtless because of their strategic positions and opportunities, had been granted unusual blessings in order that they might know the reality and the verities of the Christian hope. These people had been enlightened and had actually tasted of the heavenly gift; they also had been made partakers of the Holy Spirit. They had tasted the good Word of God and the powers of the age to come. Nevertheless they sinned against the light that was given them. They fell away and refused to go forward.

Were these genuine converts? Positively not. God had granted them by a miracle the privilege of understanding and comprehending the blessings in Christ. He had performed a miracle in their behalf in order that they might know the certainty of the blessings in Jesus Christ the Messiah.

I might illustrate the point this way. Paul, in II Corinthians 12, spoke of an experience which had doubtless been granted to him, and in which he was caught up to the third heaven and saw things which it was not lawful for him to utter. This experience was given to him miraculously for a certain purpose, namely, that he might know the certainty of the things which he believed in order that he might be spurred on to greater labors and activities. These strategically located Jews in like manner, by a special miracle from God, were allowed to taste the heavenly gift, the powers and joys of the indwelling Spirit, the good Word of God, and the powers of the age to come in order that they might know the certainty of the blessings in Christ to the end that they might tell their brethren and lead the nation to an acceptance of its Messiah.

I might further illustrate this point by the case of Paul. He was on his way to Damascus in order to persecute the Christians there. God appeared to him and gave him an experience that no other person ever enjoyed. This was not for his conversion. The Lord Jesus told him why He appeared to him: "... for to this end have I appeared unto thee, to appoint thee a minister and a witness both of the things wherein thou hast seen me, and of the things wherein I will appear unto thee ..." (Acts 26:16). From this passage we learn *why* Jesus appeared to Paul, namely, to make him a minister and a witness, to fit him for service—and not for his salvation. The Lord knew that Paul would accept Christ. He did so, and, having seen Jesus in this marvelous experience, he was able to preach as he could not have done if the Lord had not appeared to him as He did.

These apostates concerning whom the apostle now writes were men strategically placed to whom the Lord gave special opportunities to fit and prepare them to become messengers of His. Thus miraculously they were granted a foretaste of the verities that are in Christ. Because of cowardice, ulterior motives, etc., these men would not take their stand with Christ and become witnesses for Him. By their refusal to

walk in the light and accept the Lord Jesus Christ, they rendered their spiritual nature incapable of genuine repentance. They had sinned against all the light that God could give any man. They had sinned presumptuously. There is no sacrifice for such sin (Num. 15:30-31).

I might compare these men to the ten spies who went with Caleb and Joshua to spy out the land of Canaan. They were by special permission and by the providence of God allowed to go into the land of Canaan and see the wonderful home which the Lord had prepared for Israel. Upon their return they brought in an adverse report and discouraged the people. On the contrary, Caleb and Joshua, by faith and in loyalty to God and to the facts, reported accurately the conditions existing in the land before them. These two were allowed to enter. The ten who had had the same special privileges to equip them for testimony to the nation rejected the light, refused to take their stand for God, and discouraged the nation from going in. These ten spies were never allowed to re-enter Canaan. They had sinned against the light and against the people. When they returned to the camp at Kadesh-barnea, they could have said to the people, "Come on, let us enter the land. We can do so because God has said so." Then by faith they could have entered in and enjoyed permanently the blessings of the land which they had surveyed by special dispensation of God's mercy during the forty day experience of spying out the land. But they would not do this. They were therefore debarred from it. The ten spies stood in a position which was analogous to these apostates of Paul's day.

Though the apostle called the attention of the Hebrews to the tragic, fatal error of these apostates, he assured the believers that they were not in their condition even though they had made little progress in the Christian life. They had actually borne real fruit to the glory of God and Christ. This is set forth in Hebrews 6:9-12.

God made a promise to Abraham, which he accepted by faith. He inherited the promises—all of those that were promised for his day and time. He yet will become heir of the world through faith (Rom. 4:13). There is a sure and unshakable foundation upon which the Christian faith rests. That foundation consists of God's promise and oath. This is set forth in Hebrews 6:13-20.

This hope is anchored to that which is within the veil in heaven, where Jesus as the forerunner has gone and is officiating as our great High Priest, making intercession to God for us. He will sustain us in every time of need.

A HIGH PRIEST FOREVER (Installment 14)

Heb. 7

In the present installment we are to study Hebrews 7. As has been noted, 7:1 links directly with 5:10, the section 5:11-6:20 being a parenthesis as we have already seen.

According to Hebrews 5:10 when our Lord returned from the tomb and ascended to heaven, God addressed or saluted Him a priest after the order of Melchizedek. The question is, *who was Melchizedek?* He is mentioned three times in the Scriptures—Genesis 14, Psalm 110, and Hebrews 5:7-7:28.

In the Genesis record we see that Melchizedek was king of Salem, as the city was then named, but later called Jerusalem. He was a priest-king, a character who stands by himself in the historical record like a lone mountain in a vast plain. It is evident from the narrative that the little kingdom over which he reigned was the kingdom of God as it existed at that time. My reason for saying this is that he was priest of God Most High. Being a king and a priest, he was reigning over a kingdom authorized by God and supervising the worship of the Almighty.

Since this man was a true servant of God and was conducting His worship, we conclude that there was indeed a revelation of God known at that time. This inference is strengthened by absolute proof found in Genesis 26:5, which gives us the following bit of information: "Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws." In view of this clear statement there can be no doubt concerning there having been a primitive revelation made by the Lord and known and obeyed by Abraham. God called this patriarch out of Ur of the Chaldees and brought him over into Palestine into fellowship with Melchizedek. Since he participated in the worship conducted by Melchizedek, and since he obeyed God's commandments, statutes, and laws, it is abundantly certain that there was a primitive revelation known to Melchizedek and to Abraham.

That this was neither false nor pagan worship is evident from the fact that God recognized Melchizedek as His priest-king and accepted the worship which was rendered under his supervision.

A great controversy has raged through the centuries as to the personality of this priest-king. This dispute has arisen because of the statement that he was "without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like unto the Son of God, abideth a priest continually." Since it is said that he was without father and without mother, many sincere students of the Word have concluded that he was a supernatural character. The position has been taken that he was either Enoch or Seth. Still others think that he was our Lord in His prenatal state. These suggestions do not appeal to me at all, especially the latter one, the reason being that Melchizedek is said to have been *made like unto* the Son of God. Our writer could never have made this statement if he knew that Melchizedek was the Son of God. But does not the assertion that he was "without father, without mother, etc.," imply that he was a supernatural being? This is not a necessary inference although it is a possible one.

The more plausible explanation, at least to me, is that the writer was speaking from the standpoint of the Levitical priesthood. Faithful records were kept of the birth of every one of the priests and were preserved, according to tradition, in connection with the Tabernacle and later on with the Temple. In order for one to be permitted to officiate at the sanctuary, one had to prove by indisputable evidence that he was of the priestly tribe and that he was eligible for service. For example, when the captives returned from Babylon under the leadership of Zerubbabel, certain priests sought to be appointed to the divine service. Their names were not found in the genealogical records; therefore the governor and the high priest refused to let them enter into the sanctuary and to perform divine service, until there should stand up a priest with Urim and with Thummin (Ezra 2:62,63). So far as the genealogical records were concerned, these men were nonentities, the names of their mothers and fathers not appearing therein. Neither were their own names found therein recorded. They were, therefore, debarred from participating in the services. Is it quite possible, if not probable, that this incident may illustrate what was meant by Melchizedek's being without father and without mother, without genealogy—in the priestly records? Since, however, the evidence is not decisive, we shall have to be content with such information as we have and await further light on this passage.

The writer of Hebrews wished his brethren to consider how great Melchizedek was. In order to do this, he called attention to the fact that Abraham, the great progenitor of their race, had paid tithes of the spoils which he had taken in battle (Gen. 14) to Melchizedek. No one who believes the record will question for one moment that fact that Abraham did pay tithes to him. From this fact our writer concludes that the Levites of his day paid tithes to Melchizedek in that Abraham had done so.

In order to reinforce his message, Paul called attention to the general principle that the greater always blesses the lesser (vs. 7). In Abraham's paying tithes to Melchizedek he recognized his superiority so far as the organization of the worship of God was concerned. The Levites who received the tithes from the children of Israel, being in the loins of their father, in turn paid tithes to Melchizedek. The latter was therefore occupying a position in the kingdom of God much higher than that of the Levites. Thus argued the apostle Paul in this chapter.

According to King David (Ps. 110) God would raise up another priest-king who should be of the same order as Melchizedek and not of the Levitical tribe. The change of priesthood would necessarily require the changing of the law and the ordinances. This becomes the more abundantly evident when one realizes that perfection was never accomplished under the law, as the apostle argues in verse 11.

That the priesthood should be changed was apparent from the fact that Jesus of Nazareth, our Lord and Saviour, whom God saluted as a Priest after the order of Melchizedek, did not spring from the tribe of Levi. On the contrary, He was of the tribe of Judah. This fact was abundant proof that there was likewise to be a change of the law and the services. (In my using the expression, "change of the law," I do not wish anyone to think that I interpret the gospel message as law; for this is not true. Christians are not under law but are under grace [Rom. 6:14]. The expression, "change of law," is borrowed from the thought of the change of priesthood. Let us never, under any condition, interpret the gospel in terms law. It is a matter of sovereign grace.)

The new order, under our High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, who was typified by the priest-king Melchizedek, is infinitely superior to the old order under the Levitical system; for the Aaronic priesthood was appointed to this position by a carnal commandment—a commandment that was given with due respect to man's needs under the conditions then existing; but not so is it now. The fullness of times has come (Gal. 4:4). The law, together with all the ceremonial Levitical service, was a schoolmaster to bring the Jew to Christ. Thus in the fullness of the times He who was foreshadowed by Melchizedek came in the power of an endless life and became High Priest of the new order (vss. 15,16).

Since the old order has passed away and the new one has been inaugurated, there has naturally been a disannulling of the foregoing commandments and ordinances which because of the weakness of the flesh were unprofitable and could make no one perfect—no matter how sincere and earnest he was and how his soul longed for fellowship and communion with God. But by the inauguration of the new order under Christ, our great High Priest, we have a better hope and can draw very close unto God.

Furthermore, the superiority of the order under the reign of grace is shown by the contrast of the appointment of the priesthood of the former dispensation and our High Priest of the present time. The Aaronic priests were not appointed by an oath: in contrast with that fact is the further fact that Christ was appointed by an oath sworn by the Almighty: "... but he with an oath by him that saith of him, The Lord sware and will not repent himself, Thou art a priest for ever." This difference argues for the superiority of the present regime.

None of the Levitical priests could remain in office very long. They only served during their lifetime. Because of death they continued only, comparatively speaking, for a few short years. On the other hand, there is now no change of the priesthood since our Lord has become our great High Priest. His priesthood will never change, because "... he abideth for ever."

The Apostle Paul concluded his discussion of the Melchizedek priesthood of our Lord in verses 26-28. He declared that it was fitting and proper that we should have such a High Priest as the Lord Jesus who is, "...holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins, and then for the *sins* of the people: for this he did once for all, when he offered up himself. For the law appointeth men high priests, having infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was after the law, *appointeth* a Son, perfected for evermore." The Lord Jesus Christ was holy—holy in the fullest sense of the term. There was no hypocrisy about Him. He was undefiled, though He did enter the world by miraculous conception and virgin birth, and though he did associate with sinful man. Notwithstanding the fact that he lived and moved among men daily, He was separate from sinners. He challenged His opponents to show one single sin of which he was guilty.

After His resurrection He was taken home to glory and is now at the right hand of the throne of God, having all authority in heaven and in earth (Matt. 28:19,20).

Unlike the priests of the Old Economy, He never had to offer any sacrifices for Himself. He did, however, give Himself as a sacrifice for all. He tasted death for every man. The invitation goes out to all to come

and accept Him, to drink of the water of life freely, and to eat of the tree of life. Our great High Priest therefore is "a Son, perfected for evermore."

Since we have such a High Priest, and since the law has been abolished and grace has been established in its place, we can approach God with perfect assurance, believing that, "he is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." Praise God for such a salvation and such a High Priest, who will come and reign as King over this earth. May that time hastily come!

A NEW COVENANT WITH BETTER PROMISES (Installment 15)

Heb. 8:1-7

In our exposition of this marvelous book we have come to chapter 8. In the first seven verses of this chapter we have a summary of the changes that result from the priesthood of our Lord, which has been, as we have already learned, discussed in 4:14-8:28. As we have already seen, the Lord foretold in Psalm 110 that He would raise up a priest after the order of Melchizedek, which prediction was fulfilled in the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ who made the supreme sacrifice by laying down His life, tasting death for every man. In chapter 7 the writer shows that of necessity there had to be a change of priesthood. Hence he quite appropriately gave us the resume of these great changes immediately following the presentation of the proof regarding them.

According to verse 1 the chief point of the whole matter is that we have a High Priest who is superior of the Aaronic, Levitical system. Thus we have:

(1) *A better Priest* than Israel had. This Priest, as we have seen, came of the tribe of Judah and had no connection whatsoever with the Levitical priesthood. He was after a different order, the order of Melchizedek. He was *the* Son of God who entered the world by virgin birth and who was the God-man. After He had made the sacrifice of Himself, He ascended to glory in fulfillment of Psalm 110 and is at the present time seated at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens (vs. 1). This is in perfect accord with the statement found in Hebrews 1:1-4. He has returned to glory as the God-man to become the minister of the true tabernacle.

(2) *A better Sanctuary*. In verse 2 we read of the "true tabernacle" in heaven "which the Lord pitched, not man." That there is a tabernacle in heaven is quite evident from verse 5 of this chapter which declares that the ritualistic service at the Temple served as a copy and a shadow "of the heavenly things, even as Moses is warned *of God* when he is about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern that was showed thee in the mount." Moses went up into the mountain and was with the Lord forty days, during which time the Lord showed him a vision of the heavenly sanctuary and gave him specific directions and instructions—plans and specification—for the building of the earthly sanctuary. Thus the Tabernacle, and later on the Temple, were but replicas of the real spiritual, heavenly temple.

One catches a glimpse of this heavenly sanctuary in which our blessed Lord Jesus Christ is ministering in such passages as Revelation 11:19 and 15:5.

I am bold to assert my conviction regarding the reality of this spiritual tabernacle or temple of God in heaven. In my believing that it is a reality, I am not asserting anything as to that out of which it has been erected. Whether it is of a material nature, no one can say. All we can affirm is that there is such a reality in heaven and that service is being conducted therein and will continue to be carried on. In Revelation 8:1-5 we catch a glimpse of the service that will be carried on at a given time during the Tribulation.

(3) *A better Sacrifice.* Under the Mosaic Economy various offerings and sacrifices were made. For instance, there was the whole burnt offering, the meal offering, the peace offering, the sin offering, and the trespass offering. Each of these represented some phase of the work of our Lord Jesus Christ. Four of these sacrifices were bloody ones and typified the sacrificial blood of our Lord. The meal offering, of course, consisting of grain offered with incense, laid emphasis upon a different phase of His blessed ministry. While each of the bloody offerings set forth His shedding His blood for our sins, each offering emphasized a different aspect of His sacrifice and of His suffering in our behalf. On the great Day of Atonement (seventh month tenth day) the principle sacrifice was that of the sin offering which for all of those in fellowship with God rolled their sins forward one year. Each year this sacrifice had to be offered again. By this recurrence of the sacrifice on the Day of Atonement Israel was taught that those sacrifices were insufficient to cleanse man from his sin. Had they been able to atone for sin and to remove them forever, they would not have been offered every year. The worshiper was always conscious of the fact that his sins had not been adequately atoned for and that they would be remembered against him at the same time next year, for,

Though all the beasts that live and feed
 Upon a thousand hills should bleed—
 Though all their blood should flow,
 The sacrifice would be in vain,
 The stain of sin would still remain:
 Sin is not canceled so.
 "A better sacrifice" than these
 It needs, the conscience to appease
 Or satisfy the Lord.

But we have, declared our writer, a better sacrifice than all of those, which were offered upon Jewish altars. This sacrifice was none other than the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ himself. Though He was and is the High Priest making the offering, at the same time He was the sacrifice which was typified by all the offerings under the Mosaic economy. John the Baptist had this thought in mind when he, seeing Jesus returning from the Temptation, declared to two of his disciples, "Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).

What can wash away my sin? The answer is, *Nothing but the blood of Jesus Christ!* There was a fountain for sin and for uncleanness opened nineteen hundred years ago. Every sinner who will come in the spirit expressed by the song,

Just as I am, without one plea
 But that Thy blood was shed for me,

can come and offer Jesus Christ as his Sin Bearer, as his atonement and can have his sin washed away in the blood of the Lamb for ever and ever. We have a better Sacrifice than Israel had.

(4) *A better Ministry and a better Covenant.* According to verse 6 of our chapter, our Lord has obtained a better ministry, a more excellent one, "By so much as he is also the mediator of a better covenant,

which hath been enacted upon better promises." We have therefore a better covenant than the one into which God entered with Israel at Sinai. Let us remember that the Sinaitic covenant was one of *works*. God had previously entered into covenant relationship with Abraham on the basis of *grace*—viewed from the divine standpoint, and *faith*, from the human side. That covenant—Genesis 12:1-3; 15—was unconditional. When, however, Israel came out of Egypt to Mount Sinai, she exchanged, voluntarily, grace for law and pledged that she would observe and do all the things that were contained in the law. Thus she went upon a legal basis. By law no one can be justified. The law made nothing perfect. By the law men were condemned. In fact the law is called "the ministration of death" (II Cor. 3:7).

But we have a *better* covenant than Israel had. Let it be noted that this is not a better law. Christians are not under law, but are under grace (Rom. 6:14). The New Testament is not another law, a better law. It is a message of life and light. It is a covenant into which the Lord entered with the individual who will come and bring Jesus Christ as his one only and all-sufficient sacrifice, to atone for his sins. We therefore have a better covenant than Israel had. But we shall study more about it in the next installment as we examine verses 8-13 of this chapter.

(5) *Better Promises*. This better covenant is enacted upon better promises. The basis of this new covenant is, as has been suggested, that of grace and not of works. No man can observe the law perfectly. If one is under law and violates in one point, he is guilty of all (James 2:10). Many were the requirements and restrictions of the Mosaic Code. Few are the instructions which we have under our Lord and grace. The promises made to Israel looked forward to the great Millennial Age, which all the ritualism of that economy typified. The promises of the new covenant were of a more spiritual nature and looked not only toward the Millennial Age but far into the eternal ages when the redeemed shall be blessed with God and with Christ forever and ever.

Thus we who have Christ have all things. He has provided us with all things that pertain to life and godliness (II Pet. 1:1-4). He has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ (Eph 1:3). May our walk correspond with our privileges!

Heb. 8:8-13 (Installment 16)

In our studies we have come to the investigation of Hebrews 8:8-13, which is a quotation from Jeremiah 31:31-34. As we have often noted, one must turn back to the original passage from which a quotation is taken and study it in its natural setting in order to see its full import. This necessity is especially true with reference to our passage, a misunderstanding concerning which has been the occasion of certain serious errors. In this case, however, we shall have to go back to the original covenant into which the Lord entered with Abraham and view it. Next, we must take note of the covenant of works for which Israel clamored at the time of the Exodus and which is known as the Old or Sinaitic covenant. The information which we derive from a study of these two covenants furnish the necessary background for the understanding of the new covenant promised by Jeremiah and mentioned by the writer of Hebrews.

In Genesis 12:1-3 we have the call which God gave Abraham when he was in Haran. This, however, was his second call, as we learn from Acts 7:1-5. Originally the Lord called him out of Mesopotamia. He immediately went to Haran. When his father was dead, the God of glory appeared to him giving him the call mentioned in Genesis 12, at which time He made a sevenfold promise. They are as follows: (1) "I will make of thee a great nation," (2) "and I will bless thee," (3) "and make thy name great," (4) "and I will bless them that bless thee," (5) "and him that curseth thee will I curse," (6) "and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed," (7) and the land promise implied in the statement of verse 1, "unto the land that I will show thee," and mentioned in verse 7, "... Unto thy seed will I give this land."

Some time after Abraham reached the land (but we cannot say how long) God entered into a covenant with him which, of course, was confirmation of the promises recorded in Genesis, chapter 12. An examination of Genesis, chapter 15, shows that this covenant was one of pure grace. In introducing the matter to Abraham, God instructed him to look at the stars of the heavens. He then assured him that his seed would be just as numerous. Abraham believed God. His faith was counted to him for righteousness (Gen. 15:6). This promise was ratified by Abraham's cutting a covenant with the Lord. He did this by taking a heifer three years old, a she-goat of the same age, and likewise a ram, which he cut into halves, but the birds connected with this covenant were not severed. At the close of the day there was the appearance of a smoking furnace and a flaming torch that passed between the parts. This visible manifestation was a symbol of God's presence in the ceremony. According to the ancient oriental custom the contracting parties to a covenant passed between the severed parts of the victim. This fact bound them to keep the provisions of the said compact.

But in this instance Abraham did not pass between the parts. God's presence alone did that. Nevertheless it was a covenant into which the Almighty entered with Abraham. The fact that the Lord alone passed between the parts but did not require Abraham to do so shows that this covenant was of grace and unconditional.

When God brought Israel to Mount Sinai, she exchanged grace for law. The Lord promised her that, if she would obey His voice indeed, and keep His covenant, she should then become His own possession and a kingdom of priests (Ex. 19:5-6). Instead of realizing her inability to keep the law and all its requirements she answered, "All that Jehovah hath spoken we will do" (Ex. 19:8). God took the people at their word and thus entered into a covenant of works with them.

On account of the sinful nature of the human heart, no one can observe the law perfectly, for James declares, "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one *point*, he is become guilty of all" (James 2:10). The godliest people of Israel were keenly sensitive to their imperfections and confessed their sinfulness. The heart cry of these pious ones is heard throughout the Psalms. The sum and substance therefore of the Sinaitic covenant was that of works and merit.

As we have seen above, in Jeremiah 30:31-34, God promised to make a new covenant with Israel which would be different from the one into which He entered with her when He brought her forefathers out of Egypt. In Jeremiah, chapters 30-33, the prophet spoke of the time of the Tribulation, of her being delivered out of it, and of the establishment of the great millennial kingdom of our Lord upon the earth. It is true, however, that he did blend a description of the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity with that of her world-wide regathering in the end-time. Nevertheless, in these chapters the prophet was focusing his attention upon things which we know are yet in the future.

Moreover, an examination of these chapters shows conclusively that the prophet was speaking of Israel nationally and of her turning to God. This is quite evident from the language, "Behold, the days come saith Jehovah, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt ..." (Jer. 31:31-32). The covenant which God made at Sinai was with Israel *nationally* and not with the people of Israel as *individuals*. In the same way, the Lord promises to enter into a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. After the disruption of the nation upon the death of Solomon the kingdom of Israel was divided into the kingdom of Judah (the tribes of Judah and Benjamin) and the kingdom of Israel (the ten northern tribes). Though the breach thus made had been healed by Jeremiah's time, he still spoke of the twelve tribes constituting the Chosen People in terms of the period of the disruption. When therefore we read the verses quoted by Paul in Hebrews regarding the making of the new covenant with Israel, we see that the Lord was speaking of a future time when He will thus enter into relationship with the entire nation of Israel.

Since these verses in the Old Testament mean exactly what they say: namely, that God will yet in the future enter into covenant relationship with Israel, we may be sure that He said what He meant and meant exactly what He said. The question arising in this connection is this: Does Paul interpret these verses as referring to this future covenant or is he applying it in a spiritual sense to believers at the present day? In order to answer this question intelligently, we must recall the fact that in Hebrews 3:1 the writer called upon his readers to consider Jesus as the Apostle and High Priest "of our confession." As has been noted in this series of articles, the Hebrew believers had already considered Jesus and had accepted Him as such. This language therefore would not have been appropriate in addressing Christians. Moreover, as we have also seen in chapters 3 and 4, the writer drew a parallel between the Israel of Moses' day which came up to the border of the Promised Land but refused to enter in because of unbelief and the generation of Israel of his own day who had likewise been evangelized but had through unbelief refused to accept Jesus and the gospel message. Thus, a study of these chapters, as we have already seen proves that the writer was discussing Israel's national conversion and not that of the individual.

In keeping with the whole tenor of the Epistle to the Hebrews, we must interpret chapter 8:8-12 as having the same significance as it does in its original setting of Jeremiah 31; namely, that it is a promise which the Lord holds out to Israel nationally. A thorough study of the Epistle to the Hebrews brings the conviction that this letter was God's final call to the Jews of the first century to accept Jesus as Saviour and Messiah.

This new covenant, when it is made, will be upon the basis of grace, as was the Abrahamic covenant. As a matter of fact, it will be the fulfillment of that original covenant. At that time all Israel will accept the Lord Jesus Christ and will be regenerated. The Lord speaks of the results of regeneration as His putting His laws in their minds and writing them upon their hearts. When Israel nationally accepts the Lord, all will know Him from the least to the greatest. The parents will carry out literally the injunctions to teach their children the law of the Lord when they arise in the morning, when they sit in their homes, and when they lie down at night. The children then being properly taught from infancy will accept the Lord and His salvation as soon as they can understand the message and will be saved. Thus all from the least to the greatest will know Him at that time.

According to verse 13 of our passage, the old Mosaic covenant of works was ready to vanish since God had already established a new covenant—of grace through the Lord Jesus Christ—with all (both Jew and Gentile) who will accept. But let us not suppose that this new covenant under which we are now living is the new covenant mentioned in this quotation from Jeremiah, chapter 31.

Verse 13 of our passage leads us to believe that the Epistle to the Hebrews was written a little before A.D. 70, when the Temple was destroyed and the whole Levitical system vanished—until it shall be reestablished in the Millennial Age, with certain omissions and modifications.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TABERNACLE AND ITS FURNISHINGS (Installment 17)

Heb 9:1-10

The lesson for our study this month, in this series, is Hebrews 9:1-10. In the last verse of the preceding chapter the apostle showed that the first covenant was waxing old and was near the vanishing point. Strictly and accurately speaking, one knows that the law with all of its ceremonials was nailed to the cross and taken out of the way—(Col. 2:14). Nevertheless the Lord in His graciousness and mercy allowed the Temple with its ritualistic services to continue until the year 70 A.D., the year when the Romans overthrew the Jewish nation and destroyed the city with the Temple. The forty years from 30 A.D., when Christ was crucified to 70 A.D. constituted a transitional period in the history of Israel, during which time God was endeavoring to wean her from the law with all the services and to lead her to an acceptance of the Lord Jesus as her Messiah. These forty years, like the same length of time of the wilderness wanderings of Israel, were a period of testings for her nationally, given to her to make the choice between accepting God's plans and provisions for her on the one hand and rejecting His will on the other. As has been stated often before, the letter to the Hebrews was God's final call to the nation urging her to accept Him or be cut off from mercy as a nation and be scattered among the peoples of the world.

The apostle followed the prediction just discussed with some brief remarks regarding the Tabernacle, its furniture, and its symbolic meaning. In Hebrews 9:1-5 he presented the data relative to the Tabernacle; but in verses 6-10 he explained the inadequacy and the temporary nature of this sanctuary and its services.

In verse 1 he called attention to the fact that the ordinances observed at the sanctuary under the first covenant were of divine origin although the Tabernacle itself had been constructed of physical materials. This sanctuary was divided into the holy place and the most holy. From the account given in Exodus we know that the former was twice the size of the latter. In conducting the services the priests first entered the holy place. This thing they did continually, but they could not go farther. On the Day of Atonement, however, the high priest, with the blood of the bullock and the he-goat, went behind the second veil into the most holy place and there consummated the service which had been begun at the altar of burnt offerings to the east of the sanctuary.

In the holy place were the candlestick, the shewbread, and the golden altar. The candlestick, as is quite evident, served the purpose of giving light. The twelve loaves of shewbread were placed upon the table opposite the candlestick; the golden altar of incense was located immediately in front of the second veil of the Temple, which separated the holy place from the most holy.

The Ark of the Covenant was placed in the most holy place. It was the only piece of furniture in this room.

According to the instructions given by the Lord to Moses, the golden altar of incense was located in the holy place; but according to Hebrews 9:4 it was behind the veil and in the most holy place; There is therefore at least a seeming contradiction between the Exodus account and that in Hebrews. All scholars admit the difficulty. When, however, there is a seeming contradiction, we may be certain that

the difficulty lies in our lack of knowledge or in a failure to comprehend the facts and interpret them aright.

Two explanations are given in an effort to harmonize the seeming contradiction. Those holding one view suggest that originally the golden altar was situated in the holy place as God had instructed Moses. This was true both in the Tabernacle and also in the Temple built by Solomon. But, according to these expositors, the altar of incense was put behind the veil in the most holy place in the second Temple—the one erected by Zerubbabel, which was standing at the time the Hebrew letter was written, although it had been reconstructed and beautified, piecemeal, by Herod.

The other explanation offered by certain scholars is that, since the altar of incense was so very closely connected with the most holy place, the writer was not speaking in literal terms of its exact location but was thinking of it in terms of its spiritual significance in relation to the most holy place. Either of these explanations may be the correct one; or there may still be another if only we knew all the facts. Although we are unable to unravel the mystery connected with this point, we still have an unshaken faith in the infallibility of the record and await further light.

Although the Tabernacle and also the Temple were patterned after the Temple of God in heaven, they signified spiritual realities which exist between the earth and heaven itself. The most holy place, as we shall later see, viewed from one angle, represented the heaven of heavens, the very presence of God, whereas the holy place signified the kingdom of God upon earth, which during the Mosaic Economy was coterminous with the kingdom of Israel. That this statement is correct is evident from I Chronicles 28:4,5, in which passage the throne of David, upon which Solomon sat was called "The throne of the kingdom of Jehovah over Israel." This fact is again seen in II Chronicles 13:8 "And now ye think to withstand the kingdom of Jehovah in the hand of the sons of David ..."

The twelve loaves of shewbread represented the twelve tribes of Israel whom God accepted as His portion: "For Jehovah's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance" (Deut. 32:9). The candlestick quite obviously represented the revelation which God gave to Israel and which shed its light throughout the kingdom of His people. The altar of incense symbolized the worship: "Let my prayer be set forth as incense before thee; The lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice; (Ps. 141:2).

In the ark of the covenant—the only piece of furniture in the holy of holies—the two tables of stone delivered by the Lord to Moses were deposited. A pot of manna and Aaron's rod which budded were likewise placed in the ark. On the tables of stone were written the Ten Commandments, which express the basic principles of life. These might be called a transcript—engraved in cold stone—of the very nature of God's holy being and of His relation to man, His creature. The pot of manna was a memorial of the fact that during her wilderness wanderings, Israel was fed miraculously by the Lord. Aaron's rod, with which he performed his miracles, the symbol of his power, constantly budded. It is quite probable that this phenomenon signified the coming forth of life after death—death being a separation of spirit from body.

Upon the mercy seat there stood two cherubim with their wings outstretched. Upon the top of the ark, which was in reality the mercy seat, the Shekinah of glory rested—during the existence of the first

Temple. According to Jewish tradition it never returned to the restored Temple built by Zerubbabel. A study of Ezekiel chapter 1, shows that the cherubim are closely connected with the presence of God. It is therefore quite appropriate that they should be connected with the mercy seat where God met symbolically with His people when the high priest sprinkled the blood of atonement thereupon.

As stated above, the holy place represented the kingdom of God as it was during the Mosaic Economy. But after the Jews rejected Christ, this kingdom, symbolized by the holy place, was taken from the Jews and given to a nation that would bring forth fruit: "Therefore say I unto you, The Kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" (Matt. 21:43). The nation here mentioned is none other than the spiritual kingdom of our Lord known in the New Testament as the church. That this position is correct is evident from the following quotation: "But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for *God's* own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light (I Pet. 2:9,10). This body of people consists of both believing Jews and Gentiles who are brought into spiritual communion through the Lord Jesus. This fact is set forth by Paul in the following statement: "But if some of the branches were broken off, and thou, being a wild olive, wast grafted in among them, and didst become partaker with them of the root of the fatness of the olive tree ..." (Rom. 11:17,18). The olive tree in this comparison represents the Jewish race, with all the blessings of God, which sprang from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The branches which were broken off represented the faithless among the Jews who were broken off by their unbelief in Christ as Messiah and Saviour. The Gentiles who believe the gospel and receive Christ are the wild olive branches which are grafted in among the natural branches of the tree. Eventually Israel, who does not now see the light, will receive it and accept the Messiah. She will then be placed in her proper position in the kingdom of God as was symbolized by the loaves of the shewbread. Then will be fulfilled completely the symbolism of the holy place.

The priests, as has been stated above, could enter only the holy place in their daily ministrations. The high priest on the Day of Atonement—once a year—entered into the most holy place to make provisional atonement for the nation. The fact that the veil separated the holy place from the most holy signified the fact that the way into heaven itself had not been opened up so long as the first Temple stood. This fact showed that the Tabernacle was only of a temporary, provisional, and typical nature. The conscience and the soul of the people were not by those services quickened into spiritual life and power. The worshippers were always conscious of the fact that the services did not present them perfectly acceptable in the sight of God. This fact was accentuated by the annual atonement.

The Temple with all its ceremonies was only provisional, having been imposed upon Israel "until the time of reformation." This time of reformation was the period ushered in by Christ's coming and suffering for us.

Heb. 9:11-22 (Installment 18)

In the last installment of these lessons we studied the significance of the Tabernacle and its furniture. According to the writer of Hebrews, the Holy Spirit signified by the structure of the Tabernacle that, so long as it stood, the way into the very presence of God had not been opened to His people. This principle becomes quite evident to one who remembers that the most holy place typified heaven, whereas the holy place, which was separated from the most holy by the second veil, symbolized the Kingdom of God which was as we saw in the last installment, coextensive with the Kingdom of Israel during the Mosaic Age. The priests, the representatives of the nation of Israel, had free access to the holy place but were barred from the most holy. Only the high priest, who represented Christ on the Day of Atonement, could enter with the blood of atonement. This arrangement, declared the Apostle Paul, the author of Hebrews, signified that, so long as the earthly sanctuary stood, the way into the presence of God was not accessible to the children of God. All the services and ceremonies, together with their sacrifices, were only typical, pointing forward to the realities of the future, many of which we are now enjoying.

The entire situation was changed by the coming of Christ, our great High Priest. "But Christ having come a high priest of the good things to come, through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands that is to say not of this creation, nor yet through the blood of goats and calves, but through his own blood, entered in once for all men into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption" (Heb. 9:11,12). Christ's coming into the world changed the entire picture and introduced a new order of worship and service—the realities of which were typified by the ceremonial ritualism of the old covenant. His coming into the world changed not only the type of service rendered to God but also the whole social order as the truth of the gospel permeated different localities. It effected the emancipation of slaves and changed the status of women and children. When Christ comes into the heart and life of an individual, there is a great change. Old things pass away and all things become new.

According to the verses just quoted, Christ is the minister of "the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation." To what does this language refer? Some understand it as indicating the Temple of God which is in heaven (Heb. 8:2; Rev. 11:19). This interpretation is possible and even quite likely. On the other hand, it may signify the church of Jesus Christ which is called the Temple of God in I Corinthians 3:16,17. The church is indeed the spiritual house of God today, in which the Lord Jesus Christ as Priest officiates. This clause may also point forward to the Temple which will stand in Jerusalem during the thousand years' reign of our Lord and which Christ himself will build, as is indicated in the following quotation: "And he [Jesus the Messiah] shall build the temple of Jehovah; even he shall build the temple of Jehovah; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and shall be priest upon his throne; and the counsel of peace shall be between them both" (Zech. 6:12,13). This last interpretation is altogether possible in view of the fact that the Book of Hebrews was God's final call to the Jewish nation of the first century to accept Jesus as both the Apostle and the High Priest of the Jewish confession (Heb. 3:1). Regardless of which idea was the definite, specific one which the writer had in mind as he penned these words, these three interpretations are correct; for at the present time Jesus is ministering in the sanctuary in heaven, He is ministering in His church, and will be the minister and the High Priest of the great Millennial Temple.

From the quotation given above we learn that the blood of goats and calves which were offered under the Mosaic ritual was efficacious in cleansing and sanctifying with respect to the flesh. The purification wrought was only symbolic and could never affect and cleanse the conscience. It was necessary, nevertheless, for the Israelites to perform the ritualistic duties enjoined upon them for certain specific offenses and defilements. That the blood of these sacrifices and the various washings and ceremonials were inefficacious is seen from the fact that these had to be performed for every specific violation and defilement for which they were intended. Additional evidence that they were only symbolic and temporary is seen from the fact that the ritual of the sin offering on the Day of Atonement had to be repeated every year in order to roll forward the sins of the sincere ones in Israel for another year.

But Christ has come who is the High Priest of the good things foretold, which were foreshadowed by the ritualism of the Old Testament. Paul referred to these good things, of which Christ is now a Minister, in I Corinthians 2:9: "But as it is written, Things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, And *which* entered not into the heart of man, Whatsoever things God prepared for them that love him." We have been blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ (Eph. 1:3).

Christ by His own intrinsic worth—being the God-man—shed His blood for our redemption. The life, according to Leviticus 17:11, is in the blood. All the writers of the New Testament lay great stress upon the redemption which we have through Christ and emphasize that it is due to the fact that Christ shed His blood for our salvation. Truly His blood does wash away all our sins—past, present and future.

The Lord Jesus offered himself once for all "through the eternal Spirit." What is meant by "the eternal Spirit"? The answer is not certain. It may signify His own eternal divine spirit. Then again, it may refer to the Holy Spirit. The reason for this latter position is that Isaiah the prophet foretold that the Holy Spirit would rest upon the Messiah (Isa. 11:2). When Jesus was baptized, the Holy Spirit came upon Him (Matt. 3:11-17). By the Spirit of God He cast out demons, as we learn in the Gospel Records. It may be that Paul in the present passage meant that it was by the power of the Holy Spirit that the man Christ Jesus offered himself. Since the evidence is not positive, let us not be dogmatic on this point.

Since Christ had come and had introduced a new order, there was of necessity a change in the covenant as is indicated in verse 14 of our passage. Christ has entered into a covenant of grace with all—both Jew and Gentile—who will accept Him. In this connection, however, let us not confound this new covenant, mentioned in Hebrews 9:15, with the new covenant foretold by Jeremiah and quoted in Hebrews 8:8-12. This new covenant of our passage is an individual matter, whereas the covenant promised by Jeremiah is a nationalistic one into which the Lord will, when Israel accepts Jesus as Messiah, enter with the whole house of Israel.

In verse 16, Paul thought of this new covenant, which was sealed by the shedding of Christ's blood, as a will and testament. This term is borrowed from Roman law. By the use of it the Apostle intended to convey the idea that, since Christ has died, He has made His last will and testament, which can never be changed. According to legal terms one's will, after death and after it has been probated, can never be altered or changed. Christ offered to save those who come to Him and accept Him. That was His last will and testament. He has sealed it by His blood and the conditions of enjoying the benefits of His will can never be changed by anyone.

Our writer proceeded to show that what he had just stated about Christ's sealing His last will and testament with His blood was in perfect harmony with the making of the covenant at Sinai with Israel by the shedding of blood. According to Exodus, chapter 24, God delivered the book of the covenant to Moses. The proper sacrifices were offered, the blood of which was used to sprinkle the book and the people. Moreover the Tabernacle and the vessels thereof when they were made were likewise dedicated with the blood of the animal sacrifices. Having called attention to this fact, the apostle affirmed that "apart from shedding of blood there is no remission" (Heb. 9:22). Everyone who is to be saved must accept the precious, efficacious blood of Jesus Christ. To those of my readers who have not accepted Him, I plead with them to do so today.

Heb. 9:23-28 (Installment 19)

Our studies in the Book of Hebrews have brought us to the investigation of the last paragraph of chapter 9. This passage is of such vital importance that I am reproducing it in its entirety:

23 It was necessary therefore that the copies of the things in the heavens should be cleansed with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. 24 For Christ entered not into a holy place made with hands, like in pattern to the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear before the face of God for us: 25 nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place year by year with blood not his own; 26 else must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once at the end of the ages hath he been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. 27 And inasmuch as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this cometh judgment; 28 so Christ also, having been once offered to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for him, unto salvation (Heb. 9:23-28).

In the last installment of this series we saw that Christ came, "a high priest of the good things to come," and that He has obtained eternal redemption for us. The necessity for the shedding of His blood was foreshadowed by the fact that everything in connection with the Tabernacle and its service was cleansed by the sprinkling of blood. Israel had to screen herself behind the blood of the passover lamb in order that her first-born might not be destroyed. The Passover had to be observed yearly in order that she might remain in favor with God. The annual atonement had to be observed in order that the sins of the nation might be rolled forward for another year. Whenever the high priest, or the congregation, or an individual committed some sin which demanded a sacrifice, such a one or ones were required to bring the sacrifice designated in order to make atonement for the soul. But these sacrifices were absolutely necessary to cleanse the earthly sanctuary and to make atonement for the guilty ones. After the long period of apostasy during the reigns of Manasseh and Amon, good King Josiah, together with the high priest, had the Temple re-opened and cleansed with a view to re-inaugurating the services of God such as Israel had observed in former days. As the workmen were cleansing the sanctuary, they discovered the book of the law of Moses. It was read and immediately sent to the king who, upon hearing the message of the same, was convinced that Israel was threatened with the wrath of God because of a non-compliance with the ritualistic worship, as authorized by Moses. Josiah instituted great reforms and a revival resulted from his efforts to re-establish the worship and to please the Almighty. It is quite evident that this mighty revival was pleasing to the Lord. With the re-inauguration of the Temple services the Lord was well pleased. We must understand that this service did not satisfy the demands of His holiness. But He was well pleased with such services in that they typified the realities which we now have under Jesus our Lord. In view of the unfolding of God's revelation, we can see why it was necessary that the "copies of the things in the heavens should be cleansed with these (animal sacrifices); but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these."

As is stated in the verse just quoted, the animal sacrifices could cleanse the earthly sanctuary temporarily. They were simply shadows of the good things which we have under Christ. The Temple with its service was patterned after the heavenly Temple, glimpses of which we get in the Book of Revelation.

For instance, in Revelation 11:19 we see "the temple of God that is in heaven." Satan has had and still does have access to the presence of God (Job, chap. 1; Luke 22:31-54). His appearing in the very presence of God naturally would contaminate the heavenly sanctuary. The presence of demons in heaven likewise contaminates it. As proof that evil spirits do sometimes go into the presence of the Almighty, see I Kings 22:19-23. In view of these facts it is quite evident that the heavenly realities should require cleansing and purification.

The blood of bulls and goats could never cleanse the heavenly sanctuary, but Christ and the atonement made by the shedding of His precious blood can and did cleanse the heavenly sanctuary. Just as the high priest after sacrificing the animals for atonement took the blood into the sanctuary and thus purified it by the sprinkling of the same, so Christ, having offered Himself a sacrifice for the human race, went, after His resurrection, into the very presence of God and carried His blood to cleanse and purify it, thus making atonement for man. It was the good pleasure of God the Father that in Christ should all fullness dwell in order "to reconcile all things unto himself, having made peace through the blood of his cross; through him, *I say*, whether things upon the earth, or things in the heavens" (Col. 1:20).

According to the ritual presented in the Book of Leviticus, chapter 16, the high priest on the Day of Atonement entered into the most holy place with the blood of the goat which was slain and made atonement for the nation. In this way the sins of all the people—those who were in fellowship with God—were rolled forward one year. But each year this ceremony had to be observed and the goat had to be slain. Thus the sins of the nation were rolled forward from year to year.

Unlike the blood of the annual atonement is that of Christ. If His sacrifice had been on the level of the annual atonement, He would have had to offer Himself many times from the foundation of the world in order to take away sins. It is to be remembered that He, our Lord, was "the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world." He was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8). He was the Lamb without blemish and without spot who was foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world (I Pet. 1:19,20). His sacrifice was sufficient to remove sin and its effects forever and ever.

According to Hebrews 9:26 Christ made His sacrifice once for all in "the end of the ages." This statement can be understood only when we recognize the fact that there were long ages of the existence of the earth which are passed over in the record of Genesis, chapter 1—between verses 1 and 2. Christ was as a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world for the sins of humanity. Long ages upon ages passed after the creation of the world before the catastrophe recorded in Genesis 1:2 occurred. There were six days of reconstruction during which God was repairing the wreckage wrought by this calamity. The account of this reconstruction is found in Genesis, chapter 1. On the sixth day God created man. In round numbers the human family which is descended from Adam had been upon the earth four thousand years when our Lord was crucified. The Christian Dispensation has been running for approximately nineteen hundred years. This era will be followed by the great millennial kingdom. After that the earth, together with all the material universe, will pass out of existence (Rev. 20:11). Our Lord's offering Himself up two thousand years ago was in the very end of the ages of the history of the world. Thus when we understand that there were long geological epochs intervening between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2, we can understand the significance of Paul's statement in Hebrews 9:26 concerning Christ's offering Himself once for all in the end of the ages.

It is appointed unto men once to die. When they have once passed out of this life, their doom is settled. So long as men are here in this life, there is hope—there is an opportunity that they may yet accept Christ and be saved. This is the statement of the Word of God. So long as man is still in this life, just so long is there hope that he may accept Christ's salvation.

As man dies once, so Christ also offered Himself once for all—in His submitting to death. He did this in order to bear the sins of many. He made it possible for all men to be saved, but all will not accept His salvation. Thus His atonement is efficacious for those who do accept in faith the provisions which He offers. In view of these facts we can understand why Paul declared that Christ bore the sins of *many* when He died for us nineteen hundred years ago.

Having suffered and died and having been raised from the dead, Christ took His own blood and went into the most holy place in heaven. This thing He did in fulfillment of that part of the ritual of the Day of Atonement, which was performed by the high priest who having made the sacrifice took the blood into the sanctuary in order to make atonement for the nation. The worshippers stood without, anxiously looking forward to his reappearance. There was joy indeed among them when they saw him, for they knew that the atonement was acceptable. Having this ritual in mind Paul said that Christ had gone into the most holy place to make atonement for Israel. But He has not reappeared yet and will not until the remnant of Israel reaches the point that it is willing to accept Him and call for Him to return from heaven. When Israel is thus evangelized and is convicted of her need of the atonement of King Messiah, she will plead for Him to return; and when she does, He will appear a second time "apart from sin, to them that wait for him, unto salvation." The ritualism of the Day of Atonement so far as Israel is concerned has never been completely fulfilled. (For a full discussion of this most important point, see Chapter XII of *What Men Must Believe*.)

THE SIN QUESTION SOLVED—FOR TIME AND ETERNITY (Installment 20)

Heb. 10:1-18

At the conclusion of the last installment we saw that, according to Hebrews 9:27,28, Christ Jesus, the great High Priest of the Jewish nation, returned to heaven, entering the celestial sanctuary after having made His sacrifice for sin here upon this earth, and that He has remained there throughout the entire dispensation and will continue to wait in the presence of the Majesty on high for Israel to acknowledge her national sin of rejecting Him and plead for Him to return. When she does this, He will appear a second time "apart from sin, to them that wait for Him, unto salvation"—those constituting the remnant of Israel at the end of the Tribulation who, having been evangelized, will plead for Him to return and will await His reappearance.

The sacred writer begins chapter 10 by stating, "for the law having a shadow of the good *things* to come, not the very image of the things, can never with the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer continually, make perfect them that draw nigh." Since the writer used the conjunction *for*, it is evident that this sentence is explanatory of that which has preceded. In chapter 9 we see that the writer was discussing the tabernacle service which was authorized and which was carried on during the Law Dispensation. Since Christ has come, the High Priest of the good things to come, declared the author, the law with all its ceremonialism seemed to be but a shadow of the realities which we have in Christ. Though that service was typical of that which we have under our Lord, it was not the exact image of the realities which we now enjoy. Since the Mosaic ritualism was only typical, and since the annual atonement had to be offered yearly to roll forward the sins of the people, it is quite evident that that service could not make the worshipers perfect. The fact that it was repeated yearly was proof of its inadequacy to deal thoroughly with the sin question. If those sacrifices had been sufficient, they would have ceased to be offered—they would have made complete satisfaction for the sin of the worshipers. But the fact that they were offered annually was proof of their inadequacy. Those who came and engaged in the ritualism of the Day of Atonement or who offered private sacrifices were still conscious of the guilt of sin and the deficiency of the sacrifice after it had been made. Whenever the Hebrew in real penitence and contrition of heart brought any sacrifice to make atonement for his sins in order that he might be acceptable to God, he was conscious within his very soul that the sacrifice and the blood thereof could never adequately atone for his sins; for his conscience was not cleansed. The same sacrifices therefore had to be repeated yearly. In view of these facts, declared the apostle, it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin.

At the time of the Exodus the Lord instituted the Passover supper at which the paschal lamb was sacrificed. The blood was to be sprinkled upon the doorposts and lintels of every Hebrew home. On that memorable night the death angel passed over the land of Egypt. The first-born in every home where the blood was applied was spared; on the other hand, in every Egyptian home, where there was no blood, the first-born was destroyed. At Sinai the Lord spoke out of the midst of the sanctuary and gave the ritualism of the different sacrifices that Israel was to offer for various reasons. All the prophets recognized that animal sacrifices were commanded by the Lord and that, in order for the worshipers to be acceptable in the sight of the Lord, they had to screen themselves behind the blood of bulls and goats. Animal sacrifices were therefore authorized by the Lord. The spurious teaching on the part of

those who call themselves modern, which claims that animal sacrifices were of heathen origin, is indeed contrary to facts—is Satan's lie.

These sacrifices were ordained of God to typify or foreshadow the great and eternal sacrifice which the son of God made for us at Calvary. That the animal sacrifices commanded by Moses were of a typical character and that they were given for a limited time are set forth in Psalm 40, from which the writer of Hebrews quotes in chapter 10, verses 5-7.

Here the psalmist asserted that God was not satisfied with these animal offerings. He was satisfied with them for the time being because they served a definite purpose, but the prophet foretold that the time would come when they would no longer be acceptable to Him. They were unacceptable in that they could never touch the source of iniquity and make complete and sufficient atonement for a single sinner.

A careful study of the original prophecy in Psalm 40 and in the passage quoted in Hebrews, chapter 10, shows that this language is that of Messiah as He speaks to God the Father. The former, recognizing that sacrifices could not solve the sin problem, declared to the Father that He (the Father) has prepared a body for Him—Messiah. A glance at the psalm shows that in the original Hebrew the Messiah said, "My ears hath thou opened..." The marginal reading is, "ears hast thou digged (or pierced) for me." This language, an echo of the circumstances set forth in Exodus 21:1-6, assumes that Messiah has a human body and speaks of His complete surrender to do the will of God in terms of a Hebrew slave who willingly entered into a voluntary state of bondage. There is therefore perfect agreement between the Hebrew text of Psalm 40 and the Greek text of the same passage quoted in Hebrews, chapter 10.

Messiah is also, in this passage, reported as saying to God the Father "Lo, I am come (In the roll of the book it is written of me) To do thy will, O God." In this connection it is clear that the thing which is before His mind is His doing the complete will of God with reference to atonement for sin which was typified by the Mosaic sacrifices.

In verses 8 and 9 the apostle gives a very brief exposition of this quotation by saying that in the first part of it sacrifices and whole burnt offerings, which were authorized by the law, were not satisfactory to God. In view of this situation the Messiah volunteers to come and to do the will of God in this particular. The revelation of this conversation between God the Father and God the Son is proof that the law with all its ceremonialism was only typical, that now the Son has already come to be Israel's High Priest, and that the law has been removed and the new covenant established.

In verse 10 the writer emphasizes the fact that it is by Christ's having done the will of God in respect to the blood atonement that we have been sanctified through the offering of the blood of Jesus Christ once and for all. This statement is indeed marvelous and all comprehensive. Christ's having done the will of God, in respect to atonement, is the thing that sanctifies the believer once and for all. Unlike the Mosaic sacrifices, which were many, the one sacrifice of Christ solved the sin problem. Christ's sacrifice met every demand of the holiness of God. The will of the Almighty has been perfectly satisfied by His sacrifice. We believers are therefore sanctified by His having done the will of God. Our author is careful to emphasize the fact that Christ did the will of the Almighty by the offering up of His body for our sins.

He took upon Himself the human body in order that He might make this blood atonement and thus solve the sin question. The sacrifice of Christ was made once. One time was sufficient. It atoned for all the sins of the believer—past, present, and future. It was made once and for all. All the sins of men—past, present, and future—are dealt with by the one sacrifice which Christ made nineteen hundred years ago. Man's good works, his good character, his efforts, or anything that he can do cannot in the least do the will of God with reference to the sin question. The blood atonement of Christ is the only thing that can solve the problem. Man's faithfulness to the Lord cannot solve the sin question. Man's good works cannot add any merit or efficiency to the atonement of Christ. The only thing that can count with reference to any and all sin is the blood of Christ. One must see this fact clearly in order to have the proper conception of his relationship to God.

When one by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ accepts Him as the all-sufficient atonement for his sins, all of them—past, present, and future—are removed, are forgiven, are blotted out. The sin question is solved for time and eternity. Christ, according to this verse, has by His doing the will of God with reference to atonement sanctified through the offering of His body, once and for all, all those who believe.

In order to enforce or emphasize the efficacy of the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, the apostle, in verses 11 and 12, contrasted the sacrifices made by the high priest under the Jewish economy with the one sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ made for us. He therefore called attention to the fact that every priest stood, day by day, ministering and offering often times the same sacrifices "the which can never take away sins," or satisfy the soul and the conscience of the worshiper. In contrast with the repeated sacrifices of the Levitical priesthood our Lord Jesus Christ made one sacrifice for sin forever. Then he sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. His work was completed; it was sufficient; it needed no repetition. The justice and righteousness of God were satisfied.

King David, in Psalm 110, foretold the rejection of Messiah upon His first coming to earth. Furthermore, he revealed the fact that, after He would be rejected, God would invite Him to leave the earth, come to sit at His right hand, and to remain there in majesty and glory until Israel, convicted of her national sin of rejecting Him, pleads for Him to return. In Psalm 110:1-3 we see portrayed the entire redemptive career of King Messiah which consists of His first coming, His rejection, the invitation for Him to ascend to heaven and to sit at the right hand of the throne of God, and His return to earth at the invitation of Israel, at which time, He will set up His glorious millennial kingdom and reign from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth. The author of Hebrews therefore calls our attention to the fact that after Jesus was rejected, crucified, and raised from the dead, he accepted the invitation of the Father to come and sit at His right hand. The Apostle Peter on the day of Pentecost struck the same note as is seen from a study of Acts chapter 2.

Once more, the apostle, in verse 14, emphasizes the sufficiency of the atonement of Christ in the following words; "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." The law, as we have seen, could make no one perfect because, after a sacrifice had been made, the worshiper was still conscious of the inadequacy of such an atonement and also was conscious of a knowledge of sin. Exactly opposite to this situation are the results of the work of Christ. By His offering the worshiper is perfected forever. If he is perfected forever, there is nothing that can add to his security. The work is done.

In this verse the writer speaks of Christians as those who "are being sanctified." Sanctification, according to this verse, is a progressive process, a growth, a development. The believer accepts the Lord Jesus Christ and is clothed with His righteousness. Before God he stands perfect in Christ. Nevertheless there is room for growth and development in the spiritual life. That is what is stated in this verse. The Christian is supposed to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the truth, as well as in the Christian graces.

The Holy Spirit, according to verse 15, has borne witness to us on this point. As proof of this proposition, the writer quotes from Jeremiah, chapter 31, a passage which clearly refers to the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit. By that miracle God puts His laws on their hearts, and on their minds He writes them. When He does that, He remembers their sins and their iniquities no more: "And their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." The sin question has been settled. The believer's sins are covered—all of them, past, present, and future. This is in perfect accord with Psalm 32:1,2. There David pronounced a blessing upon the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered, and to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile. After one has been regenerated, saved, God does not chalk down against him his sins, for they have all been taken care of by the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Of course every son whom the Lord receives He chastens. He corrects them for their good, but their sins are all covered by the blood. The apostle therefore, in Hebrews 10:18, declared that "where remission for these [sins] is, there is no more offering for sin." Since Christ has made the offering for sin and it is all-sufficient, then there is no more remembrance of sin.

In view of the marvelous teaching of the passage which we have been studying (Heb. 10:1-18), we see that we have a most wonderful Saviour and a glorious salvation. To God be all the praise, through our Lord Jesus Christ!

" 'Tis finished! The Messiah dies,—
Cut off for sins, but not His own;
Accomplished is the sacrifice,
The great redeeming work is done.

" 'Tis finished! All the debt is paid;
Justice divine is satisfied;
The grand and full atonement made;
Christ for a guilty world hath died.

"The veil is rent; in Him alone
The living way to heaven is seen;
The middle wall is broken down,
And all mankind may enter in.

“The types and figures are fulfilled;
Exacted is the legal pain;
The precious promises are sealed;
The spotless Lamb of God is slain.

“Death, hell, and sin are now subdued,
All grace is now to sinners given;
And, lo, I plead the atoning blood,
And in Thy might I claim my heaven.”

PROVOKING ONE ANOTHER TO LOVE AND GOOD WORKS (Installment 21)

Heb. 10:19-31

In our Study of the Book of Hebrews we have gone through the argumentative portion and have reached the exhortative section which begins with chapter 10, verse 19. In that portion which we have studied, we have learned that the Lord Jesus Christ, the God-Man, has come to earth as our great High Priest, has offered himself as the sacrifice for our sins, has returned to the heavenly sanctuary and is there now as our great High Priest making intercession for us and will come someday for His own. Moreover, by His sacrifice He satisfied the justice and holiness of God and has devised a plan of redemption by which we are sanctified and made perfect. There is therefore nothing which man can do and which will increase the efficacy of the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ. By His sacrifice He has done the perfect will of God. In that He has accomplished the will of God by offering His body a sacrifice for us, we are now being sanctified and are awaiting his return to perfect us and to give us our glorified bodies. We have therefore perfect and complete redemption in Him. God has blotted out our sins and will never remember them against us anymore.

In view of the perfect redemption which has been wrought for us by the Lord Jesus Christ, the writer of the epistle, turning from the entire Jewish nation whom he has been addressing in the preceding portion of the letter (with the exception of 5:11-6:20 which section was directed to Hebrew believers), spoke again to his Hebrew believing brethren and urged them to worship God through Christ as we see in 10: 9-25.

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

Examination of this paragraph shows that Paul was speaking of the Christians approaching God in worship in terms of the ritualism of the Old Testament service. As we learn from the study of the Books Exodus and Leviticus, the Hebrew worshipper brought his sacrifice of burnt offerings and there presented it to the Lord to make atonement for his sins. After performing the prescribed ritualism, the victim was turned over to the priest who went from the altar to the laver and bathed himself before continuing the service by entering the Holy Place where he sprinkled the blood of the sacrifice upon the altar of incense. Since the readers were familiar with this routine of ritualistic worship, it was natural that the writer of Hebrews should speak of the Christian's approach to God in terms of that which they were familiar. Since Christ has done the perfect will of God by offering Himself for our sins and has taken them away, we have boldness to approach God by this new and living way, which Christ dedicated for us by His sacrifice. Moreover, since our High Priest is none other than our Lord Jesus Christ who loved us and gave Himself up for us and who has been touched with all the feelings of our infirmities, we can

come to Him with perfect assurance. Since we have an approach to the Lord, the apostle urged the Hebrew believers to draw near with a true heart in fullness of faith. We must be sincere and must believe. There is no place for insincerity or half heartedness in worship of God. Neither are we to question His promises, for he who is in doubt can receive nothing from the Lord.

The one who was rendered unclean according to the Law had to cleanse himself with the water of purification mentioned in Numbers, chapter 19. Having this ceremonialism in mind, the apostle spoke of our heart sprinkled from an evil conscience (of course by the precious blood of Christ) and our bodies washed with pure water, which latter statement doubtless refers to baptism, as is noted by the leading commentators.

Moreover, the writer urged these believers to "hold fast the confession of our hope that it waiver not." We are saved by hope. When one's hope becomes dim there is a corresponding letting down in the spiritual life and in Christian service. This fact is in accordance of the true principles of psychology. Though things may not appear to be in our favor, let us not consider outward circumstances but look at him who is invisible and who has redeemed us. Both God and Christ are faithful. They will make good every promise which they have uttered. Let us realize that the Lord is working all things together for good for those who love Him, even those who are called according to his purpose. The Lord Jesus is our pilot and he will steer us safely through the stormy weather of our earthly experience and guide us into the haven of rest where we shall ever be with Him.

We are also to be mindful of each other and to encourage one another to love and good works. Satan will discourage the people of God if he possibly can. Each one needs a good word of encouragement from all the rest. We are spiritually akin to one another and should be interested in each other—to the extent that we will do all that we can for the advancement of the spiritual life and activity of our brethren.

According to verse 25 of the quotation given above, the writer urged his readers to meet together for the purpose of worship. Whenever one absents himself from the assembly of the saints, one is depriving himself of a spiritual uplift which always comes, all things being equal, when we meet together and worship the Lord. It seems from this verse that there were certain brethren that were forsaking the assembly and who were in grave danger of becoming lax and indifferent. This meeting is doubtless of saints on the Lords day. (see I Cor. 11; 16:1.)

They were to exhort one another so much the more as they saw "the day drawing nigh." There is some discussion as to what day is here meant. Some think that it refers to the destruction of Jerusalem which occurred 70 A.D. That interpretation is altogether possible. I am inclined however to believe, that the apostle was speaking of the "day of Lord" which is the Tribulation Period and which culminates in the glorious second coming of our Lord. My reason for inclining toward this position is the fact that in verses 26-31 the apostle discussed the judgments of the Tribulation and the those of eternal judgment.

A careful study of the next paragraph will prove this interpretation conclusively.

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

Who are the ones discussed in this paragraph? The answer is: Those who have received the knowledge of the truth but sin willfully by rejecting it. Let us notice verse 26: "For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth there remaineth no more a sacrifice for sins." The language speaks for itself. Those who have accepted the truth and who have been born again cannot possibly be referred to in this verse, for nothing is said about anyone's having accepted Christ. Those who are mentioned have been taught thoroughly, had seen the truth, but had sinned willfully in the rejection of the same. That they had heard the message, had understood it, but had willfully rejected is shown in verses 28 and 29 which please read again.

The people mentioned in verse 26 are the same ones as those who are discussed in chapter 6:1-8. As I stated in my exposition of this passage, there were certain ones among the Hebrews who had been given unique advantages and opportunities to see and understand the truth. Notwithstanding those special blessings, those people refused the light thus graciously given them. By their doing that they sin against light and grace and rendered their spiritual mechanism incapable of genuine repentance and a sincere acceptance of Christ. In this connection the reader should study again the installment in this series which discuss chapter 6 and appeared in the issue of August 1943, of the *Biblical Research Monthly*.

One cannot sin against the light and not be punished by the Lord. No provision was made in the Old Testament system of sacrifices for willful, deliberate sin. There is no provision today for the one who, having been given the truth respecting the son of God and salvation through Him, —treads figuratively speaking—the Son of God under His feet, counts the blood of the covenant an unholy thing and does despite the Spirit of Grace. Those who do that have absolutely no hope. Vengeance belongs to God. The Lord will judge. It is indeed a fearful thing for such a one to fall into the hands of the Living God, having rejected truth and the salvation which is freely offered in Christ.

Can one today reject light as did those of whom the apostle was here speaking? This is a question to which I cannot make a definite answer. But we may be absolutely certain that men can and do receive the true light from the Word of God. When they turn their backs upon it and they refuse the salvation which is offered in Christ there is no hope. There is salvation only in and through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. May every reader of this article screen himself behind that precious blood is my sincere prayer!

In the concluding paragraph of this chapter (vss. 32-39) we have the following language:

"32 But call to remembrance the former days in which, after ye were enlightened, ye endured a great conflict of suffering; 33 partly, being made a gazing stock both by reproaches and affliction; and partly, becoming partakers with them that were so used. 34 For ye both had compassion on them that were in bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your possessions, knowing that ye have for yourselves a better possession and an abiding one. 35 Cast not away your boldness which hath great recompense of reward. 36 For ye have need of patience, that having done the will of God you may receive the promise. 37 For yet a very little while, He that cometh shall come, and shall not tarry. 38 But my righteous one shall live by faith: And if He shrink back my soul hath no pleasure in him. 39 But we are not of them that shrink back unto perdition; but of them that have faith unto the saving of the soul."

After having explained the terrible doom that awaits those who sin willfully after having received the knowledge of the truth, the apostle began again to exhort the Hebrew believers, whom he had addressed in vss. 19-25, to remember the former days of their suffering when they first accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior. The persecutions which had been brought against them were indeed severe. Nevertheless they stood firmly for their convictions and gave their testimony to the saving power of Jesus Christ.

The apostle urged them not to cast away their former boldness but to face the crises which was before them with courage and valor. Even though one accepts Christ and is bold in his stand for the Lord he needs patience and courage to go on in the Christian life.

One is saved by the grace of God through faith. He does the will of God by accepting the salvation which Christ purchased. The Jews once asked, "What shall we do that we may work the works of God?" The Lord replied, "This is the work of God, that you believe on him whom he has sent" (John 6:29). Having done the will of God by accepting the Lord Jesus, we are to continue in good works, for we are to be rewarded according to our deeds. We shall receive our rewards at the coming of our Lord.

The apostle quoted from Habakkuk a passage which shows that the righteous shall live by faith. An examination of the context from which this passage was taken shows that Habakkuk was speaking of the invasion of Palestine by the Babylonians, but a closer examination of the entire book of Habakkuk proves that the prophet was blending his prediction concerning the Babylonian captivity and all of its horrors with a description of the terrors of the end of this age—of the Tribulation, which will be followed by our Lords return. This quotation then is looking at the national aspect as the race passes through two major crises of its history. The faint hearted and falterers fall back, refuse the light through fear of the consequences. The bold, courageous ones accept the truth, face the issues, and are delivered. As we have already seen in previous installments of this series, the Book of Hebrews deals

with the Jewish question nationally. The Lord had brought the light of the gospel to the entire nation prior to the writing of this epistle. The impending fall of Jerusalem which occurred in 70 A.D. was indeed a national crises. The apostle therefore reminded his readers that the righteous always live by faith, but the timid fearful ones shrink back. Then he concluded by saying that those who shrink back do so unto perdition but that the real believers have faith unto the saving of the soul—for God will take care of them and see them through to the end and bless them eternally.

FAITH UNTO THE SAVING OF THE SOUL (Installment 22)

Heb. 11

Chapter 10 closes with a warning to the Hebrew Christians, who had endured many persecutions when they accepted Christ, not to become panic-stricken and be thrown into a stampede, but to brace up against the situation which was facing them and endure to the end. It is necessary therefore for one who has done the will of God in accepting Christ to exercise patience unto the end of life. Paul's exhortation was emphasized by quotations from Habakkuk, chapter 2. The apostle expressed his convictions concerning the Hebrew Christians, that they would not shrink backward but would press forward in the fight.

The people of God have always been saved by faith. It is by faith that they are saved today. Such is the conclusion to which the apostle came as we saw in the last lesson. In chapter 11 Paul enlarges upon the principle of faith and shows how the people of God have always lived by faith and wrought all of their accomplishments.

In 11:1 the apostle asserts that faith is the assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen. Properly speaking this is not a logical definition of faith. Nevertheless, it is a statement which gives us a definite idea as to its nature. There are many things which we cannot take hold of by any logical processes or by sight, but we have faith which is based upon the testimony of God that such and such a thing is true. Our faith is the conviction with reference to the things not seen. Believing God as we do, we accept His statements, step out upon His promises, taste the Lord, and see that He is good. Thus faith brings us to the standpoint of absolute certainty.

All the biblical writers emphasize the fact that people are saved by faith and not by works. At the present time there are two schools of thought: One declares that men are saved by faith and faith alone; the other asserts that faith is never recognized as such until after it has expressed itself in obedience to some definite command. Which of these two positions is correct? Does Hebrews, chapter 11, throw any light upon the question, the answer to which we are seeking? As we study this passage, we see that various men of God who are mentioned here wrought by faith. What they did was the expression of faith. For instance, Abel made his offering to God by faith. Noah built his ark by faith. Abraham obeyed the call of God to leave his country by faith. He offered up Isaac, his son, upon the altar by faith. Moses forsook Egypt by faith. Those belonging to the school of thought that emphasizes that faith is never recognized as such until after it has expressed itself in obedience to some command look to such verses as these and find in them proof of their position.

On the other hand, there are those who look at verse 5 and see that Enoch was translated by faith so that he did not die. God did not command him to do anything in order that he might not die. He simply gave him the promise that he would not die but would be taken out of the world without dying, and he believed implicitly. There was therefore nothing that he did which entered into his translation except trusting implicitly the promise of God. Thus he was translated by faith and faith alone. "By faith even Sarah herself received power to conceive seed when she was past age, since she counted him faithful who had promised." The same thing was true of Abraham. There was absolutely nothing which they could do or did except to believe implicitly the promise of God. So faith in this case is faith only. At the

end of his life Joseph made mention of the departure of the children of Israel and gave commandment concerning the removal of his bones to Palestine. He had implicit faith in the promises of God. This faith expressed itself in the command to the Hebrews to take his remains to the Holy Land. He did not do anything but simply asserted his absolute unswerving confidence in the promises of God. This was a case of faith purely. According to verse 35 certain women received their dead by a resurrection from the dead. This they did by faith. Nothing that they did affected the situation but, believing the promises of God, they received their dead back to life. God thus honored their faith. This is faith apart from works. Others were tortured and subjected to mockings and scourgings, whereas still others were stoned and sawn asunder. These were heroes of endurance. They believed the promise of God and thus unflinchingly accepted what was done to them. By faith—pure and unadulterated—they took their stand. There were no works in anywise in connection with their stand for God.

In view of the various cases that are set forth in Hebrews, chapter 11, we come to the conclusion that the faith by which people are saved is simply trusting God and relying upon Him to fulfill His promises. It is erroneous therefore to say that faith must always express itself in obedience to a definite command before it is recognized as saving faith. This conclusion is confirmed by Paul's statement in Romans, chapter 4, "Now to him that worketh, the reward is not reckoned as of grace, but as of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness" (vss. 4,5). When therefore the Scriptures affirm that men are saved by faith, they mean simply what they state. This is a pure trust in God apart from any act of obedience.

But everyone who has a trusting faith will unhesitatingly obey the commands of the Lord. If they hesitate or refuse to become obedient to what the Lord commands, it is evident that they do not have a saving faith. Men are saved by the grace of God, but they take hold of this redemption by pure faith. Those who are saved are urged to live for and work for the Lord, who promises a rich reward for service rendered in His cause. We are therefore saved by faith, but we are to be rewarded according to our works. To this conclusion all the evidence of Hebrews, chapter 11, points most positively and unmistakably.

Hebrews, chapter 11, has been designated "the roll call of faith." Those who are listed here are indeed heroes of faith who naturally fall into two classes: the heroes of achievement and those of endurance. Most all of those mentioned in the first thirty-four verses are named because of their pressing forward after their justification in the cause of God in an aggressive active life in His service. But the heroes of endurance are especially mentioned in verses 35-38. It takes more faith to be in this latter class than in the former. Action under the gaze of the world proves a great stimulant often times; whereas to linger in some unknown spot, enduring suffering because of one's loyalty to God requires a much greater faith.

According to 11:2 the elders had witness borne to them by their faith. It is a little difficult to know of whom the apostle is speaking here—whether of the early patriarchs or the ones who are mentioned later in the chapter.

In verse 3 he tells us that by faith "we understand that the worlds have been formed by the word of God." The word in the original rendered "worlds" primarily means ages. But from the facts presented it is evident that he is speaking about the material universe. However, he speaks of it in terms of the

section of eternity which we call time and which was preceded by eternity in the past and will be followed by eternity after the material universe passes away. "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain." Since faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God, it is evident that God commanded Cain and Abel to offer sacrifices as an atonement for their sins. Abel offered his by faith, whereas Cain substituted his wisdom for that of the Lord. He was therefore rejected.

"By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death." As stated above faith here does not embrace any act of obedience whatsoever but simply implies trust in God. This assumes that God had promised that He would translate him. Enoch believed the promise and God honored his faith, taking him out of the world suddenly. In the same manner all who are in Christ at the time of His descending from heaven to the air will be caught up to meet Him there. This is termed the rapture of the church. It is mentioned in I Thessalonians, chapter 4, and I Corinthians, chapter 15. We do not know when that time will come. It may occur any moment but we are confident from the teachings of the Scriptures that it will occur before the Tribulation. Without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing to God. Everyone who comes to Him must believe that He is and that He will reward those who seek after Him.

Noah was warned by God of the coming Flood which destroyed the antediluvians. He therefore by faith went forward and constructed an ark in which he and his family were saved. This great ship rested upon Mount Ararat. In recent years there have been certain rumors that it has been discovered by some aviators but the reports are so very vague and unauthenticated that one cannot put any confidence in them. We shall therefore await further and positive evidence before reaching any conclusions as to its being in existence today.

God called Abraham to separate himself from his relatives and to come to a land which He promised to give him for an inheritance. Abraham obeyed. When he left home, however, he took his father and entered into northern Mesopotamia and stayed there until the latter died. Then he came on down into "the land of promise." He sojourned there with Isaac and Jacob, heirs together with him of the promise. They were looking for the great millennial city of Jerusalem which will be the joy of the whole earth. He could have returned to the place from which he had come, namely, Ur of the Chaldees, but he was looking for "the city which hath the foundations, whose builder and maker is God." This, as has been suggested, is none other than the millennial Jerusalem, of which we read in Isaiah 65:17ff.

By faith Isaac upon his dying bed blessed Jacob. Jacob likewise blessed Joseph. In the same way Joseph spoke of the departure of the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage.

In the same manner Moses by faith "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter accounting the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he looked unto the recompense of reward." In the course of time by faith he forsook Egypt, kept the Passover, and screened himself behind the sprinkling of the blood of the paschal lamb.

By faith Joshua led the host of Israel across the Jordan and besieged Jericho. By faith he captured it. By faith Rahab the harlot hid the spies and enabled them to escape to their own camp. By faith the various judges of Israel wrought their mighty works. Likewise David and Samuel and all the prophets who worked for God did so by faith and thus obtained the promises.

As stated above in verses 35-38 we see a reference to God's noblemen and women. Here are the real martyrs and true saints of God who doubtless will obtain the greatest rewards and wear the brightest and most glorious crowns. These, as we see, suffered unflinchingly the tortures and the mockings which were imposed upon them. Some of them were stoned; others were sawn asunder. Some were killed with the sword. They went about in sheepskins and in goatskins, being destitute and afflicted and ill-treated. Of such characters the world is not worthy. Of course the writer was speaking of the Old Testament saints; but during the Christian Era there have been many loyal and faithful martyrs of the Lord Jesus Christ. From the sixth chapter of the Book of Revelation and other passages in that section of the Word, we see that the days of martyrs are still ahead. God alone knows what awaits His people. But let everyone realize this fact: That God's grace is sufficient for all of them. All they have to do is to look to Him, trusting His grace, and waiting for Him to bring the deliverance.

According to verses 39 and 40 all the Old Testament worthies died without having received the promise. The reason for this was that God purposed that they should not be made perfect and enter into the fullness of their reward apart from us. The time when they will receive their reward is at the end of the Tribulation and at the beginning of the Millennial Age when the kingdom of the world becomes the kingdom of our Lord and His Christ (Rev. 11:17,18).

In Revelation, chapter 4, we see four and twenty elders sitting on twenty-four thrones around the throne of God. A careful study of this passage reveals the fact that these are saved men who are in the presence of God. The number twenty-four is suggestive of the twelve tribes of Israel, and the twelve Apostles of the Lamb. When anyone studies this passage in the light of God's moral government and His dealings with His people in the past and present, he comes to the conclusion that these twenty-four elders represent the saved of the Old Covenant as well as those who are at present saved. Thus Revelation, chapters 4 and 5, when studied in the light of Hebrews 11:39,40, sets forth the teaching with reference to the saved of all ages who are made perfect at the same time.

LAW AND GRACE (Installment 23)

Heb. 12

In our last study we took a hurried view of Hebrews, chapter 11, which has been termed "the roll call of faith." As we then saw, this discussion was given in order to show men what faith really is—the faith that saves the soul. Men are saved by faith—pure faith; but are rewarded according to their works. Faith is a trusting attitude toward God and the provisions which He has made through the Lord Jesus Christ who can and will save all who come unto God by Him. One accepts Christ by faith—pure faith. When one has such a faith one will have the attitude exhibited by the Apostle Paul: "What shall I do, Lord?" A saving faith is always an obedient one. We must, however, always differentiate between faith and the obedience of faith. Men are saved by faith—not by the obedience of faith. The apostle therefore encouraged those who were already saved to manifest their faith by a loyal, obedient life in the service of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the first studies of this series we learned that the Epistle to the Hebrews was written by the Apostle Paul to the entire nation of Israel. This document was God's last call to the Jews of the first century to accept the Lord Jesus Christ. This book therefore must be interpreted in the light of this fact. This epistle in the New Testament is like the Book of Isaiah of the Old Testament. Isaiah, while he addressed the nation as a whole, at the same time spoke of and to the remnant of Israel, the inner circle. As one studies Isaiah, one must keep this fact in mind; for the prophet very frequently blended his special message to the remnant with that to the entire nation. This same literary phenomenon we observe in the Epistle to the Hebrews. The believers of the first century constituted the remnant within the nation. We therefore must look very carefully and see what applies to the entire nation and what is applicable to the remnant—the church—in this instance.

In the first two verses of chapter 12 we find the Apostle Paul expressing his thought under the imagery of the Roman amphitheater. In different places where I have been throughout the Old Roman Empire, I have seen the ruins of these amphitheaters, consisting of the arena and the elevated tiers of seats surrounding it. An excellent example of this is the Colosseum in Rome. The apostle thought of those men of God whom he had mentioned in the eleventh chapter as being in the seats of an amphitheater and of himself and the other Christians of his day as being in the arena. Those who are represented as being in the upper seats and looking upon those in the arena are the saints of God who have already gone into the presence of the Lord and are looking down upon those who are now running the Christian race or fighting the Christian warfare.

He calls attention to the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ during His life ran His course and took hold of the crown at the end of His earthly career. In one particular we are to do as the contestants in the various Grecian games did—to lay aside every weight and the sin (unbelief) which does so easily beset us and to run the race with patience, looking to Jesus, the author and perfecter of the same.

Are we to conclude from this majestic imagery that our loved ones who have already gone into the presence of God are looking down upon us and know what we are doing and how we are acting? Some scholars answer this question in the affirmative, whereas others insist that such an interpretation pushes the language far beyond that which is legitimate. On this point, however, I shall not be dogmatic,

but I am rather inclined to believe that it favors the former interpretation. Especially am I led to this view when I read Revelation 6:9-11. In this passage we see the souls of certain Tribulation saints who have been beheaded for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ. They are in heaven and are under the altar there. At the same time they are conscious of the fact that those who executed them are still upon the earth and have not been punished for their crimes. This fact shows that the departed saved are conscious, at least to a certain extent, of what is going on upon the earth. For the Christian to depart this life and to be with Christ is far better than remaining here. In such promises is the idea of association and full possession of one's spiritual and intellectual faculties. To be in the body is to be absent from the Lord, but to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. This statement connotes full possession of one's intellectual powers after death and apart from the body. In view of these facts it is quite likely that the dead in Christ whose spirits are with the Lord are conscious of what is going on, at least in a general way, here upon the earth and are observing us as we are running our race.

When we read Hebrews 12:3-13 and study it in the light of 10:32-39, we see that the Hebrew Christians of Paul's day were suffering persecutions and being imprisoned. The apostle in the present section exhorted them not to faint under such trials, but to consider Jesus who suffered as no one else had ever done. They had, prior to this time, resisted evil, but their stand had not been the occasion of any martyrdom—"Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin."

The apostle quoted from Proverbs 3:11,12. There are three possible attitudes for one to take toward suffering for the Lord: (1) To accept suffering very lightly; (2) to go to the other extreme and to faint under it and despair of hope; (3) and to realize that God permits suffering to come in order to correct some evil in the life of His child who is thus suffering. If one does not receive chastisement, one is not a son of the Lord but is rather a bastard.

All parents who have the proper idea of their relation to their children and who have correct ideals will punish their children when ever they do wrong. Punishment or chastisement is with one design only; namely, to correct the error. God is wise, discreet, and loving and will chasten His children only as they need to be corrected.

It is true that He sometimes permits some great calamity to come upon one of His children who does not need correction. Such afflictions then cannot be classified as chastisement. His case is that of God's using him to demonstrate some great spiritual lesson. Of course whenever God thus permits one of His servants to suffer for His name's sake—when he does not need chastisement—He will reward such a one for thus accepting that which He has chosen for him. The reward will therefore be commensurate with the intensity of the suffering and all the factors entering thereinto.

At the present time no chastisement or punishment is pleasant; but, when it is accepted properly, "it yieldeth peaceable fruit unto them that have been exercised thereby, *even the fruit of righteousness*" (12:11). Whenever any of God's children are thus suffering, others should encourage them and assist them in every possible way. This exhortation is seen in verses 12 and 13:

12 Wherefore lift up the hands that hang down, and the palsied knees; 13 and make straight paths for your feet, that that which is lame be not turned out of the way, but rather be healed.

In the paragraph consisting of verses 14-17, the apostle seems to have turned from addressing individual believers, who constituted the faithful spiritual remnant of his day, to the entire nation. Such a change of viewpoint is familiar to those who are acquainted with the writings of the prophets. The nationalistic element in this passage is in the foreground, while the individual has receded into the distance. This fact becomes apparent when one realizes that the apostle quotes from Deuteronomy 29:18. One should, however, turn to this passage and read the entire paragraph—verses 14-21. One sees from this Deuteronomy passage that these instructions were given to Israel nationally. The fact that the Apostle Paul thus quotes this verse confirms the idea that he was talking to the nation as a whole and not to the individuals who constituted the spiritual remnant of the nation.

As we have seen in former studies, the apostle called upon the entire nation to accept Jesus of Nazareth as their Lord and Messiah. Here again he sounded the same note and urged the nation to purge out the profane and wicked ones and to avoid the mistake that was made by such men as Esau who for a mess of food sold his birthright. Esau was living on the carnal plane and had very little appreciation for spiritual matters. After he made his fatal mistake, he attempted to correct it—but all to no avail. Thus Israel was urged here to accept the exhortation given by Moses and to follow after peace and sanctification without which no one can see the Lord. If the nation continued to reject the Lord Jesus Christ and allowed the period called "to-day," mentioned in chapters 3 and 4, to pass, it would be selling its birthright for a mess of pottage as did Esau. Then of course it would be too late for God to change His plan and purpose (humanly speaking). The Lord gave Israel that period called "to-day"—the forty years from 30 A.D. to 70 A.D. as we have seen—to accept Jesus as Messiah nationally. When the epistle was written, it was almost over. The date of Hebrews was probably, as we have seen, 68 A.D. At the end of the period of "to-day" the nation, if it acted as Esau did, would find no change of mind with God. Those who did not accept the Messiah within that period of time would come short of the glory of God and would be profane persons like Esau.

In Hebrews 12:18-24 the writer contrasts the blessings of Israel of Moses's day with those offered to the Hebrews of his day and time. When Moses led Israel out of Egypt, he guided her to Mount Sinai where the law was delivered. It was given amid thunders, voices, and lightnings—tokens indicating the character of the law and the administration which she was accepting voluntarily.

On the other hand the Jews of the first century were brought to Mount Zion, Jerusalem, the symbol of grace, mercy, peace, salvation, and all spiritual blessings. They are said to have come to the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable host of angels, to the general assembly and the church of the first-born, to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus Christ "the mediator of a new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better than *that of Abel*." Law condemns; grace makes alive. The covenant of Sinai meant death; the covenant of grace means life to all who accept it. Those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and are regenerated have come into personal spiritual contact with God, Christ, and all the saved. We are of that great company now even though we do not see them face to face but shall at the second coming of our Lord.

The apostle thus saw the culmination of the fruits of grace which will be in evidence at the end of this age when our Lord returns with the angels and with all the redeemed. Thus he told the Hebrew Christians of the first century that such was their ultimate destination and the fellowship into which they who accepted Christ had been inducted and that they would at the proper time enter into the closest fellowship with God and Christ and realize the blessedness of these spiritual realities.

The national call to Israel is sounded again in verses 25 and 26 of this chapter. The nation was warned not to refuse Him who speaks from heaven. To show the necessity of their obeying this exhortation, he called their attention to the fact that those who refused him who spoke upon earth in the past did not escape the judgment of God. Moses spoke to Israel upon this earth, and every disobedience and transgression received a just recompense of reward. No rebel in Israel escaped punishment; neither will anyone who now refuses to accept the Lord Jesus Christ, —who has come from heaven to speak to man the message of God's love, —escape. Such is the gist of verses 25 and 26.

The Lord of glory, Jesus of Nazareth, is the one whose voice will cause not only the earth to tremble, but also the very heavens. In verse 26 we have a quotation taken from Haggai 2:6. An examination of this prediction in its original context shows that the prophet was speaking about the Lord's second coming when He will shake both the heavens and the earth, will take the world situation in hand, and introduce the new order—the kingdom of glory. The apostle therefore applied this passage from Haggai to the removal of the present order and the introduction of the glorious millennial kingdom at the return of our Lord. In view of the great change that will take place then and the great glory which will be extended to us, the prophet declared that we are the ones who will be receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken. Certainly this kingdom is not the church, for it has suffered many setbacks and reverses. Many changes have come to it, but the kingdom of which the apostle was speaking is none other than the glorious millennial reign of our Lord upon the earth, which He will establish at His return. In view of the fact that we are to be heirs of such a manifold demonstration of God's grace, "receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us have grace, whereby we may offer service well pleasing to God with reverence and awe: for our God is a consuming fire."

CHRISTIANITY A WORKABLE RELIGION

Heb. 13

In this exposition of the Book of Hebrews we have now come to the last chapter, which, as we shall see, deals largely with practical matters. In religion one must have, not only the theory, but also the practice. Christianity is a workable religion. What God works into us we are to work out in Godly lives (cf. Phil. 2:12,13). In the first six verses of Hebrews, chapter 13, the apostle especially mentioned various and sundry practical outworkings in the Christian life.

In the first place he exhorted that "love of the brethren continue." The Lord Jesus said: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35). God put his love into our heart through the Holy Spirit and expects us to yield to Him in order that we may become empty channels through which this love may flow and thus express itself.

Christians are not only to love their brethren but are also to show love and consideration for strangers, as verse 2 exhorts. Abraham received three strangers. When he did so he "entertained angels unawares" (vs. 2). Two of these were ordinary angels, but one was "the Angel of Jehovah,"—the Lord Jesus Christ himself. One never knows when he extends a kindness or a courtesy to a stranger what the results may be. At the same time I believe that the Lord expects us to use judgment and discretion in our extending courtesies and favors to others.

The days of persecution against the church had already begun when the Hebrew Epistle was written. Certain of the brethren, as we see from verse 3 were in bonds. The writer therefore exhorted his brethren to remember them as being bound with them. They were to enter sympathetically into their sufferings. By so doing, their hearts would go out in compassionate love, and they would discover ways and means by which they might assist those thus distressed.

In verse 4 the writer urged that the marriage relationship should be held on the high and holy plane upon which God placed it in the very beginning. Christian men and women are commanded by the Lord to be faithful and true to their marriage vows. The husband is to be faithful and true to his wife. The wife likewise is to be equally faithful to her husband. Immorality and unfaithfulness, should never, according to this verse, be known among the people of God. The exhortation of this verse is of great importance today when the marriage relationship is looked upon very lightly, and the divorce evil is allowed to dissolve these God created ties between a man and his wife.

Human nature is the same today as it has always been. Men have been lovers of money and material goods from the beginning and have always been grasping for more. Unfortunately many born-again people lose sight of the temporary character of wealth and riches and strive for them as if they were to remain here always. The apostle by the Spirit exhorted the brethren to be free from the love of money and to be content with whatever things God gives. Sometimes we hear that certain ministers are mercenary and are often dissatisfied from what they receive from the brethren for the services that they render. I have heard that some ministers even set a price upon their services. Personally I cannot believe that this is in harmony with the will of God. The apostle Paul never set a price upon his ministerial service. Neither did the Lord Jesus Christ; and I cannot believe that any of the Apostles ever

did.

We have the promise of the Lord that He will in no way fail us, nor in anywise forsake us. Hence the writer declared that with good courage we may say,

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

In this connection I wish to give my personal testimony: I have been preaching the gospel for thirty-eight years. Never one time have I entered into any contract or bargained with any man or group of men, church or churches, for a stipulated sum. I have always gone forth upon the promise of the Lord, believing that he would give me through His people that which He wanted me to have. There have been times when the offerings have been small; at other times they have been reasonable; and on some occasions they have been abundant and have always met the actual needs. It is far better to have the promise of God and to lean upon it than to have the signed statements of men. May the Lord deliver us from the bargaining, grasping, money spirit, and may His grace enable us to trust His promises. May we by faith march forward looking to Him alone to fulfill the promises and to take care of all our needs.

The writer exhorted his readers to remember his spiritual leaders who are looking after the welfare of the flock of God. Evidently those brethren to whom the writer referred were exemplary characters. The first generation of them seemed to have passed away when the letter was written. These men had faithfully proclaimed the Word of God to his people and then had passed on to their reward. Thus the apostle urged his readers to consider the issue or the outcome of their lives and to follow their example. We would do well to chose as models, if we so desire, the Godliest and most consecrated loyal, faithful servants of God and emulate their faith and conduct.

In verse 8 we have a marvelous statement which relates to the nature and the person of our Lord Jesus Christ: "Jesus Christ *is* the same yesterday and today, *yea* and for ever." He was "the Word" in all eternity—prior to the creation of the universe. He then, at the proper time, brought into existence the material worlds. Since then He has been controlling their movements. He is working all things together for the good of those who love God during this present age (Rom. 8:28). He will return some day, and, having lifted the curse, reign for a thousand years on this earth. After the Millennium the present universe will pass out of existence. He will then create the eternal heavens and the eternal earth—as we learn in Revelation, chapters 21 and 22. Thus the present heavens and earth will pass away, but the Lord Jesus Christ will remain the same. His love is unchangeable. His powers are unabated. He is able to meet the situation of the people of God under all circumstances and at all times. Thus we can believe with perfect assurance that He cares for us and that we are His.

In verses 9-17 we have a section of scripture which deals specifically with the Jewish question. It starts with an exhortation to the brethren not to be carried about by various and strange teachings. On the contrary, the author shows that it is important for the heart to be established by the grace and the power of God and not to be dependent on the outward observance of eating meats and the performing of certain rites and ceremonies. Engaging in such religious acts cannot establish the heart. Only the

grace of God inwrought in the soul by the power of the Spirit can establish and can strengthen the believer so that he can stand for the Lord Jesus Christ and live and labor for Him.

These Hebrew Christians had their attention called to the fact that they too had an altar—just as the Jews had at the Temple in Jerusalem. At the Christian altar those who served the Temple had no right to eat. Just as the bodies of those animals which were brought to the holy place by the high priest were burned without the city, so was the Lord Jesus Christ led outside the city of Jerusalem in order "that He might sanctify the people through his own blood." The arrangement to carry the bodies of the offerings outside the city was designed to show that the Messiah would be offered for the sins of the world without the camp of Judaism—beyond the legalism and the ritualism of the Law.

The Jews looked to Jerusalem as their spiritual center. In a figurative manner we too have a city. Ours is not an abiding one here and now; but we have one that is to come. It can be none other than the great Millennial Jerusalem a description of which we find in Ezekiel 40-48. We are walking by faith and not by sight. We are not interested in the material things of life now. On the contrary we are seeking that city which has foundations whose maker and builder is God. Like the patriarchs of old we are walking by faith. God will never disappoint us.

Let us therefore, since Christ is our great High Priest, approach God through Him, offering "a sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips which make confession to his name." As we thus live daily for Him let us be careful not to forget to do good to all and to communicate to the necessity of the needy. Moreover, let us obey those who have the rule over us and submit to their wise suggestions, for the true shepherds of God are working in behalf of our souls and for our good.

In verse 18 and 19 the apostle urged that prayer be offered in his behalf and that of his co-laborers in order that they might be restored to them the sooner.

One of the great doxologies of the Bible is found in verses 20 and 21 of this chapter.

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

The Almighty is indeed the God of peace. He brought again from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep, the Lord Jesus Christ, through the blood of an eternal covenant. He is able to make us perfect in every good thing to do his will. The Lord urges us to be perfect, even as God is perfect. We cannot do this in and by our own strength but can do so by the power which He supplies. It is possible for us to live such yielded lives that we can know what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God regarding ourselves. But to Jesus Christ be all the glory "for ever and ever," for all that we are, do, and accomplish now and in the future.

In the last four verses of chapter 13 are contained certain exhortations and personal matters. The apostle felt led to urge the brethren to "bear with the word of exhortation." He told them that Timothy

had been set at liberty and added that he, accompanied by him, hoped to come to them shortly. He urged the brethren to salute and have respect for those who had the rule over them. He closed with a doxology similar to the one which is found at the end of all the Pauline epistles: "Grace be with you all. Amen." This familiar Pauline touch has led many brethren to believe that the Apostle Paul was the author of the Epistle of the Hebrews. I share this conviction.

The Hebrew letter is one of the profoundest, if not the most profound, in the entire Bible. We have merely scratched the surface in this series of articles. Someday, the Lord willing, I hope to write a book on this section of the Word.

In the meantime it is my sincere hope that those of you, my readers, who have followed this series have been blessed spiritually and that each one's life has been enriched by meditation upon the marvelous truths which our Heavenly Father has given to us in the Book of Hebrews through His servant the apostle.

THE END