

The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the HEBREWS **INTRODUCTION**

1. Title. The title given this book in the oldest Greek manuscripts is simply *Pros Hebraious* (“To the Hebrews”). Inasmuch as the book deals to a large extent with the significance, for the Christian, of the sanctuary and its early Hebrew, or Jewish, Christians (see below under “Historical Setting”), the title is particularly appropriate.

2. Authorship. The authorship of Hebrews has been in dispute since early times. While many attributed the book to Paul, others dissented vigorously. Origen, one of the early Fathers, concluded his examination of the book with the declaration, “Who wrote the epistle, in truth God knows” (quoted by Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* vi. 25. 14; Loeb ed., vol. 2, p. 79). Other Fathers thought Barnabas, Apollos, Clement, or Luke to be the author.

This uncertainty in regard to the authorship of Hebrews was a major factor in the reluctance of many early Christians in the western part of the Roman Empire to accept the epistle as canonical. It was, in fact, not until the latter part of the 4th century that Hebrews came to be accepted generally in the West (see Vol. V, p. 131). During the following centuries the discussion regarding the authorship of Hebrews ceased, and most Christians accepted it as the work of Paul. This view was generally held until comparatively modern times, when the question again came under scholarly discussion. As late as 1885 the RV ascribes Hebrews to Paul, but at the present time few critics hold this view.

The evidences against the view that Paul wrote Hebrews have been drawn largely from considerations of the literary style and content of the book. Although it is possible for a writer’s vocabulary and style to vary with subject matter, these variances are largely in the technical terms characteristic of the different subjects about which he writes. His more general vocabulary and particularly the words that he chooses almost unconsciously in expressing himself, such as prepositions, adverbs, and especially connectives, are considered by most scholars to be much better indications of his style than is his technical terminology.

When compared with the generally accepted epistles of Paul, Hebrews differs markedly, especially in the small, common connective words with which its author binds together his clauses. Another distinctive difference is found in the handling of quotations from the OT. The accepted epistles employ one group of more or less standard phrases to introduce OT quotations, whereas Hebrews uses another group. Also, the epistles show that the apostle was relatively free in his use of OT materials. Often his quotations follow the LXX, but at times he gives what apparently is his own translation of the Hebrew; at still other times he is content to give only a loose quotation. By contrast OT quotations in Hebrews are virtually always word for word from the LXX.

From a broader standpoint, the general literary style of Hebrews is notably different from that of any of the epistles that bear the name of Paul. The style of the latter is marked indelibly by effervescent yet fervent passages that reveal the surging torrent of the author’s thoughts at the expense of polished literary style. Hebrews, on the other hand, presents a thoroughly organized argument, and maintains the highest rhetorical level of any NT book. This marked difference in style was noted by writers of the early church, for whom Koine Greek was the native language. Clement of Alexandria (died c.

A.D. 215; cited by Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* vi. 14.2–3) suggests that Paul wrote Hebrews in Hebrew, and that Luke translated it into Greek. Although such an explanation is ruled out by the fact that Hebrews contains a number of plays on Greek words that could not have been translated from another language, yet Clement's statement is significant in that it implies the recognition that the Greek of Hebrews does not appear to be the Greek of Paul. Origen (died c. A.D. 254), one of the prominent scholars of the early church, likewise recognized the difficulty of harmonizing the style of Hebrews with that of Paul. His solution was "that the thoughts are the apostle's, but that the style and composition belong to one who called to mind the apostle's teachings and, as it were, made short notes of what his master said" (quoted by Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* vi. 25. 13; Loeb ed. vol. 2, pp. 77, 79).

Certain presumptive evidence in favor of the Pauline authorship of Hebrews rather recently came to light in connection with the discovery of the 3d century Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri (see Vol. V, pp. 116, 117. In the codex that consists of the Pauline Epistles, Hebrews is found between Romans and 1 Corinthians. Though this fact does not prove the Pauline authorship of Hebrews, it strongly suggests that very early in the history of the church there were those who believed that Hebrews should be included as a part of Paul's writings.

This commentary holds that though weighty arguments have been presented against the Pauline authorship of Hebrews, those arguments are not sufficient to offset the traditional belief that Paul is the author. Much of the difference in tone and style of Hebrews compared with the known Pauline epistles may be reasonably explained by the fact that these other epistles are addressed to particular church groups, or to individuals, to meet particular problems. Granted there are certain differences in literary style that cannot be explained on this basis, these differences may be reasonably explained on the assumption that Paul preached certain sermons on the theme of Christ's priestly ministry and that these were taken down stenographically. As is sometimes the case with matter thus recorded, the final literary form of the transcribed copy may be strongly colored by the transcriber. It is easy to see how Paul might never have had opportunity to edit these sermons—he traveled incessantly, with the traveling terminated, ere long, by martyrdom.

It is generally agreed that Hebrews was written before the fall of Jerusalem. Now, the number of church leaders was very small in the years before A.D. 70. Which of those leaders might have set forth an argument as profound as that presented in the book of Hebrews? By all odds the most likely person is Paul. To say that the author was an unknown Christian of that early period simply poses a new problem. How was it that a Christian possessing the theological insights and the logical powers necessary to produce a work like Hebrews should have been anonymous at a time when Christian leaders were so few and the record of Christian workers so full?

3. Historical Setting. The issue that produced probably a deeper cleavage in the apostolic church than any other was the question of the ceremonial law and its observance by Christians. The council at Jerusalem had freed Gentile Christians from its obligations, but psychologically the large Jewish-Christian community in Palestine was unprepared to enter into the same freedom. They doubtless felt that they themselves, because they were Jews, should keep it. Thus they failed to realize that for all men the ceremonial observances had met their fulfillment in Jesus Christ. This situation set up an

unhealthy tension in the church, inasmuch as one large segment followed an elaborate system of religious life disregarded by the other.

Paul and those close to him had the needed insight into the Mosaic ordinances and ceremonies to evaluate them rightly and give them their proper setting in the plan of salvation. Paul knew their transitory nature and that the time was past due for their abrogation (see Col. 2:16, 17). The Jewish Christian church, centered at Jerusalem, seemed unaware of the calamities soon to befall it. Jewish Christians still kept the feasts; they still sacrificed as in former years; they were still zealous for the ceremonial law see (Acts 15). They had but a faint conception of Christ's work in the heavenly sanctuary; they knew little of His ministry; they did not realize that their sacrifices were useless in view of the great sacrifice on Calvary. These thousands of Jewish Christians, "all zealous of the law" (Acts 21:20), would be confronted by a crisis when the city and the Temple should be destroyed. This occurred apparently only a short time after Hebrews was written see Vol. VI, pp. 86, 106.

It was high time that the eyes of the Jewish Christians should be opened to heavenly realities. When their Temple should be destroyed, it would be needful for them to have their faith anchored to something sure and steadfast that would not fail. If their minds could be turned to the heavenly High Priest and sanctuary and to a better sacrifice than that of bulls and goats, they would not be dismayed when a mere earthly structure should pass away. But if they had no such hope, if they had no vision of the sanctuary in heaven, they would be bewildered and perplexed as they should see the destruction of that in which they had trusted. It was important that the Jewish Christians should understand these things, not only for themselves, but also for the sake of the Gentile churches throughout the provinces among whom the Jerusalem believers would be scattered during the coming war with Rome.

It seems to have been in this crisis hour that the book of Hebrews appeared. It contained just the help needed: light on the sanctuary question; on Christ as high priest; on the blood "that speaketh better things than that of Abel" (ch. 12:24); on the rest that remains for the children of God (ch. 4:9; on the blessed hope that is "as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil" ch. 6:19).

4. Theme. The book of Hebrews consists essentially of a comparison with, and contrast between, the symbols by which God presented the plan of salvation to His chosen people in OT times and the reality of Christ's ministry on behalf of sinners since the cross. The experiences of ancient Israel under the typical system are set forth as a lesson and warning to Christians. Through the typical system and Israel's experiences under it, Paul seeks to develop a more complete understanding and appreciation of the ministry of Christ in heaven above. The following analysis of the comparisons and contrasts he draws between various aspects of the earthly and heavenly sanctuaries and priesthoods outlines the way in which the apostle develops this theme.

The Earthly and Heavenly Sanctuaries and Priesthoods Compared

The Earthly

The Heavenly

1. Moses and Christ Compared as Leaders of God's Chosen People

1. "God, who . . . spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son" (1:1, 2).

2. "Moses was faithful in all his house" (3:2). "Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; who was faithful to him that appointed him" (3:1, 2).
3. "... than Moses" "This man was counted worthy of more glory . . ." (3:3).
4. "... than the house" "He who hath builded the house hath more honour . . ." (3:3).
5. "Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; But Christ as a son over his own house" (3:5, 6).

II. The Old and New Covenants

6. "That first covenant," "the covenant that I made with their fathers," "my covenant" (8:7, 9) "A new covenant . . . : not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers," "a better covenant," "the everlasting covenant" (8:8, 9, 6; 13:20).
7. "Because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not," "find -ing fault with them," "he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away" (8:9, 8, 13). "Behold, the days come saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel," "the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days" (8:8, 10).
8. "If that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second" (8:7).

III. The Earthly and Heavenly Sanctuaries

9. "The first covenant had . . . a worldly sanctuary. For there was a tabernacle made." "Make all things according to the pattern" "The sanctuary, . . . the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man" (8:2).

shewed to thee in the mount” (9:1, 2; 8:5).

10. “Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true;

but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us” (9:24).

“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith” (10:19, 22).

IV. The Earthy and Heavenly Priesthoods

11. “If he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things,” “many priests” (8:4, 5; 7:23).

“The priesthood being changed,” “Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.” “Now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises” (7:12; 6:20; 8:6).

12. “Every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God” (5:1).

“So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee” (5:5).

13. “Those priests were made without an oath [they were born to the office];

but this with an oath . . . : by so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament” (7:21, 22).

14. “The law maketh men high priests which have infirmity;”

but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore” (7:28).

15. “They truly were many

But this man, because he continueth ever,

priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death:

16. "Here men that die receive tithes;

17. "If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, . . .

18. "The law maketh men high priests,"
"priests that offer gifts according to the law,"
"the law having a shadow of good things to come" (7:28; 8:4; 10:1).

19. "The law made nothing perfect,

hath an unchangeable priesthood" (7:23, 24).

but there he receiveth them" (7:8).

what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not . . . Aaron?" (7:11).

"The priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. . . . There is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof" (7:12-18).

but the bringing in of a better hope did" (7:19).

V. The Earthly and Heavenly Ministrations

20. "Every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices:

21. "Almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these;

22. "If the blood of bulls and of goats, . . . sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh:

23. "The priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing

wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer" (8:3).

but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these" (9:22, 23).

How much more shall the blood of Christ, . . . purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (9:13, 14).

"But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that

the service of God.
But into the second went
the high priest alone
once every year . . . : the
Holy Ghost this
signifying, that the way
into the holiest of
all was not yet made
manifest, while as the
first tabernacle was yet
standing: which was
a figure for the time then
present, . . . im-
posed on them until the
time of reformation”
(9:6-10).

is to say, not of this building; neither by the
blood of goats and calves, but by his own
blood he entered in once into the holy place,
having obtained eternal redemption for us”
(9:11, 12).

24. “. . . daily, as those
high priests, to
offer up sacrifice,” “often,
as the high priest
entereth into the holy place
every year with
blood of others.” “Every
priest standeth daily
ministering and offering
oftentimes the same
sacrifices” (7:27;
9:25;10:11).

“Who needeth not daily, as those high
priests, to offer up sacrifice . . . : for this he
did once, when he offered up himself.” “But
now once in the end of the world hath he
appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of
himself.” “But this man, after he had of-
fered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down
on the right hand of God” (7:27; 9:26; 10:12).

25. “The bodies of those
beasts, whose blood
is brought into the
sanctuary by the high
priest for sin, are burned
without the camp.

Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify
the people with his own blood, suffered with-
out the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto
him without the camp, bearing his reproach”
(13:11-13).

26. “For the law having a
shadow of good
things to come, and not the
very image of the
things, can never with
those sacrifices which
they offered year by year
continually make the
comers thereunto perfect.

“By one offering he hath perfected for ever
them that are sanctified” (10:14).

For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. . . . For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins,” “sacrifices, which can never take away sins,” sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience” (10:1-4, 11; 9:9).

27. “In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure” (10:6).

“Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me. . . . Then said I, Lo, I come . . . to do thy will, O God” (10:5-7).

28. “He taketh away the first,

that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (10:9, 10).

VI. Our Privileges and Responsibilities

29. “Ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, . . .

but ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, . . . and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant. . . . See that ye refuse not him that speaketh” (12:18-25).

30. “Whose voice then shook the earth:

but not he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven,” “that those things which cannot be shaken may remain” (12:26, 27).

31. “God, who . . . spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son” (1:1, 2).

32. “. . . as well as unto them.” “Unto us was the gospel preached” (4:2).
33. “Your fathers tempted me. . . . I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart” (3:9, 10). “Harden not your hearts. . . . Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief” (3:8-12).
34. “I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest. . . . They could not enter in because of unbelief.” “They to whom it was first preached entered not in. . . . If Jesus [Joshua] had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day” (3:11-19; 4:6-8). “There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.” “It remaineth that some must enter therein.” “Let us therefore fear, lest . . . any of you should seem to come short of it.” “Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief” (4:9, 6, 1, 11).
35. “If the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord?” (2:2, 3).
36. “For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven” (12:25).
37. “He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, . . . and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?” (10:28, 29).
38. “By it [faith] the elders obtained a God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made

good report.” “And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: perfect” (11:2, 39, 40).

39. “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus.” “Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. . . . Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (12:1, 2; 4:14, 16).

5. Outline.

- I. The Supreme Position and Authority of Jesus Christ, 1:1 to 2:18.
 - A. His equality with the Father, 1:1–3.
 - B. His superiority over angels, 1:4–14.
 - C. The importance of accepting salvation provided in Christ, 2:1–4.
 - D. The purpose of the incarnation of Christ, 2:5–18.
 1. The exalted destiny of the human race, 2:5–8.
 2. Salvation possible as a result of the incarnation, 2:9–18.
- II. The “Rest” That Remains to the People of God, 3:1 to 4:16.
 - A. The faithfulness of Christ, our Apostle and High Priest, 3:1–6.
 - B. The failure of ancient Israel to enter into God’s “rest,” 3:7–19.
 1. An appeal to faithfulness on our part, 3:7–15.
 2. Unbelief the cause of Israel’s failure, 3:16–19.
 - C. An appeal to enter into God’s “rest” through faith in Christ, 4:1–16.
 1. Evidence that the promise of “rest” remains valid, 4:1–11.
 2. An admonition to find this “rest” by coming to Christ, 4:12–16.
- III. The Exalted Status of Christ as High Priest, 5:1 to 8:13.
 - A. Christ appointed high priest by the Father, 5:1–10.
 1. The function of a high priest, 5:1–3.
 2. The appointment of Christ, 5:4–6.
 3. Christ’s preparation to serve as high priest, 5:7–10.
 - B. An admonition to acceptance of Christ as high priest, 5:11 to 6:20.
 1. The slowness of many to understand Christ’s role as high priest, 5:11–14.
 2. The writer’s confidence that his readers will grow in understanding, 6:1–12.
 3. The certainty of the Christian hope, 6:13–20.
 - C. Christ as high priest after the order of Melchisedec, 7:1–28.
 1. The exalted position of Melchisedec, 7:1–4.
 2. The Melchisedec priesthood prior and superior to the Aaronic priesthood, 7:5–11.
 3. The Aaronic priesthood replaced by the priesthood of Christ, 7:12–24.
 4. The efficacy and permanence of Christ’s priesthood, 7:25–28.

- D. Christ as high priest of the heavenly sanctuary, 8:1–5.
- E. The new covenant, under which Christ serves as high priest, 8:6–13.
- IV. The High-priestly Ministry of Christ, 9:1 to 10:22.
 - A. A description of the earthly sanctuary and its services, 9:1–7.
 - B. The typical significance of the earthly sanctuary, 9:8–14.
 - C. Christ as mediator of the new covenant, 9:15–28.
 - 1. Ratification of the old covenant and dedication of its sanctuary by blood, 9:15–22.
 - 2. The blood of Christ makes the new covenant effective, 9:23–28.
 - D. Christ’s sacrifice superior to animal sacrifices, 10:1–22.
 - 1. The ineffectiveness of animal sacrifices, 10:1–4.
 - 2. The efficacy and permanence of Christ’s sacrifice, 10:5–18.
 - 3. An appeal to accept Christ’s priestly ministry, 10:19–22.
- V. An Appeal to Faithfulness and Godly Living, 10:23 to 13:17.
 - A. In view of the day of judgment and the coming of Christ, 10:23–39.
 - B. In view of the faithful example of the ancient worthies, 11:1 to 12:2.
 - C. In spite of trials and persecutions, 12:3–13.
 - D. In spite of temptation, 12:14–29.
 - E. With respect to specific situations in daily life, 13:1–17.
- VI. Apostolic Benediction and Personal Salutation, 13:18–25.

CHAPTER 1

1 *Christ in these last times coming to us from the Father, 4 is preferred above the angels, both in person and office.*

1. God. The epistle launches directly into a doctrinal discussion without the customary opening salutations (see the opening verses to the other NT epistles; see p. 387). In Greek the word for God does not occur first, but the word for “sundry times.” See below under “spake.”

At sundry times. Gr. *polumerōs*, “in many portions,” “in many ways.” The full light from the throne of God did not burst upon men in one great flash of glory. Rather, it came slowly, little by little, as men could comprehend it.

In divers manners. Gr. *polutropōs*, “in various ways.” God spoke through the prophets by spoken and written message, by parable, and by means of visual aids. Whatever means were employed, it was God who spoke (see below under “spake”).

Spake. The writer emphasizes the fact that it was God who spoke through the prophets. A book may bear the name of Isaiah or Amos or Daniel, but God is the real author (cf. John 5:46, 47). The fact that God gave revelations through the prophets in OT times did not preclude His giving later and even greater revelations as they were needed. It was fitting in OT times to show faith in the coming Redeemer by offering a lamb on the altar. But after Christ had come it would be inappropriate to continue such sacrifices: to do so would no longer show faith but unbelief. It was necessary to discard rites and ceremonies that pointed to Christ to come, and substitute others that would betoken faith in a Christ who had come. To enable the believer in God to do this would require fresh revelations from Heaven.

To discontinue age-hallowed ceremonies and customs—as Christianity demanded of Israel—and to adopt new ones that in outward display did not compare with the old; to sever connection with the stately Temple service—all this doubtless seemed to many not

only a repudiation of all past experiences and revelations but an end of all religion. The 1st-century Jews and their fathers had always offered sacrifices, and God had accepted their worship. Could there be any harm in continuing that which Heaven had so signally blessed? They remembered how God had instructed Moses to build the sanctuary, and how God Himself honored its dedication by sending fire from heaven to light the wood on the altar. The religion that was good enough for Abraham, Moses, and Elijah, they deemed to be good enough for them.

It is always a difficult task to change the customs of centuries, and to transform the habits of a nation in a few years is well-nigh impossible. In the case of the transition from Judaism to Christianity it was particularly difficult, in that the change had to be accomplished through the leadership of men who, in the estimation of most of the people, did not rank with those who had instituted the customs. The transition period was therefore a most trying one. Much wisdom and wise counsel were needed. The question would doubtless constantly recur that if God did not require sacrifices now, if in fact they were displeasing to Him, what about the great and good men of old who had taught them to Israel, and had themselves offered gifts to Him? Had these men not followed the specific directions of God? And who were Paul and the other apostles that they should presume to change ancient practices and institutions? The Jews might pointedly ask the apostles whether they considered themselves greater than the prophets and patriarchs of old (cf. John 4:12).

These questions are answered in the first words of the epistle. The great leaders of the past had not been mistaken. They had been led by God. They were God's men. When they spoke, God spoke. They had not followed cunningly devised fables. In taking this position the author of the book would naturally gain the confidence of the people, who believed that the great men and prophets of old had been led by God.

In time past. Gr. *palai*, "long ago," "formerly." The reference is doubtless to all OT revelation.

Fathers. Here meaning "forefathers," or "ancestors."

Prophets. Gr. *prophētai* (see on Matt. 11:9).

2. These last days. This is equivalent to the expression "in our time." Bible writers sometimes speak of events associated with the first advent of Christ as occurring in the "last days" (see Acts 2:17; Heb. 9:26; 1 Peter 1:5).

By his Son. The word "his" is supplied. The RSV translates the phrase "by a Son." This translation, though grammatically allowable, is misleading, for it could be taken as suggesting that God had more than one son. It is better to regard the absence of an article here as laying emphasis on the quality of the noun as in Dan. 7:13; Rev. 1:13 (see on comment there; cf. on John 1:1). The meaning of the phrase would then be "one who is a son." The contrast is between revelation by a prophet and revelation by a "son."

Hath appointed. It is difficult to assign this event to any precise moment in history inasmuch as the purposes of God are eternal. However, the appointment here referred to probably took effect at the time of the ascension, when Christ sat "down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (v. 3).

The first verse presents the Father, the second the Son. In presenting the Son, the author of Hebrews comes to the heart of his subject. If Christ is to supersede the Aaronic priesthood instituted by Moses, He must be shown to be superior to Moses, or He would

not have the power to abrogate that which Moses had instituted. Therefore Christ is set forth as God (see on 1:3; cf. on John 1:1).

Heir of all things. When Jesus came to earth He laid “aside His royal robe and kingly crown” (9T 68). He “chose to give back the scepter into the Father’s hands, and to step down from the throne of the universe” (DA 22, 23). At His ascension He resumed the position that He had had with the Father prior to the incarnation (see AA 38, 39; cf. 8T 268, 269). It was important that the Hebrews understand the true position of the Son. Old Testament writers did not clearly distinguish between the persons in the Godhead. Israel had been taught, “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord” (Deut. 6:4). It was necessary that they understand that the Messiah shared the throne of the universe with the Father. See Additional Note on John 1; cf. on 1 Cor. 15:24–27.

By whom also he made. The Son stands revealed as associated with the Father, the active agent in creation (see on John 1:3; Col. 1:16, 17).

Worlds. Gr. *aiōnes* (see on 13:39). The plural probably looks to the whole system of things brought into existence by Christ in time, the “all things” of Heb. 1:3, the things “visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers” (1:16, 17). Through Christ, God made the worlds. God used Him, not as a tool, but as a fellow worker. There is an indication here of division of activity in the Godhead. He who was to be man’s Redeemer was his Creator. And, indeed, because He is the Creator, He is able to create a man “a new creature” (2 Cor. 5:17).

When we consider the magnitude of God’s creation, the unnumbered millions of worlds circling the throne of Deity, not only do we gain an enlarged concept of God; we are led to say with the psalmist, “What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?” (Ps. 8:4). Wonderful in wisdom, knowledge, and power must our God be; and with this, wonderful must be the love of Him who created and upholds all things and invites man to become a partaker with Him in glory.

3. Being. Gr. *ōn*, an expression denoting eternal, timeless existence (see on Rev. 1:4). The related verb form *ēn* occurs with this same idea in the expression in John 1:1; “in the beginning *was* [*ēn*] the Word” (see comment there). Christ did not come into existence “in the beginning”—in the beginning He already *was*. When He came to this world, He that already *was*, *became* flesh. He had not previously been flesh (see on John 1:14).

Brightness. Gr. *apaugasma*, “outshining,” “outraying,” “reflection,” “radiance.” The Father and the Son are inseparable. The Son reveals the Father, is the outshining of the Father. As when we look at the sun, we see not the sun itself but its rays, so we see not the Father but the Son, the Father Himself being invisible, “dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see” (1 Tim. 6:16).

Glory. Gr. *doxa* (see on Rom. 3:23; 1 Cor. 11:7). The glory of God is the sum total of all His attributes. On a certain occasion Moses asked God, “I beseech thee, shew me thy glory” (Ex. 33:18). In response to the appeal God said, “I will make all my goodness pass before thee” (Ex. 33:19; cf. ch. 34:5–7). God’s glory is His character (see DA 20; PK 312, 313; GW 417). Christ did not *become* the brightness of God’s glory. He already *was*, and always had been (see on John 1:1; see Vol. V, p. 917). This constitutes the essential and eternal ground of His personality.

Express image. Gr. *charaktēr*, originally, a tool used for engraving or marking. Later it came to mean the marking itself. The same duality of meaning may be noted in certain English words. Thus “seal” may mean the impression made upon the receiving medium, as well as the instrument used, and “stamp” denotes both the instrument used and the imprint made. As a seal or stamp impresses an exact image of itself upon the wax, so Christ is the exact counterpart of God.

Person. Gr. *hupostasis*, literally, “that which stands under,” hence, “subsistence,” “essence,” “actual being,” “reality.” It signifies reality as contrasted with imagination and fancy, and is used for the essence of things, the inmost nature of anything, the real self. It is also used to denote firmness, steadfastness, assurance, confidence.

When Christ is said to be the “express image” of the Father’s *hupostasis* it means more than outward likeness. He is the exact and true expression of the very inmost nature of God. As is the Father, so is the Son: one in essence, one in character, one in mind and purpose. So alike are they that Christ could say, “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father” (John 14:9), “I and my Father are one” (ch. 10:30). Indeed, one of the great purposes of Christ’s coming to this earth was to give men a true picture of the Father.

Upholding. Gr. *pherō*, “to bear,” “to carry,” “to bear along,” “to bear up.” Here there may be the added meaning of movement, purpose, guidance; proceeding with definite intent. Christ is the one who is upholding all things in the entire universe and who keeps the heavenly bodies in their appointed paths. Compare the phrase, “by him all things consist,” that is, hold together (Col. 1:17). *Pherō* is more comprehensive than our English word “consist,” since it embraces the concept of purposeful working, of planning. This definition changes the concept from that of a mere power sustaining the physical universe to that of an intelligent Being who has a plan and is in the process of carrying it out.

Word. Gr. *rhēma*, “utterance,” “word,” “command.” In ch. 11:3 the worlds are said to have been framed by the *rhēma* of God. Compare the use of *rhēma* in Rom. 10:8, 17, 18; Eph. 6:17; 1 Peter 1:25.

His. That is, Christ’s.

Power. Gr. *dunamis*, “might,” “strength,” “the ability to perform.”

By himself. Important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 10) for the omission of this phrase. The idea is contained, however, in the form of the Greek expression translated “had ... purged.” Christ trod the wine press alone (Isa. 63:3).

Purged. By His atonement Christ accomplished both the cleansing of sin in general—which work was made possible by the sacrifice on the cross and will at last issue in the purification of the universe from sin—and the cleansing of the individual from sin. This latter work, also made possible by the cross, is still in progress and will not be finished till the last soul is saved.

On the cross Christ finished His work as victim and sacrifice. He shed His blood, and thus was a “fountain opened ... for sin and for uncleanness” (Zech. 13:1). But His work as intercessor continues on. He is our advocate with the Father (see Heb. 7:25).

Christ overcame every temptation. Though the sins of the world were laid upon Him, His own soul was unsullied. He repelled every suggestion to evil. Satan never secured a foothold anywhere. He made a thousand attacks upon Christ, but not one succeeded.

Our. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the omission of this word. The reading therefore is that Christ “by himself purged sins,” or rather, “made purification of sins.” It is true that Christ purged “our” sins, but the author here takes a more inclusive view.

Sat down. Christ’s sitting down was a formal seating, an installation into office, an inauguration, a coronation. It was an investiture with authority, an acknowledgment of His right to exercise jurisdiction. It was the beginning, not the end, of His activity as special mediator. It was the placing of God’s seal upon His mediatorial work. By thus seating Christ at His own right hand, God placed His approval upon the work Christ had done in the earth and accepted it, addressed Him as high priest, and authorized Him henceforth to function as mediator after the order of Melchisedec (ch. 7:17).

The seat on the right hand of the Majesty on high was given Christ in view of His purgation of sin. He had succeeded where Adam had failed. He had won for Himself the right to speak and act for mankind. Therefore, far from sitting down to rest, He was now beginning His new activity. As a judge on earth takes his seat on the bench, as the chairman of an assembly “takes the chair” and proceedings begin, so Christ took His seat at the right hand of God, and thus received official recognition before the assembled multitudes that He served by the appointment and will of God.

The priests in the service on earth offered the blood of the victims the people brought to the sanctuary, the blood of slain animals. It was necessary that Christ as high priest should have “somewhat also to offer” (ch. 8:3). This “somewhat” was not “the blood of goats and calves, but ... his own blood” (ch. 9:12). This blood He could not offer until it had been shed on Calvary. But as soon as it was shed, He could begin His ministry. This He did immediately after He was installed in office. He was now a priest forever, and was ready to intercede for man in the holy places in heaven.

Right hand. The place of honor and authority. There is doubtless an allusion to Ps. 110:1.

Majesty. Gr. *megalōsunē*, literally, “greatness.” The word occurs in the NT only here and in Heb. 8:1; Jude 25. An attribute of divinity is here used in place of the divine name, doubtless for literary purposes.

On high. Literally, “in [the] heights,” that is, heaven (cf. Ps. 93:3).

4. Being made. Rather, “having become.” At His incarnation Jesus was made “a little lower than the angels” (see on ch. 2:9); now He is highly exalted (ch. 1:3).

So much better. The remainder of the chapter is devoted to a discussion of the contrast between Christ and the angels. The author sets out to show that Christ is, in the highest sense, God. If Christ is to purge men from sin, He must be God; for only God can forgive sins. Great as are the angels, and highly as the Jews regarded them, no angel can ever be a savior. The author therefore proceeds to show that Christ is “much better” than the angels.

The deity of Christ was a great stumbling block in the way of the Jews’ acceptance of Christianity. Israel had for centuries prided itself on the worship of only one God, whereas the heathen had many gods. “The Lord our God is one Lord” (Deut. 6:4) had been the challenge to their heathen neighbors. The Jews needed to understand the nature of the Godhead, that the phrase “one Lord” involved Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

By inheritance. Christ has been “appointed heir of all things” (see on v. 2). With this inheritance He was also given “a name which is above every name” (see on Phil. 2:9).

A more excellent name. Some believe that the name is “Jesus.” This was the name given to Him at birth, and it was given in recognition of the fact that He would “save his people from their sins” (Matt. 1:21); and since the angel who announced the name was only executing God’s command, it was in reality God the Father who gave Him that name. Others think that the title “Son” is here referred to. They believe this name is highlighted by the OT quotations cited (Heb. 1:5–8). It was with respect to the incarnation that the title “Son” came especially to be applied (see on Luke 1:35). The angels were merely “ministering spirits” (Heb. 1:13, 14); Jesus was uniquely “Son.”

5. *Which of the angels.* Now begins a series of OT quotations to prove the superiority of Christ over the angels. The anticipated answer to the question is, “He never said this to an angel at any time.”

Thou art my Son. A citation from Ps. 2:7 (see comment there). For a discussion of the title “Son” applied to Christ see on Luke 1:35; cf. on Rom. 1:4. The author here disposes of the claim made by some that Christ is an angel raised to a higher position. If Christ really were an angel elevated to His present status, then God *did* say to an angel, “Thou art my Son.” But God did *not* say this to any angel “at any time.” Some refer to Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7 as evidence that the Scriptures do call angels sons of God (see comments on these verses). It should be noted that these expressions are all in the plural. Nowhere is any angel called a son of God; and, of course, angels are created beings (Col. 1:16).

This day have I begotten thee. For a discussion of the various interpretations given to this passage see on Acts 13:33; cf. on Rom. 1:4.

I will be to him a Father. A citation from 2 Sam. 7:14 (see comment there). The original prophecy had primary application to Solomon, but it is here given Messianic import. The purpose of the citation is to highlight the sonship of Christ and thus further establish His superiority over the angels.

6. *When he bringeth.* Apparently a reference to the incarnation, although no such command seems elsewhere to be recorded. Some urge that the time element should not be pressed. Christ was God before the incarnation; He was God during the incarnation; and He is God after the incarnation. At any stage worship was appropriate. The command to worship sets forth the supremacy of the Son.

Firstbegotten. Gr. *prōtotokos* (see on Rom. 8:29).

Let all the angels. A free citation from the LXX of Deut. 32:43, with elements of Ps. 97:7. The quotation is not found in the Hebrew Bible. Citations from the LXX are characteristic of this epistle (see p. 388). The command to worship Christ is confirmatory of the deity of Christ. High as is the position of the angels, Christ is so much higher that they are commanded to worship Him. God only may be worshiped (Rev. 22:8, 9). Christ is therefore God.

7. *Spirits.* Gr. *pneumata*, “winds,” citation is from Ps. 104:4 (see comment there). The author’s purpose in quoting this text is to show that angels are servants, and that God uses them as His ministers, in contrast with the Son, who is God.

Ministers. Gr. *leitourgoi* (see on Rom. 13:6). Whereas the Son is God and is to be worshiped, the angels are ministers, servants who delight to do God’s will. From the very beginning they have had a definite part in the plan of God and have served in many capacities. After man had sinned they guarded the way to the tree of life (Gen. 3:24). When the final events take place and Christ returns, they will come with Him (Matt.

25:31), and Christ will send them to “gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other” (Matt. 24:31).

All through history angels have been men’s guardians and protectors, “sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation” (Heb. 1:14). The angels appeared often in the ministry of Christ on earth, from the first announcement of His birth to the time of His ascension. Although we may not be conscious of the constant presence of angels in our lives, we may know of a surety that we are always under their loving watchcare.

Flame of fire. Compare on Gen. 3:24.

8. Unto the Son. In contrast with “of the angels” (v. 7).

Thy throne, O God. A citation from Ps. 45:6, 7 (see comment there). Here the Father addresses the Son reverently, calling Him God. This may be considered the climax in the argument on the position and dignity of Christ. There can be no higher testimony to the deity of Christ than this apostrophe of the Father to the Son. In the most solemn manner Christ’s Godhood is affirmed, and this by the Father Himself.

Man’s salvation and the whole plan of redemption are based on the deity of Christ. If Christ is not God in the highest sense and in His own right, our faith is in vain and salvation becomes impossible.

Many of the Jews had seen Jesus in the flesh. It was probably harder for them than for later generations to believe in Christ as divine. Did they not know His supposed father and His mother, and were not some of the family still living? How could this man be God? This stumbling block the author sought to remove. Hence he summons the testimony of Scripture to confirm his position. It would be of little use to present the vital subjects with which Hebrews deals, until this one point was settled and fully accepted.

As we consider the history of the church since the days of the apostles, we see the need of emphasis on the deity of Christ. Many there are today who revere Christ and in their own way esteem Him highly, who nevertheless refuse to give Him the place that is rightly His. They fail to understand that the deity of Christ is the central fact in the plan of redemption, and that there is “none other name under heaven given among men,” whereby we may be saved (Acts 4:12).

For ever and ever. Compare on Rev. 11:15; 14:11.

Righteousness. Gr. *euthutēs*, “rectitude,” “uprightness.” The reference to the throne and the scepter is worthy of note. It indicates actual, not merely potential, possession of power. It presents the kingdom not as future, but as present and in active operation. The throne and the kingdom are everlasting; and the scepter—symbol of actual exercise of authority—is characterized by uprightness.

9. Righteousness. Gr. *dikaïosunē* (see on Matt. 5:6). This has particular reference to Christ’s earthly life. This is the basis upon which He was anointed, as mentioned in the latter part of the verse.

To *love* righteousness is a higher virtue than merely to *do* righteousness. Many sincere Christians take an active part in various good enterprises more from a sense of duty than from any inherent love for the work. A missionary may go to a needy field with a high sense of duty and of the responsibility resting upon him, and accomplish a great work. It is not, however, until he enters into the love of the work, not until he truly begins to love the people among whom he labors, that he has reached the standard set by God. Work, with duty as a motive, is commendable. Work, with love as a motive, is a still higher experience.

Some accept the doctrines of the church and step out in obedience to God's command because of the overpowering logic of the truth and its masterful presentation. However, unless they also receive "the *love* of the truth, that they might be saved" (2 Thess. 2:10), they may at last be found wanting.

Love is what prompted God to action. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son" (John 3:16). "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it" (Eph. 5:25). Paul, who confesses, "I laboured more abundantly than they all" (1 Cor. 15:10), testifies, "the love of Christ constraineth us" (2 Cor. 5:14).

Iniquity. Gr. *anomia*, "lawlessness," "violation of law." Love is an essential Christian virtue. However, it is necessary to stress the quality of hate also. God commends Christ for His love of righteousness, and also for His hatred of sin.

It is possible to resist sin without actually hating it. Indulgence in a particular sin may not appeal to a man, and hence may be no temptation to him. Other sins may be pleasing to him, but knowing that they are sin and also that he may possibly be detected, he refrains from doing what he would really like to do. We do not know what credit will be given on the books of heaven to such a man. But we know that simply fear of having one's reputation ruined if one is found out, is not a satisfactory motive for abstinence from sin. Only the man who has actually learned to hate sin is really secure. The man who abstains from sin, yet hankers after it and finds it alluring and interesting, is not on safe ground. He needs to learn to hate sin. The Ephesus church was commended for hating the deeds of the Nicolaitanes (Rev. 2:6). In God's book are recorded not only our loves but our hates.

Anointed. The anointing here is with the oil of gladness, that is, with oil which is gladness. The anointing is symbolical of blessing and joy (see Deut. 28:40; Ps. 23:5 92:10).

Fellows. In the original prophecy these were doubtless other celestial personages. When the passage is applied to Christ these "fellows" are understood by some to represent all other beings; by others, to represent Christ's associates in the plan of salvation, that is, the saved, who are associate heirs with Him.

10. Thou, Lord. Verses 10–12 are a citation from Ps. 102:25–27. Citation after citation from the LXX is marshaled to establish the deity of Christ beyond question. In v. 8 Christ is called God. Here He is named Lord. Jesus is both Lord and God (cf. on Acts 2:36).

The foundation of the earth. The fact that Christ was the active agent in creation has already been mentioned (see on v. 2). Here an OT quotation that the Jews viewed as referring to God is shown to have specific reference to Christ.

11. They shall perish. That is, the atmospheric heavens and the earth will undergo fundamental changes (see on Matt. 24:35; Rev. 21:1).

Thou remainest. Here eternity is attributed to Christ. As Creator, Christ existed before all things (Col. 1:17), and when perishable things vanish, He remains.

12. As a vesture. A striking picture of the decay and temporary nature of the heavens and the earth (see on v. 11).

Thou art the same. This statement attests Christ's immutability. All of God's attributes are vital. We stress His love, His kindness, His justice. But His immutability is just as important, though we do not always appreciate this. It is a most blessed thing that

we can depend upon Christ's always being the "same yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (ch. 13:8).

Eternity and immutability give the idea of solidarity, stability, permanence. They are an "anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast" (ch. 6:19). In these times of uncertainty it is well to have something sure to build on; it is well to have an anchor that will not drift.

13. The angels. The anticipated answer to the question (cf. on v. 5) is, "God never called an angel 'my Son,' neither did He ever invite one to sit at His right hand—to share His position and prerogatives."

Sit on my right hand. A citation from Ps. 110:1. See on Heb. 1:3.

Thine enemies thy footstool. A reference to an Oriental custom according to which the victor placed his foot on the neck of his enemies as a sign of their submission. Compare Jesus' reference to this statement from the psalms (Luke 20:42, 43).

14. Ministering. Gr. *leitourgikos*, "rendering [public] service." *Leitourgikos* is related to *leitourgos*, the plural of which is translated "ministers" in v. 7. For the verb *leitourgeō* see on Acts 13:2.

To minister. Gr. *eis diakonian*, "for service." For *diakonia* see on Rom. 12:7.

While discussing the supremacy of Christ over the angels, it is not the intention of the author to speak slightingly of these messengers of God. They hold high office (see on v. 7). The Jews highly regarded the angels; hence the argument in this chapter is an impressive one.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–5MH 421; 8T 268

2 DA 668; EW 158

3 COL 115; DA 55; Ed 132; Ev 614; EW 77; MB 49; MH 418; MM 19; PP 34, 45; 2T 200, 345; 8T 265

6 DA 834; GC 502; 2T 426

8 PP 34

9 DA 180, 734

13 ML 304

14 AA 154; AH 323, 405; COL 176, 389; CW 140; DA 639, 832; Ed 103; EW 88, 262; GC 511, 551; MH 253; ML 303, 304; MYP 17, 27; PP 65; SR 154; 2T 125, 453; 3T 198, 516; 5T 420; 6T 40, 63, 161, 175, 316, 319, 433, 456; 7T 17, 266

CHAPTER 2

1

1 *We ought to be obedient to Christ Jesus, 5 and that because he vouchsafed to take our nature upon him, 14 as it was necessary.*

1. Therefore. That is, because of the supremacy of the Son over the angels, the theme of ch. 1, and consequently because of the importance of the message of the Son "in these last days" (see on ch. 1:2).

Give the more earnest heed. Or, "pay the greater attention." It is the Son, Himself God, who has spoken.

¹Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Heb 1:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

Which we have heard. The manner in which the message came to them is described in v. 3.

Let them slip. The clause may be translated, “lest we should float past them,” or “lest we should drift away from them.” The author fears that his readers will fail to recognize the transcendent importance of that which was spoken by Christ. The Jewish Christians possessed great zeal for OT revelation but were in danger of failing to see the importance of the new revelation that had been given.

Drifting is one of the easiest and most pleasant means of locomotion, but it is also a most treacherous and dangerous one. No effort is needed to drift, and as one glides down the river toward sure death, the feeling is that of well-being and contentment, even of drowsiness. The downward movement is hardly perceptible, for as the boat moves down the river it seems to remain motionless. The water moves with the boat and thus appearances are deceitful.

2. Word spoken by angels. A reference to the system of laws instituted at Sinai (see on Gal. 3:19).

Stedfast. Gr. *bebaios*, “sure,” “firm,” “established.” The law was fully valid and could not be ignored with impunity.

Transgression. Gr. *parabasis*, literally, “a going aside,” hence, “an overstepping,” “a transgression.” The word implies a stepping over a line knowingly, a deliberate act as contrasted with an accidental fall. A man may, in the dark, stumble over a line that he does not see and does not know is there. This is different from coming to the same line in the full light of day, seeing the sign forbidding trespassing, and then stepping over. Such willful stepping over is transgression.

Disobedience. Gr. *parakoē* (see on Rom. 5:19).

A just recompense. The Mosaic law specified the penalties for various kinds of transgression. Though “spoken by angels” the law was of divine origin and hence, like its author, was just in all its penalties and requirements.

3. How shall we escape? The rhetorical question demands the answer, “We shall not escape.” The pronoun is emphatic in the Greek. The “we” is contrasted with those who in OT times transgressed the Mosaic code (v. 2). They neglected “the word spoken by angels”; those represented by “we” are in danger of neglecting the word spoken by Christ.

Neglect. Gr. *ameleō*, “to be careless of,” “not to care,” “to neglect.” Many of the Jewish Christians clung to the old Judaic system and were inclined to think depreciatingly of the gospel. It was the purpose of the epistle to show that the old system had come to an end and that salvation could be found only in Christ and the gospel.

The warning is applicable in any age. There is no escape for those who are careless of the appeals of the gospel. There may be no outright rejection of Christ but simply a delay and neglect. Such a course is fraught with extreme danger and if persisted in will lead to eternal loss.

So great salvation. Great, in that God is its author. Great, because of its cost, the life of the Son of God. Great in its accomplishment, the renewal of body, soul, and spirit, and the exaltation of mankind to a place in heaven above.

Spoken by the Lord. In contrast with “the word spoken by angels” (v. 2). “God ... hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son” (ch. 1:1, 2). The reference is to the

message proclaimed by Christ during His earthly ministry. For the significance of the title “Lord” when applied to Christ see on John 13:13; 20:28.

Confirmed. Gr. *bebaioō*, “to establish,” “to confirm.” The gospel had not simply been proclaimed to them; it had been proclaimed with convicting power.

Unto us. The author here classes himself with those who had the gospel confirmed to them by those who heard it directly from Jesus. This excludes any of the twelve apostles from being the author of Hebrews. Many hold that it also excludes Paul, for he boasts that he did not receive the gospel of man but by revelation of Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:12). However, this reasoning is not in itself conclusive, for the author could be including himself in a general way with his readers. Furthermore, there were doubtless many things that were confirmed to Paul by eyewitnesses of Jesus. The mystery of the gospel he, of course, received directly from Jesus Christ. The problem of authorship must be settled on other considerations (see pp. 387–389).

4. God also. God also bore witness to the verity of the gospel message. The message could have no greater attestation.

Signs. For a definition of signs, wonders, and miracles see Vol. V, p. 208. See on Rom. 15:19.

Gifts. Literally, “distributions.” For an enumeration of these gifts see 1 Cor. 12:8–10, 28; cf. Eph. 4:11, 12.

According to his own will. See on 1 Cor. 12:11.

5. Unto the angels. The position of Christ in contrast with that of the angels is further discussed (cf. ch. 1). The thought that follows implies the positive side—unto the Son the world to come *has* been subjected.

The world to come. Doubtless a reference to the kingdom of glory to be ushered in at the second advent of Christ (cf. on Matt. 4:17; 5:3). Compare Eph. 1:21; Heb. 6:5.

6. A certain place. This does not imply uncertainty as to where the reference is to be found, but is simply a means of introducing a statement when it is felt unnecessary to cite the source.

What is man? The quotation in vs. 6–8 is from the LXX of Ps. 8:4–6. For the meaning of this passage in its original setting see on Ps. 8:4–6. By inspiration the author of Hebrews extends the meaning of the passage, applying it to Christ (Heb. 2:9). For the principles underlying such applications see on Deut. 18:15.

7. A little. Or, “for a little while.” The Greek may be understood either way. Both ideas are true. The latter is especially appropriate when applied to Christ (v. 9), for only briefly during His incarnation was He made lower.

Crownedst him. This points to the experience of Adam and Eve recorded in Gen. 1:28 (see comment there). God did not create man to be a servant or a slave. He made him to be king, and bestowed glory and honor upon him.

Didst set him over ... hands. Textual evidence is divided (cf. p. 10) between retaining and omitting this clause. It may have been added in some MSS to complete the quotation from Ps. 8:4–6.

8. In subjection. After God had created Adam and Eve, He “blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it” (Gen. 1:28). This gave man undisputed possession of the earth, and dominion over every living thing.

Left nothing. Scholars are not agreed as to the extent of this original dominion. Some contend that it included power over nature and the elements as Christ had power over them when on earth; others hold that all that is meant is that man was given dominion over and was superior to the brute creation.

To a remarkable degree man today has learned to harness the powers of nature. He soars in the heavens above, and the depths of the sea yield their secrets to him. He harnesses the mighty waterfalls and makes electricity his servant. He speaks, and the ends of the earth hear his voice; he sunders continents and brings forth riches from the bowels of the earth. He splits the atom and releases immeasurable power.

Not yet. In spite of his remarkable achievements (see above under “left nothing”) there are forces against which man is helpless. He has learned to postpone death but he cannot ultimately escape it. He is largely under Satan’s power, so that he falls far short of exercising the position originally assigned him.

9. But we see Jesus. The “but” here denotes contrast. Man does “not yet” have dominion (see on v. 8), “but we see Jesus.” He has dominion. He has been crowned with glory and honor. He has all authority (Matt. 28:18).

A little lower. Or, “a little while lower” (see on v. 7). Christ is shown to be very man, as truly as in the first chapter He was shown to be very God. His humanity enables Him to be the kind of high priest men need (vs. 17, 18). In heaven Christ was, of course, higher than the angels, immeasurably so. When He became man He voluntarily took His place among men and demanded no special favors. But even under these conditions He did not renounce His Godhood. He knew whence He came (John 13:3); He knew He had power to forgive sins (Matt. 9:6); He knew that at any time He could call to His aid help from above (ch. 26:53). But although He had this power, at no time did He use it to save Himself, except as directed by God. To do this would have invalidated His work. For a discussion of the humiliation of Christ see on Phil. 2:5–8.

For the suffering of death. Rather, “because of the suffering of death.” Also the word order in Greek favors connecting the phrase with “crowned with glory and honour.” The passage therefore sets forth not the purpose of the incarnation but the result of the suffering of death, namely the exaltation.

Crowned with glory. That is, at the time of His ascension (see on Heb. 1:3; cf. on Phil. 2:9).

By the grace of God. Textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 10) for the reading “without God,” suggesting that Christ in His death suffered alone without the sustaining presence of God. Certain scholars, both ancient and modern, hold that this was the original reading. However, the weight of evidence is in favor of the KJV reading. At the same time both readings are factually true: In His death Christ suffered alone (see Matt. 27:46); His suffering for man was also a demonstration of the grace of God.

Taste. Gr. *geuomai*, “to eat,” “to taste,” “to experience.” The passage does not mean, as some suggest, that Christ merely tasted lightly of death and did not suffer the full measure. Gethsemane shows that He drank the cup to the dregs and tasted death as no man had ever tasted it.

For every man. Or, “in behalf of every man.” Christ’s sacrifice was for all (see on Rom. 5:15). Every one who wills to do so may apply the benefits of the death of Christ to himself (see Rev. 22:17).

10. It became. Gr. *prepō*, “to suit,” “to be fitting,” “to be becoming.”

Him. That is, the Father, as the remainder of the verse clearly indicates.

For whom. Or, “because of whom.” “All things” exist because God willed that they exist (cf. on 1 Cor. 8:6).

By whom. Or, “through whom.” God is the one by whom “all things” came into existence. Compare Rom. 11:36. The Scriptures also present Christ as the one through whom all things were created (Col. 1:16; cf. Heb. 1:2). It was the Father “who created all things by Jesus Christ” (Eph. 3:9).

Bringing many sons unto glory. As Christ, following His humiliation, was glorified (see John 17:5), so His sacrificial death was to result in many being glorified. For the meaning of glorification see on Rom. 8:30. For the significance of the title “sons” see on Rom. 8:14. The title is chosen designedly to show the relationship between Christ, the Son, and the redeemed, who are His brethren (see Heb. 2:11–18).

Captain. Gr. *archēgos*, “leader,” “chief,” “founder,” “prince.” The word *archēgos* occurs four times in the NT and is twice translated “Prince” (Acts 3:15; 5:31), once “author” (Heb. 12:2), and once “captain” (Heb. 2:10).

In classical Greek *archēgos* is used for the head or progenitor of a Greek clan, also of heroes, and even as a divine name for Apollo. In the present text in Hebrews some suggest the meaning “pioneer,” a not unsuitable meaning, for it was Christ’s incarnation and death that made it possible for the members of the human race to be brought to glory. He pioneered the way. But the expression is inadequate in that Christ is more than a pioneer. He is the Saviour. Those who follow Him are the redeemed.

Perfect. Gr. *teleioō*, “to complete,” “to make perfect,” “to bring to consummation.”

For the adjective *teleios* see on Matt. 5:48. The author does not mean that Christ was not previously perfect. Christ was perfect as *God*. In His incarnation He was perfect as *man*. But by His sufferings He became perfect as *Saviour* (see Acts 5:31). The thought here in *teleioō* is that of reaching a predetermined goal, of finishing a race, of completing a prescribed course. Before Christ came to earth, the path He must tread was plain before Him; every step was clear. To reach the goal He must go all the way. He could not stop short of His ultimate destination; He must persevere to the end. It is the finishing of this course that is involved in the text before us, not any moral perfecting.

Sufferings. Christ reached His exalted state through the pathway of suffering. It was His “suffering of death” (v. 9) that constituted Him a savior and enabled Him to be the captain leading many sons to glory. The sufferings of temptation enabled Him to be “a merciful and faithful high priest,” “able to succour them that are tempted” (see on vs. 17, 18). Had Christ come to this world and spent His allotted time in peace and contentment, guarded by heavenly angels and protected from the hazards and temptations common to man, He would not have been perfected for His office. He would have had no opportunity to demonstrate what He would do under pressure. Had He not been tempted in all points, men would have wondered what He would do if He were really hungry, tired out, sick; what He would do if men should revile Him, curse Him, spit upon Him, scourge Him, and at last hang Him on a cross. Would He still retain His composure and pray for His enemies? If those whom He trusted should forsake Him, deny Him, betray Him, and desert Him in His supreme hour, would He, undiscouraged, commit Himself to God? If, as a climax, God Himself should appear to forsake Him. and the horror of darkness

envelop Him and nearly crush Him, would He still drink the cup or would He draw back? Such questions men would ask if He had been shielded from temptations and suffering.

11. He that sanctifieth. In this context Christ (cf. ch. 9:13, 14).

They who are sanctified. These are the “many sons” who are led to glory (v. 10).

Of one. That is, of God the Father. Christ the Son and the “many sons” have all one Father.

Not ashamed. In spite of His vast superiority over the angels (Heb. 1:4; cf. Luke 9:26).

Brethren. See on Matt. 12:49, 50; cf. John 20:17.

12. I will declare thy name. A quotation from Ps. 22:22. Psalm 22 is a Messianic psalm (see introduction to this psalm). Paul employs the passage to substantiate his observation that those who are sanctified (v. 11) are brethren of Christ.

Brethren. The significant word for which the passage was quoted (see v. 11).

13. And again. A formula introducing a new quotation.

I will put my trust. A quotation from 2 Sam. 22:3 or Isa. 8:17, more likely the latter, since the following quotation is from latter, since the following quotation is from Isa. 8:18. The statement is quoted as proof of the humanity of Christ. It is a picture of His complete fellowship with us. He Himself exercised the same trust and faith that He requires of us.

I and the children. For the meaning of this quotation in its original context see on Isa. 8:18. The author of Hebrews makes a Messianic application of the passage. He regards Isaiah, a type of Christ and his children as representative of the spiritual children of Christ. The metaphor is changed from “brethren” to “children,” but the same basic idea is emphasized—Christ shares humanity with us, here illustrated by the fact that a father and his children share the same nature.

Which God hath given. In His prayer before Gethsemane, Christ referred eight times to the disciples as being given to Him by God (John 17:2, 6, 9, 11, 12, 24). He did not ascribe honor to Himself, but gave God the glory for the result of His lifework.

14. The children. That is, the children mentioned in v. 13.

Are partakers. Or, “have been made sharers.” The children share a common human nature.

He also. That is, Christ.

Took part. The form of the Greek verb suggests the thought of taking hold of something not previously possessed. This was true of Jesus: He was divine, but He took our human nature, mysteriously blending the two natures in one (see on John 1:14). That He might enter into all the experiences of mankind, Christ became man.

Through death. That is, his sacrificial death on the cross (cf. v. 9). When Jesus died on the cross, Satan appeared to have triumphed; for it seemed that even the Son of God acknowledged Satan’s power of death and became subject to it. But God had another purpose.

Destroy. Gr. *katargeō*, “to render null and void,” “to destroy” (see on Rom. 3:3). Already Satan’s power over death has been broken, for though natural death still reigns, the resurrection is assured (see 1 Cor. 15:20–22, 51–57). Finally the originator of sin and the author of death will himself be annihilated (see on Rev. 20:10).

That had the power. Satan has the power of death because he is the originator of sin, and death results from sin (see on Rom. 5:12). His kingdom is a kingdom of death, and in it he rules. As sin rules in our lives, so death rules, and so Satan rules.

Christ was the one who entered the strong man's house (Mark 3:27), bound the enemy, and took away his prisoners. Christ entered the realm of death—Satan's stronghold—and wrested from Satan his prey. When he thought he had Christ in his power, when the tomb was sealed and Christ locked in, Satan exulted. But Christ burst the bonds of death and walked forth from the grave, for "it was not possible that he should be holden of it" (Acts 2:24). Not only did Christ Himself rise, but "the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection" (Matt. 27:52, 53). And so, though the "strong man armed keepeth his palace, ... a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him" (Luke 11:21, 22). The stronger man, Christ, entered the realm of death, and in death overcame him who had the power of death, took away his captives, and spoiled his house (Matt. 12:29); "and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it" (Col. 2:15). Henceforth, death for the believers is but a sleep; they rest in peace until God calls them. For many it will even be a blessed sleep (Rev. 14:13). Christ "hath abolished death" (2 Tim. 1:10). He has "the keys of hell and of death" (Rev. 1:18; cf. 1 Cor. 15:51–57).

Devil. Gr. *diabolos* (see on Matt. 4:1).

15. Deliver. Gr. *aplassō*, "to free" "to release." Christ came to free men from bondage to sin and death.

Fear of death. This is the condition of the unredeemed. Millions are in bondage to sin and are longing for deliverance. They fear the present; they fear the future; they fear life; they fear death. Is there any hope or comfort or deliverance? The answer is that Christ has destroyed the power of Satan, has abolished death, and has delivered, and will deliver, them from the fears that have bound them.

All their lifetime. Man is born in sin. He continues in servile bondage until released by Christ.

Bondage. Or, "slavery." For comment on the bondage of sin see on Rom. 8:15.

16. Verily. Gr. *dēpou*, "of course."

Took ... on. Gr. *epilambanomai*, "to take hold of," "to grasp," "to be concerned with," "to take an interest in," "to help." The question is, Which of these varied meanings applies in the text under consideration? The KJV supplies the word "nature," but the tense of the Greek verb is against this. The Greek reads, "is taking hold of," if the meaning "to take hold of" is adopted. The incarnation would hardly be described as an event now going on, as the present tense would imply. Furthermore, the "wherefore" of v. 17 does not naturally follow a reference to the incarnation in v. 16.

The meaning "to help," is well suited to the context and the Greek construction. It suggests the reading, "It is not angels that Christ is helping but members of the human family." The meaning "to be concerned with" also makes good sense. Adopting it, the verse would read, "For surely he is not concerned with angels, but he is concerned with the seed of Abraham." Man is in need of redemption and capable of restoration, and it is he about whom Christ is anxious as far as the plan of redemption is concerned. The meaning "to take an interest in" is also suitable.

The seed of Abraham. Here probably synonymous with “man.” There is no attempt to exclude the Gentiles. Perhaps the spiritual seed is designated (Gal. 3:29).

17. Wherefore. That is, because He was concerned with man (see on v. 16).

In all things. Christ must become man so completely and fully that it can never be said that He is a stranger to any temptation, any sorrow, any trial or suffering that men must pass through.

Behoved. Gr. *opheilō*, “to owe,” “to be indebted,” “must,” “ought.” Compare the use of the verb and related nouns in Matt. 18:30, 34; 23–16; Luke 16:6, 7; John 13:14; 1 Cor. 5:10; 2 Thess. 2:13.

Made like. For the reason stated subsequently, namely, to qualify Him for the position of high priest. Although this does not mean that His experiences must be identical with ours in every respect—for a thousand lifetimes would not be sufficient for that—it does mean that the trials must be representative, and must in principle include all that man has to suffer, and that in severity they must fully measure up to all that men have to bear.

Might be. Or, “might become.”

Merciful and faithful. These two characteristics are necessary to a just ministry. Mercy alone might be too lenient and might ignore justice. Faithfulness provides a balance to mercy, as it considers the rights and duties of both the offender and the offended. As high priest Christ must be kind and understanding toward the offender, but He must also be true to justice and not ignore the law. Faithfulness will keep the delicate balance between unconditional mercy and unrelenting justice. The high priest must consider the sinner, but he must also consider the one sinned against. He must be faithful to his trust as well as merciful to the transgressor.

High priest. The subject of Christ as high priest is here introduced and is later more fully developed (see chs. 3; 5; 7–10).

Things pertaining to God. That is, matters of divine service. The Greek phrase thus translated occurs in the LXX of Ex. 4:16, with reference to Moses’ relationship to God in regard to Aaron.

To make reconciliation. Gr. *hilaskomai*. For the meaning of this verb and related nouns see on Rom. 3:25. The verb occurs only here and in Luke 18:13, where it is rendered “to be merciful.”

18. Being tempted. Gr. *peirazō*, “to test,” “to prove,” “to tempt” (see on Matt. 4:1). The human nature of Christ felt the full force of temptation. Otherwise, Christ would not have understood the terrific struggle of a poor sinner who is mightily tempted to yield. Christ was tempted in all points “like as we are” (Heb. 4:15). He actually suffered under temptation.

How much Christ suffered in resisting temptation, the wilderness, Gethsemane, and Golgotha reveal. In the first two cases the temptation was so overwhelming that it seems He would have died under the impact had not an angel been sent to strengthen Him (Matt. 4:11; Luke 22:43). The cup was not removed, despite His prayer. He must drink it. To these experiences the author evidently refers when he says, “Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin” (Heb. 12:4). Christ *did* resist unto blood.

Able to succour. Or, “able to help.” By successfully resisting temptation and patiently enduring suffering Christ overcame the tempter. We are now contending with a defeated foe. Christ’s victory is our assurance of victory. See on Matt. 4:1.

It is an ever-present source of comfort to the Christian to know that Christ understands our sorrows and perplexities, and sympathizes with us. If Christ had not become man, the question might easily have arisen, How can we know that God loves and cares for us when He has never experienced the trials we encounter, has never been poor or forsaken, and has never known what it is to be alone and face an unknown future? He asks us to be faithful to death, but has He ever faced the issues we face? If He were one of us and one with us, He would know how hard it is to meet certain trials. But if He has never been man, does He really know all our sorrows, and can He sympathize with us when we stray?

To this the answer is that God *does* know, and that it was not for His sake, but for ours, that He became poor; it was not for His sake but for ours that He suffered and died. We needed the demonstration that Christ came to give, or we would never have known the deep love of God for suffering humanity. Besides, we would never have known the suffering that sin has brought to the heart of God.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–3FE 404

3 2T 213, 691; 3T 365; 5T 352

7 Ed 20; 3T 568; 4T 563

9 PP 65

10 GC 351; MB 62; PP 480; 4T 448; 5T 71, 133; 8T 212

11 DA 25; GC 477; MB 103; ML 289; SC 14; SL 41; 5T 230, 740

13 AH 159; CG 561, 565; GC 646; 2T 366

14 EW 151; GC 503; PK 701; PP 65; SR 214

14, 15 DA 320

16 8T 207

17 AA 472; DA 24; FE 442; MH 422; ML 297; 8T 286

17, 18 FE 275; TM 225, 355; 3T 93

18 Ed 78; EW 150; FE 106; GC 416; MB 13; ML 335; PP 64, 480; SR 43; TM 391; 2T 201; 4T 294; 5T 422; 9T 185

CHAPTER 3

1 *Christ is more worthy than Moses, 7 therefore if we believe not in him, we shall be more worthy punishment than hardhearted Israel.*

1. Wherefore. That is, in view of all that has been said in chs. 1 and 2 concerning the exalted position of Christ as God, and His infinite condescension in assuming human nature.

Holy brethren. All believers are “brethren” in Christ. Inasmuch, however, as the book of Hebrews is addressed primarily to Christian Jews (see p. 387), the term “brethren” here seems to refer to this more restricted group. The subject matter of the following chapters—lessons from the history of ancient Israel—would be particularly meaningful to Jewish “brethren” in Christ. They are here called “holy” in the sense that their lives have been dedicated to God, not in the sense that they had no faults or shortcomings (see on Matt. 5:48; Rom. 1:7).

Partakes. Gr. *metochoi*, “shares” (see on Luke 5:7; cf. Heb. 3:14; 6:4; 12:8).

Heavenly calling. That is, the call of God to obtain salvation through Jesus Christ (see on Rom. 8:28, 30).

Consider. Gr. *katanoēō*, “to fix the mind upon,” “to contemplate.” The “holy brethren” are here invited to fix their attention upon the central theme of the epistle to the Hebrews, the ministry of Christ as our great high priest in heaven (see p. 390).

Apostle. Gr. *apostolos*, “ambassador,” “envoy,” “delegate,” “messenger” (see on Mark 3:14; Acts 1:2). Christ came to this earth as the “Apostle” of the Father, “the Sent of God” (DA 475; cf. John 6:29). He came to represent God before men (see on Matt. 1:23; John 1:14), and returned to heaven as man’s representative, or high priest, before the Father. Similarly, in OT times, the high priest of the earthly sanctuary represented God to the people, and the people before God (see on Lev. 16:4).

High Priest. See on ch. 2:17.

Profession. Gr. *homologia*, “confession,” “acknowledgment,” “profession” (see on Rom. 10:9; 1 Tim. 6:12).

Christ Jesus. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 10) the omission of the word “Christ.” “Jesus” was the name of our Saviour as a man among men; “Christ” was His name as the Messiah of OT times, as the “Sent of God,” as the Son of God. To call Jesus the Christ is to acknowledge the son of Mary as indeed the One in whom the prophecies of the OT concerning the Messiah met their fulfillment, and that as Son of man He is verily the Son of God. Used together, the two names thus constitute an affirmation of belief in the divine-human nature of our Lord. See on Matt. 1:1.

2. Faithful. Reference here is to Jesus’ faithfulness throughout His mission to earth. At the incarnation He humbled Himself by relinquishing the prerogatives of Deity and taking human nature, He endured the privations and temptations that beset His life on earth, He pressed forward with determination and fortitude to the cross (see Phil. 2:5–8; Heb. 2:14, 2:17; 12:2; Vol. V, pp. 917–919). In all things He was faithful to the plan that had been decided upon before the creation of this earth (see DA 147, 208).

Appointed. Gr. *poieō*, “to make,” “to do,” “to perform,” “to appoint” (see on Mark 3:14). Christ was loyal to the Father, coming to this earth as His representative (see on John 1:14). In the mysterious council of peace between Father and Son (see on Zech. 6:13), when the plan of salvation was formulated, Christ agreed to come to earth. In carrying out this plan He voluntarily surrendered to the Father certain of the prerogatives of Deity. He subordinated Himself to the Father for the duration of His life on earth, in order that He might live as a man among men and that His perfect life might provide them an example of the relationship they should sustain to their heavenly Father (see on Matt. 6:9; John 1:14; cf. Vol. V, p. 918). Thus the Father “appointed” Christ to His earthly mission (see on John 3:16), and in this subordinate role Christ proved “faithful.”

As also Moses. In vs. 1–6 Christ is compared with Moses, the great lawgiver (John 1:17; 7:19), and in a sense founder of the Hebrew nation. Paul wishes to prove that Christ is infinitely greater than Moses (Heb. 3:3). The high esteem in which Jews of NT times held Moses is evident from the pride they took in speaking of themselves as his “disciples” (John 9:28, 29). Christ has already been shown to be equal with the Father (Heb. 1:8) and superior to the angels (v. 4). Here He is shown as superior to Moses. He will later be shown to be superior to Abraham (ch. 7:2, 4; cf. v. 15), father of the nation

(John 8:39; see on Matt. 1:1), to Levi (Heb. 7:9, 10), and to Aaron (v. 11)—and His priesthood superior to the Aaronic priesthood.

Moses did “according to all that the Lord commanded him” (Ex. 40:16); he was a reliable and trustworthy leader. Similarly, living as a man among men, Christ faithfully represented the Father on earth, saying and doing only those things that were in harmony with God’s will and were pleasing to Him (John 4:34; 6:38; 8:28, 29). At the close of His ministry on earth He reported to the Father, “I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do” (ch. 17:4).

His house. Moses is compared with a steward placed in charge of the affairs of his master’s household (cf. Gen. 15:2; Luke 12:42; 16:1, 2). Joseph once served in this capacity in the house of Potiphar (Gen. 39:1–6). The steward was custodian of his master’s property and administrator of the household. The “house” here referred to is God’s chosen people, through whom He purposed to work out the plan of salvation. In ancient times this house was the Hebrew nation, but now it is the Christian church (see Vol. IV, pp. 26, 35).

It is not clear whether the pronoun “his” refers to Moses, its natural antecedent, or to God, as may be inferred from v. 4. If “his” refers to Moses, the “house” over which he was appointed supervisor is considered from the viewpoint of its being his to supervise. If “his” refers to God, the house is considered from the point of view of being the property of God. For practical purposes the meaning is the same either way. It appears probable that the last part of v. 2 is based on Num. 12:7, where God acclaims Moses as “faithful” over His “house.”

3. This man. That is, “the man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 2:5).

Counted worthy of. Or, “considered as deserving.”

Glory. Gr. *doxa* (see on John 1:14; Rom. 3:23; 1 Cor. 11:7), here meaning “respect,” or “honor.” As the builder of the “house” Christ deserved more honor than either the “house” or Moses, who was steward of it for a time.

Inasmuch. Here the figure changes slightly, but the purpose is still to exalt Christ. Christ is thought of in His OT role of builder of the house.

He who hath builded. That is, Christ. Compare ch. 11:10.

More honour. A magnificent structure elicits the commendation of those who behold it. But even greater honor belongs to the architect who conceived it and to the builder who erected it.

4. God. In v. 3 the builder of the house is Christ; here it is said to be God (cf. on John 1:1, John 1:14).

5. Verily. The first part of v. 5 repeats the last part of v. 2 in order to restore the figure of Christ and Moses as stewards, each over his respective “house.” This figure was interrupted in vs. 3, 4, where Christ is referred to in His OT role as builder of the house over which Moses was steward. In NT times Christ became steward over the house.

Was faithful. The purpose in exalting Christ is not to depreciate Moses. Far from it! Moses is commended as being altogether “faithful.” In measure, Christ’s superiority over Moses consists in the fact that although Christ later became steward over the “house,” He was actually its builder and owner at the time Moses served as steward over it.

Servant. Gr. *therapōn*, “a [personal] attendant,” “a servant-companion.” *Therapōn* describes a servant who renders a higher and more personal type of service than either

that of the *doulos* (see on Rom. 1:1) or the *diakonos* (see on Mark 9:35). Here used of Moses, *therapōn* reflects the high esteem in which the Jews held the great lawgiver. Great as he was he was nevertheless only a “servant-companion” of Christ in carrying forward the purposes of God on earth. But what higher honor could Heaven accord any man?

For a testimony. The faithful life and service of Moses bore witness to the faithfulness of Christ, when He should come to serve on earth as Moses had served (see on vs. 1–3). In fact, the entire ceremonial system instituted by Moses under God’s direction was “for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after,” a “testimony” to the ministry of Christ as “the Apostle and High Priest of our profession” (v. 1). See Deut. 18:15.

Those things. That is, the life and mission of Christ on earth and His ministry as high priest in heaven above.

6. Christ as a son. Christ is greater than Moses, even as a “son” is greater than a “servant” (Heb. 3:5; cf. Gal. 4:1). Moses proved “faithful” as a “servant,” and Christ as a “son.” See Matt. 21:34–37; cf. Gen. 15:2–4; see on Heb. 1:5; 5:8. Concerning Christ as the Son of God see on Luke 1:35; John 1:14.

His own house. See on v. 2; cf. ch. 10:21.

Whose house are we. The “house” over which Moses had supervision was the “house of Israel” (cf. ch. 8:8). The “house” over which Christ now presides is the Christian church (Eph. 2:19–22; 1 Peter 2:5).

Hold fast. See on Matt. 24:13; Heb. 10:35, 36; cf. Rev. 3:11.

Confidence. Gr. *parrēsia*, “boldness,” “courage,” “confidence” (see on Acts 4:13; cf. Heb. 10:19, 35). This “confidence” consists of the conviction in the heart of the Christian of the certainty of the things he has learned to believe concerning Christ. It is the believer’s privilege to enjoy the blessed assurance of present acceptance with God (see on 1 John 5:10–12). He treasures in his heart “the earnest of the Spirit” (see on 2 Cor. 1:22) and has the “substance” of the things he hopes for (see on Heb. 11:1).

Rejoicing. Gr. *kauchēma*, “boasting,” “exultation,” “pride.” The related verb, *kauchaomai*, is variously rendered “to rejoice,” “to glory,” “to boast,” etc. (see on Rom. 5:2). Compare the “glory” (*kauchaomai*) Paul took in the cross of Christ (Gal. 6:14). The Christian should take great pride in, and rejoice because of, the Christian hope.

Hope. See on Rom. 5:2–5; 8:24; Eph. 1:18. The Christian hope centers in “the Apostle and High Priest of our profession,” in “the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ,” in “the resurrection of the dead,” and in eternal life (Heb. 3:1; Titus 2:13; 3:7; Phil. 3:11; 1 Cor. 15:12–23). Christians have good reason to be the most cheerful, hopeful, and optimistic people on earth.

Firm unto the end. Important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 10) for the omission of these words, though evidence as a whole favors their retention. The same expression is fully attested in v. 14. See on Matt. 24:13; Rev. 2:10.

7. Wherefore. That is, in view of what has been said in vs. 1–6 concerning Christ as “the Apostle and High Priest of our profession” (v. 1) and of our “confidence” and “hope” in Him (v. 6).

The Holy Ghost saith. Recognition is given to the Holy Spirit as the agent of communication between God and man (see on 2 Peter 1:21), particularly with respect to Ps. 95, from which the quotation in Heb. 3:7–11 is taken, and to David as being supernaturally inspired when he wrote the psalm (cf. Heb. 4:7).

To day. See on Ps. 95:7. The “to day” to which David referred was his own time, but, guided by inspiration, the writer of Hebrews declares that the truth here stated applies with equal force in NT times (see Vol. IV, p. 37; see on Deut. 18:15). The Holy Ghost bears this same message to us today (see on Heb. 4:7–9). From generation to generation the same merciful appeal has gone forth, calling men to find “rest” of soul in Christ. Soon mercy will no longer plead and the day of salvation will close.

The thought stated in ch. 3:7–11 is repeated again and again in chs. 3 and 4 and forms the basis of the argument here presented. The conclusion drawn from the argument is that “there remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God” (ch. 4:9) and that we should “therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (v. 16).

It should be noted that the argument of chs. 3 and 4 opens with the presentation of Christ as “the Apostle and High Priest of our profession” (ch. 3:1) and closes with an appeal to come to Him in faith, in the full assurance that He can and will provide the help we need (ch. 4:14–16). Note how the expressions, “hold fast the confidence” (ch. 3:6), “hold fast our profession” (ch. 4:14), “come boldly unto the throne of grace” (v. 16), bind the line of reasoning together.

If. Gr. *ean*, “if,” “when,” “whenever.” Man’s free choice in accepting or rejecting God’s merciful call is here set forth in clear, unmistakable language. God has not predestined certain men to accept, and certain other men to reject, His mercy (see on John 3:17–20; Eph. 1:4–6).

Hear his voice. Obviously more is implied than hearing with the ears. Reference is to effective hearing, that is, hearing that results in appropriate action. Compare on Matt. 7:24–27; Rev. 1:3.

8. Harden not your hearts. That is, do not reject or neglect the merciful appeal of God’s voice (v. 7). For comment on the hardening of the heart see on Ex. 4:21; Rom. 9:18.

Provocation. Literally, “revolt,” “rebellion.” Reference here is particularly to the rebellion at Kadesh-barnea (see Num. 14:1–35), though, as Heb. 3:9 suggests, it may also apply in a general way to the various occasions when the people rebelled before the crisis at Kadesh (see Num. 14:22). There, the people refused to enter the “rest” of Canaan (see on Heb. 4:11), and as a result almost the entire adult generation was barred from entering the Promised Land (Num. 14:22–35).

Temptation. Literally, “testing,” here not “temptation” in the sense in which the word is commonly used today (see on v. 9). The “day of temptation” refers to the same event as the word “rebellion” and explains the nature of the rebellion. Israel put God to the test upon many occasions (see Ex. 17:2, 7; Num. 14:22).

The wilderness. Kadesh was situated in the Wilderness of Zin (Num. 20:1; 27:14).

9. Your fathers tempted me. Or, “your fathers tested me,” or “your fathers put me to the test.” By incessant complaining and acts of rebellion Israel tested God’s patience to the uttermost. His infinite patience with ancient Israel can be a source of hope for those who may have wandered far astray in our time, though never an excuse for imposing

upon God's mercy and long-suffering (see Rom. 6:1, 15). "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed" (Lam. 3:22; cf. Ex. 34:6, 7).

The repeated instances of rebellion against the authority and leadership of the Lord were the inevitable product of Israel's "evil heart" of "unbelief" (see on Heb. 3:12, 19). By the plagues in Egypt, by the crossing of the Red Sea, by the manna, by water from the rock, by deliverance from the fiery serpents, and in many other ways God demonstrated to His people His mighty wisdom and power. Again and again God had permitted circumstances that would teach His people to trust in Him and to follow His instructions. But Israel proved to be "a stiffnecked people" (Ex. 32:9), slow to learn. This perverse spirit continued almost to the very close of the 40 years of wilderness wandering (see Num. 20:5).

It is not for us to condemn the Hebrew people for their many mistakes. Rather we should learn from the sad experiences they went through because of their perversity of heart, and avoid making the same mistakes they made (1 Cor. 10:5–12).

Proved me. Or, "tested [or "tried"] me."

Saw my works. That is, witnessed manifold instances of divine providence, which should have been sufficient to lead them into an experience of perfect confidence in God's wisdom and power. There were repeated occasions when, in justice, God could have abandoned them to follow their own perverse ways. But, in mercy, He continued patiently to bear with them.

Forty years. Exactly 40 years elapsed between the Passover celebrated at the time of the exodus from Egypt and the Passover celebrated a few days after the crossing of the Jordan □see Vol. I, p. 187).

10. Grieved. Or, "vexed," "provoked," "angered." In the language of man (vs. 9–11) God declares the utter futility of further attempts to win the confidence and cooperation of the generation of slaves He had delivered from Egyptian bondage. As a group, though not necessarily as individuals, their probation closed at Kadesh-barnea. Events had amply proved that their character, as a group, was fixed beyond the possibility of change, and nothing was to be gained by bearing longer with them.

That generation. That is, the adult population, above 20 years of age, that had come out of Egypt (Num. 14:29, 35).

Always. Repeatedly, when brought to a test, the children of Israel had failed to exercise faith in divine providence (see Num. 14:22).

Err. Gr. *planaō*, "to wander," "to go astray" (cf. on Matt. 18:12).

In their heart. Israel refused to understand the will and providences of God and to follow His leading. The refusal was willful and deliberate, and persisted in spite of all the evidence God had provided. Compare Hosea 4:6.

Not known my ways. They took the providential provisions of God in the wilderness for granted, as their due, and failed altogether to appreciate His lofty purpose in calling them out of Egypt and in making them a nation (see Vol. IV, pp. 26–30). They did not realize that God had designed their wilderness experiences for their good, to teach them to trust and cooperate with Him, and thus prepare them for the occupation of the Promised Land.

11. Wrath. Gr. *orgē* (see on Rom. 1:18; 2:8). For comment on the "wrath," or "anger," of God see on 2 Kings 13:3.

They shall not enter. God had promised Abraham that his descendants would return to Canaan “in the fourth generation” (Gen. 15:16). His only purpose in bringing the Hebrew people out of Egypt had been to lead them into the land He had promised them. But when, in utter perversity, they refused to learn the lessons they must learn before He could take them into Canaan, God eventually had no alternative but to abandon them to their own ways. It would have been futile for Him to give them possession of the Promised Land, for, on the basis of their performance in the wilderness, they would have frustrated the very purpose He had in giving them that land. God had borne long with the people, and there was nothing more He could do for them. Compare God’s promise to give them “rest” (Ex. 33:14) with His “breach of promise” at Kadesh (Num. 14:34).

Rest. Gr. *katapausis*, “[settled] rest,” “[place of] rest.” The fundamental concept of *katapausis* is cessation from labor or other activity, together with the state of inactivity that follows cessation. *Katapausis* appears altogether eight times in chs. 3 and 4 (chs. 3:11, 18; 4:1, 3 [twice], 5, 10, 11), and the related verb *katapauō* three times (ch. 4:4, 8, 10 [“hath ceased”]). In each instance *katapausis* is definite, specifying a particular “rest,” God’s “rest.” Where *katapausis* appears in the LXX it is usually the translation of the Heb. *menuchah*, “resting place,” “rest,” from *nuach*, “to settle down,” “to remain [in a place],” “to rest,” that is, after previous activity. In the LXX *katapausis* is used of the permanent abode of the ark in Canaan, after the wilderness wanderings (Num. 10:36), and of the inheritance of Israel in Canaan, after the 430 years of sojourn (Deut. 12:9). The related verb *katapauō* is commonly the translation of the Heb. *nuach* or *shabbath*, both of which mean “to rest.” In Gen. 2:2, 3; Ex. 34:21; 31:17, *katapauō* is used five times of the Sabbath “rest.” Like *katapausis*, *katapauō* represents cessation from any kind of activity and may also include the “rest” that follows cessation. See on Heb. 4:9.

Careful attention to the four different applications of the words *katapausis* and *katapauō* is essential to an understanding of the argument set forth in chs. 3 and 4:

1. In chs. 3:11, 18; 4:3, 5, reference is to the promised literal occupation of the land of Canaan by the generation of Israelites that had been delivered from Egypt. The promise was not fulfilled because of the rebellion at Kadesh-barnea (see on ch. 3:7–11). The fact that the next generation did enter into this aspect of “rest” is evident from such passages as Deut. 3:18, 20; Joshua 21:44; 23:1.

2. It is evident, however, that the entrance of Israel into literal Canaan is only one aspect of the “rest” God had in store for His people. Once they were established in the Promised Land, He purposed to qualify them, as a nation, to be His chosen messengers of salvation to the world (see Vol. IV, pp. 26–30). But centuries later, in the time of David, they had not entered into this aspect of God’s “rest” (Heb. 4:7, 8); in fact, they never entered into it (see Vol. IV, pp. 30–34). Throughout its history Israel repeatedly made essentially the same mistake as that made by the generation whose probation, as a group, closed at Kadesh. Thus God finally barred them, as a nation, from ever entering into His spiritual “rest,” as He had formerly barred the generation at Kadesh from entering literal

Canaan (Vol. IV, p. 33). They forfeited their role as the chosen people (see on Matt. 21:43).

God's renewed invitation in the time of David to enter into this spiritual aspect of His "rest" is evidence that Israel's failure to do so in Joshua's time and after, had not—in David's time—yet canceled His purpose for Israel as a nation. Furthermore, the renewal of the invitation in David's time is evidence that Joshua had not given Israel the spiritual "rest" (ch. 4:8).

3. In ch. 4:4 (see comment there) God's resting on the seventh day of creation week is used, in an illustrative sense, of the "rest" into which God would have Christians enter.

4. In ch. 4:1, 3, 10, 11 *katapauō* and *katapausis* refer to the Christian's rest from the works of sin and from attempts to earn salvation by his own merits. Compare Christ's personal invitation, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (see on Matt. 11:28).

The line of reasoning in chs. 3 and 4, which centers in the word "rest," is essentially as follows:

1. God originally intended that Moses should lead Israel into the Canaan "rest," but neither Moses nor the generation that left Egypt entered Canaan.
2. Joshua, however, did lead the next generation into Canaan but because of their unbelief he could not lead them into God's spiritual "rest."
3. In the days of David, God renewed the invitation to enter into His spiritual "rest" (see Vol. IV, p. 31). But it was obvious, by NT times, that Israel as a nation had not entered into God's "rest."
4. Nevertheless, God's invitation and promise had not lapsed by default, for when God determines upon a certain objective He will, ultimately, achieve it despite human failures (see on ch. 4:3, 4).
5. Accordingly, since God's people have not as yet entered into His "rest," it is certain that "there remaineth ... a rest to the people of God" (ch. 4:9).
6. If Christians will "come boldly unto the throne of grace" (ch. 4:16), where Christ ministers as "the Apostle and High Priest of our profession" (ch. 3:1; cf. ch. 4:14, 15), they will find One who can "be touched with the feeling of" their "infirmities" (ch. 4:15), and will "obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (v. 16). In so doing they will enter into God's spiritual "rest," the "rest" of soul He has provided for repentant sinners. Thus, explains the writer, the experience into which Israel had failed to enter in centuries gone by becomes the privilege of the sincere Christian today (ch. 3:13, 15).
7. "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. ... Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief" (ch. 4:1, 11). Faith is the key to entering into God's "rest" (ch. 4:2; cf. chs. 3:18, 19; 4:6; 11), and we should "take heed" lest there be in us "an evil heart of unbelief" (ch. 3:12).

Under the Levitical priesthood men were to perform certain "works" designed to help them understand and appreciate the plan of salvation in Christ Jesus. But under the ministration of Christ as high priest men are to go directly to Christ without the mediation of a human priest. They are to find "rest" in Christ, without the "works" required by the ceremonial system, or any other system. In chs. 3 and 4 the writer pleads with his Jewish Christian brethren to cease from these profitless "works" and to enter into the "rest" of

simple faith in the atoning merits and ministry of our great High Priest in heaven. Compare Isa. 30:15; Jer. 6:16; Matt. 11:29.

12. Take heed. Or, “take care,” “beware,” “consider,” literally, “see,” “look.” Those to whom the epistle is addressed, and all Christians who read it, are to give the most earnest heed to the experience of ancient Israel in order to avoid making the mistake they made.

Brethren. See on v. 1.

An evil heart of unbelief. This has ever been the root of difficulty in the matter of man’s relation to God. Thus it was with Israel in the wilderness, and later in the land of Canaan. This same difficulty prevents nominal Christians today from entering into the experience of “rest” that is possible through genuine faith in Christ Jesus. Israel’s lack of faith stands in marked contrast with the faithfulness of Moses and Christ (vs. 1, 2).

Departing. Gr. *aphistēmi*, “to go away,” “to withdraw,” “to depart,” literally, “to stand off from.” Our word “apostasy” is derived from the related noun form *apostasia*, which is translated in Acts 21:21 as “to forsake” and in 2 Thess. 2:3 as “falling away” (see comments there). Christians are here admonished to beware of apostatizing in their hearts “from the living God,” the while they maintain the forms of religion. The experiences through which ancient Israel passed “happened unto them for ensamples,” or, “as lessons” (1 Cor. 10:11), and “were written down for our instruction” (RSV). Christians who, upon reviewing the obduracy of ancient Israel, consider themselves superior, will do well to heed the admonition, “Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall” (1 Cor. 10:12; cf. vs. 1–10).

Living God. To separate oneself from the Source of life is to die.

13. Exhort one another daily. Or, “keep on exhorting [or, “encouraging”] one another day by day.” Compare on Acts 16:15; 1 Cor. 1:10.

While it is called To day. That is, while the day of probation lasts and while the merciful invitation to enter into God’s “rest” is still being made.

Hardened. See on Ex. 4:21; cf. Heb. 3:8.

Deceitfulness. Or, “delusion,” “fraud.” Men are lured into sin because it appears attractive and desirable. It was when Eve “saw” that what God had warned her not to eat appeared “good,” “pleasant,” and desirable (see on Gen. 3:6) that she stepped across the line that separates righteousness from sin. The sincere Christian will do well to beware when anything that God has warned against begins to appear attractive and desirable. When what God has said is all wrong begins to look all right the Christian may know that he stands on Satan’s enchanted ground, where things appear to be the opposite of what they really are.

14. Are made. Rather, “have become.”

Partakers of Christ. Or, “sharers in Christ.” The Christian shares in the victory and character of his blessed Lord, and may partake of the benefits and blessing that are his to enjoy as a result of Christ’s great sacrifice upon the cross and His ministry as high priest in the courts above. Union with Christ here and now is a precious experience (see on Gal. 2:20). This is the “rest” into which we are to enter.

If we hold. See on Matt. 24:13; Heb. 10:35, 36.

The beginning. After a time the bright faith that accompanies genuine conversion may tarnish, and the warm heart may become cool. Happy the Christian who preserves his first faith and ardor undiminished throughout life. See on v. 6.

Confidence. Gr. *hupostasis* (see on ch. 1:3), a different word from that translated “confidence” in ch. 3:6 (see comment there). To hold one’s confidence firm to the end is the opposite of hardening one’s heart (cf. vs. 8, 15).

Stedfast. Gr. *bebaios*, the word translated “firm” in v. 6.

Unto the end. See on Matt. 24:13; Rev. 2:10. The admonitions of the book of Hebrews were originally addressed to believing Jews of the apostolic church, and the messages of the book had their primary application to that group (see pp. 387, 389). It was commonly believed in the church of apostolic times that the promised return of the Lord would not be long delayed (see Additional Note on Rom. 13), but some 30 years or more had now passed since Christ ascended to heaven (see Vol. VI, p. 106) and there was still no sign of His immediate coming. What then doubtless seemed a long and unexpected delay may have found the faith of some on the wane, and perhaps the admonition to be “stedfast unto the end” was intended particularly for this wavering group. A clear conception of the work of Christ as our great high priest in the courts above would provide a firm foundation for their faith by making it possible for them to be “partakers of Christ” (Heb. 3:14). They must understand that a great work yet remained to be done, both for themselves and for others. There might be delay in the return of Jesus, but it was their privilege to enter into God’s “rest” *now* (see on vs. 7–11) by faith (see on v. 12). The admonition here given the apostolic church is particularly appropriate for the church today.

15. While it is said. The Christian is to remain “stedfast” throughout earth’s great day of salvation—“while it is said, To day.”

To day. For comment on v. 15 see on vs. 7, 8. For emphasis the quotation from Ps. 95 is here repeated in part.

16. Some. That is, those who rebelled at Kadesh-barnea (see on vs. 8–11). This is an understatement, for almost all of those who had been delivered from Egypt were involved in the rebellion and perished in the wilderness. However, the Greek of the first part of v. 16 may be translated: “Who ... rebelled?” In Greek v. 16 is obviously parallel in construction with vs. 17, 18, which fact implies that it should also be translated as a question.

When they had heard. Or, “even though they heard,” that is, even though they knew better.

Provoke. That is, rebel (see on v. 8).

Howbeit not all. Rather, “Indeed was it not all ...?” The first rhetorical question is answered by a second. The question implies that all who came out of Egypt rebelled. In a general sense this was true, though there were certain exceptions (see Num. 26:65; cf. Joshua 17:4; 22:13, 31, 32; Num. 25:7).

By Moses. That is, under Moses’ leadership.

17. Grieved. See on v. 10.

Forty years. See on v. 9.

Them that had sinned. That is, those who habitually rebelled (see on vs. 8–10).

Carcases. Or, “bodies.”

The wilderness. See on v. 8.

18. Sware he. See Num. 14:22–35.

Not enter into his rest. See on v. 11.

Them that believed not. Or, “them that were disobedient.”

19. So we see. The author concludes the line of thought introduced by the quotation begun in v. 7.

They could not enter. The generation of Israelites whose rebellion reached a climax at Kadesh-barnea was barred from entering the Promised Land because of a fundamental and fatal defect, not by an arbitrary act on the part of God or because Moses had failed to provide strong and able leadership. Moses had been “faithful in all his house” (vs. 2, 5), and could therefore not be charged with responsibility for their failure. Their lack of faith, demonstrated by their disobedience, made it impossible for them to enter.

Unbelief. The “unbelief” of the people stands forth in sharp and sad contrast with the faithfulness of Moses. Had the people been more like him they might have entered in. Like Moses, Christ also is “faithful” and cannot be held responsible for the failure on the part of some Christians to enter into the promised “rest” of soul (see on v. 11). This is the lesson drawn by the author from the experience of ancient Israel (see on ch. 4:1).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

5, 6 PP 480

7, 8 AH 358; CT 419; SC 34; 5T 216

11 1T 281

12 CSW 30; PP 294; SC 108; SR 126; TM 355; 1T 377; 2T 656; 5T 72, 234, 701

12–141T 429

12–168T 115

13 COL 44

14 AA 242, 518; CT 183; Ev 360; GW 128, 262, 269, 307; ML 313; PK 595; 6T 60, 250; 7T 108; 8T 11, 297; 9T 29

15 AH 358; CT 419; SC 34; 5T 216

19 Ev 696; GC 458

CHAPTER 4

1 *The rest of Christians is attained by faith.* 12 *The power of God’s word.* 14 *By our high priest Jesus the Son of God, subject to infirmities, but not sin,* 16 *we must and may go boldly to the throne of grace.*

1. Let us therefore fear. The same warning is sounded in 1 Cor. 10:1–12. Seemingly oblivious to their own grave danger, Christians may be prone to look critically at the obtuseness of the generation of Hebrews that failed to enter Canaan and of later generations that failed to enter into the spiritual “rest” God had planned for Israel as a nation (see on Heb. 3:11). Beginning with ch. 4:1 the writer proceeds to apply the lesson from the history of Israel in the wilderness to the experience of the Christian church in apostolic times. In principle, Christians today are in the same danger and are in need of the same admonition to faithfulness.

A promise being left. The promise of entering into God’s “rest” had not been withdrawn as a result of Israel’s repeated mistakes. The promise remains valid and is repeated to each successive generation.

His rest. See on ch. 3:11.

You. Specifically, the Christian Jews to whom the epistle was addressed. To be sure, the same is true of all Christians.

Come short. That is, fail as ancient Israel had failed to enter into God’s promised “rest.”

2. Gospel. Literally, “good news” (see on Mark 1:1). The statement may be rendered, “we have been gospelized, just as they also.” In OT times the gospel was “preached” through type and ceremony, in sacrifice and ritual, but it was the same gospel as that more recently proclaimed by Christ (see on Heb. 1:1, 2).

The word preached. Literally, “the word of hearing,” or “the heard word.”

Not profit them. Unless “the word preached” meets with faith on the part of the hearer, it cannot benefit him (see on Matt. 7:24–27). The effectiveness of Christ’s personal message, when here on earth, was likewise limited by the receptiveness of His hearers. Of Nazareth it is said that “he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief” (Matt. 13:58). The outworking of this principle is clearly illustrated in the parable of the Sower (see on Matt. 13:3).

Faith. See on chs. 3:12; 11:1.

3. We which have believed. That is, we Christians, meaning particularly converted Jews in the apostolic church.

Do enter. Or, “are entering.” The invitation is still valid; furthermore, some are accepting the invitation and entering into God’s “rest,” by faith.

Rest. Literally, “the rest,” meaning the very same “rest” to which reference has already been made in chs. 3:11, 18; 4:1 (see on ch. 3:11). The “rest” into which Christians, including converted Jews, enter is the very same spiritual “rest” into which God had invited ancient Israel to enter—the “rest” of soul that comes with full surrender to Christ and with the integration of the life into the eternal purpose of God (cf. Isa. 30:15; Jer. 6:16; Matt. 11:29).

As he said. The writer has just affirmed that, one by one, Christian believers are entering into the very same spiritual “rest” into which God formerly purposed that ancient Israel should enter, but from which they, as a nation, were now barred. Beginning at this point and continuing on through v. 8 he sets forth the evidence on which he bases his conclusion, a conclusion shocking to unconverted Jews and perhaps an enigma to many, if not most, converted Jews. In v. 9 he concludes this line of reasoning by reaffirming the validity of his major premise, namely, that admission to God’s “rest” is now through the Christian faith as it formerly was through Judaism.

The line of argument in vs. 3–8 may be summarized as follows:

1. God had sworn that literal Israel should not enter into His “rest.”
2. Nevertheless, God’s “works”—here His purpose for mankind—were “finished [“finalized”] from the foundation of the world.” In the beginning God had determined that men should enter into His “rest.” Thus, God’s oath barring ancient Israel from the promised “rest” might appear, on the surface, to be in conflict with His original purpose. Does the oath mean that God has rescinded His original design? Or does He pursue an objective until He secures it?
3. To prove that God achieves His purposes, the writer points (v. 4) to the “works” of creation. God set out to create this world; He completed His “works” of creation; His rest on the seventh day testifies to a completed creation. Note the words “finished” and “ended” in Gen. 2:1–3 and the emphasis on completion.
4. In Heb. 4:5 God’s oath that ancient Israel should not enter into His “rest” is repeated and placed in juxtaposition with the thought of v. 4, that God accomplishes what He sets out to do, as illustrated by the completed work of creation.

5. A completed creation, as testified to by God's rest on the seventh day of creation week, is evidence of the immutability of God's purposes. This is Paul's major premise. His minor premise is the fact that God had purposed that His chosen people should enter into His "rest," but that "they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief." This brings him to the conclusion that "it remaineth that some must enter therein" (v. 6).
6. As further evidence for the validity of his conclusion, the writer points again, in v. 7, to the words of Ps. 95, to the effect that the failure of earlier generations had neither altered God's original purpose nor withdrawn the original invitation. Compare the repeated invitations to the great banquet (see Luke 14:16–24).
7. In v. 8 he draws the further conclusion from the observation in v. 7 that God's mention of "another day" in the time of David is evidence that although Joshua had indeed given Israel "rest" in the literal land of Canaan (see on ch. 3:11), he had definitely not led them into the spiritual "rest" God intended them to enjoy.
8. From the entire line of argument set forth in vs. 3–8 the writer concludes it to be certain that "there remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God" (v. 9).

As I have sworn. The Greek here is identical with that of ch. 3:11, translated "so I swear."

Wrath. See on ch. 3:11.

If they shall enter. The Greek is identical with that of ch. 3:11, translated more accurately "they shall not enter."

Rest. See on ch. 3:11.

Although. The relationship between the two statements thus connected may be freely rendered as follows: "Despite the fact that His plans for this world were fixed at the beginning of time, God revoked His solemn promise to Israel of 'rest' in the Promised Land." It is here assumed that God does not change and that He will carry His plans through to completion (see Vol. IV, p. 34; Mal. 3:6). On the surface, the changelessness of God and the reversal of His promise to Israel appear to be in conflict. The one, the author implies, seems incompatible with the other. The resolution of this seeming dilemma is set forth in Heb. 4:4–8. The answer is that the changelessness of God's purpose has not been affected by the reversal of His promise to Israel. The conclusion is stated in v. 6, "therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein," and v. 9, "there remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God." The resolution of the dilemma proves what has already been stated in vs. 1–3, that God has "preached" the "promise . . . of entering into his rest," referred to in v. 2 as "the gospel," to Christians as formerly He did to literal Israel, and that believing Christians are verily entering into God's true, spiritual "rest."

Works. Here referring, not to the "works" of the natural world, but to God's purpose and plan for the man which at creation came into being. In other words, the "works" of creation are here conceived of as including the purpose of God in the creation of this earth and His plan for achieving that purpose. In fact, the material "works" of creation were actually subsidiary to the infinite purpose to which they were designed to contribute. In v. 4 the material "works" of creation week are specifically referred to.

Finished. Literally, "became," "came into being," meaning that they were "completed," or "finished," at that time and therefore not subject to future alteration. The material world as it came forth from the hands of the Creator was a perfect, completed

product (Gen. 1:31). In the same way the physical and biological laws that govern the natural world were also “finished,” that is, not subject to periodic modification or change. For instance, gravity still operates as it did at the beginning. And the law of genetics by which each plant and each animal reproduces after its kind (see on Gen. 1:12) has never been revoked or amended. The force of the argument in Heb. 4:3, 4 is that God’s original purpose for this earth to be the “rest,” or “abode” (see on ch. 3:11), of a race of righteous and happy beings, was an integral part of the work of creation week. The entrance of sin into the world did not nullify that beneficent purpose, inasmuch as the plan of salvation provided a means by which the original objective could yet be achieved, in spite of sin. This being so, the fact that the “gospel” (v. 2) did not “profit” ancient Israel (v. 2), and that God had, as a result, revoked His promise to them, could not possibly alter His fundamental purpose that “some must enter therein” (v. 6).

Foundation of the world. That is, creation.

4. In a certain place. The quotation is from Gen. 2:2.

Did rest. Gr. *katapauō*, “to stop,” “to cease,” “to rest.” Like the related noun *katapausis*, the verb *katapauō* denotes cessation from labor or other activity, together with the state or condition of inactivity that follows cessation (see on ch. 3:11). The equivalent Hebrew word, *shabath*, translated “rested” in Gen. 2:2 (see comment there)—the passage of Scripture here quoted—literally means “to cease” from labor or activity. *Katapauō* and *shabath* thus include both cessation from previous activity and the state of inactivity that follows cessation. Both aspects of meaning were true of God’s “rest” on that first Sabbath day; He ceased creating, and then continued in a state of inactivity so far as further creating was concerned. The “works” of creation were complete in every respect, and on that first Sabbath day, which He made a memorial of creation, God began His “rest” from creating this earth. So far as our world is concerned God has never been again taken up the work of creating then laid down, nor has He revoked or amended the laws then set up to govern the natural world. The writer of Hebrews here focuses attention on creation—including the material world, the laws that govern it, man, and God’s purpose for him and for the world—as a completed act not subject to later revision. The emphasis, then, here, is on God’s *cessation* from further creative activity.

The Sabbath of creation week was also the first full day of life for Adam. His experiences that day were a foretaste of the eternal “rest” that was in store for him should he remain loyal to God. Our observance of the seventh day of the week as the Sabbath testifies to our faith in the true God as the Creator of all things, and is a visible expression of that faith. It testifies also to our desire to live in harmony with His great eternal purpose for this world—implicit in the creation of this world and of man to live upon it—and with His purpose for us as individuals. See on Ex. 20:8; Eze. 20:12, 20; Isa. 58:13. As God’s original purpose for this world—His “rest”—remains unchanged, the seventh-day Sabbath, the day of “rest” He established to be a memorial of creation and thus a reminder of His purpose in the creation of the world, likewise remains unchanged. The observance of the seventh-day Sabbath thus testifies not only to faith in God as the Creator of all things, but also to faith in His power to transform the life and qualify men and women for entering into that eternal “rest” He originally intended for the inhabitants of this earth. The Sabbath thus bears witness both to the creative and to the sanctifying

power of God, and its observance is an acknowledgment of faith in His power to create and to re-create, or sanctify, individual lives.

The seventh day. See on Gen. 2:1–3.

All his works. In Gen. 2:2 reference is to the created “works” of the natural world as described in the preceding chapter.

5. In this place. That is, in Ps. 95:11.

Again. The statement is here quoted for the third time (cf. chs. 3:11; 4:3). The entire argument in chs. 3:7 to 4:10 revolves around God’s withdrawal of His invitation to enter into His “rest.” Here, the quotation from Ps. 95:11 is placed in juxtaposition with that from Gen. 2:2 (in Heb. 4:4), by way of explaining the significance of the reference in vs. 3, 4 to God’s “rest” on the seventh day of creation week. The writer has introduced this reference to God’s “works” being “finished” (see on v. 3) and to the fact that He “did rest” (v. 4), to prove that the withdrawal of His promise to ancient Israel was not absolute. In other words, the promise was not withdrawn altogether from all men, but only from those who “entered not in because of unbelief” (v. 6).

Rest. See on ch. 3:11; cf. on ch. 4:4.

6. Seeing therefore. Or, “since therefore.” Verse 6 states the conclusion to be drawn from the argument of vs. 3–5.

It remaineth. Or, “it is left over,” that is, the promise of entering into God’s “rest” remains valid even after it was withdrawn from ancient Israel.

That some must enter. Literally, “for some to enter.” Despite the perversity of those who “could not enter in because of unbelief” (ch. 3:19), God’s original plan for this earth to be inhabited by a race of righteous, happy beings will ultimately succeed. But those who do so must first enter, by faith, into His spiritual “rest,” the rest of the soul from sin and from its own efforts at salvation. It is the “rest” of soul to which reference is here made (see on ch. 3:11).

Therein. That is, into the “rest” of soul.

They to whom. See on v. 2.

First preached. That is, the first proclamation of the gospel invitation, mentioned in v. 2.

Entered not in. The generation of Israelites that left Egypt “entered not in” to the literal Land of Promise, and those who did enter into literal Canaan never, as a nation, entered into the spiritual “rest” God purposed for them (see on ch. 3:11; see Vol. IV, pp. 30–34).

Because of unbelief. See on ch. 3:19.

7. Again. In vs. 7, 8 the writer adds another point to prove his contention that a “rest” remains to the people of God.

He. That is, God, speaking to Israel through His servant David.

Limiteth. Literally, “appointed,” “set.”

A certain day. That is, God appointed the reign of David as another fitting and appropriate time when Israel might enter into His “rest” (see Vol. IV, p. 31). In the Greek it is clear that “to day” is the “certain day” referred to.

In David. That is, in one of the psalms of David—The 95th (see on Heb. 3:7, 8). Compare on Rom. 11:2.

After so long time. In the Greek it is clear that this refers to the word “saying.” It is not a part of the quotation from Ps. 95:7, 8. The era of David was “so long a time” after the era of Joshua—some three centuries.

As it is said. Rather, “as has been said,” that is, in ch. 3:7, 15.

To day. For comment on the quotation see on ch. 3:7. God’s promise of entering into His spiritual “rest,” originally extended to Israel when they came out of Egypt, remained valid centuries after it was first made. Although it had been neglected or rejected by successive generations ever since, it still remained valid in David’s day. Furthermore, God’s invitation to the nation of Israel in the days of David proves (ch. 4:8) that Joshua had not led Israel into the spiritual “rest” God purposed for them as a nation (see on ch. 3:7).

The “day” of salvation has been a long day. It began when Adam fell, and will end with the close of human probation. Sinners have given God abundant cause for terminating the “day” of grace (cf. PP 92; DA 37). But God is “merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness” (Ex. 34:6); He is “not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9).

8. For if. From the fact stated in v. 7, concerning the renewal of the invitation to enter into God’s “rest” in David’s time, the conclusion is drawn that Joshua had not given Israel “rest.” Otherwise, had Israel entered into the spiritual “rest” God intended for them as a nation, in the days of Joshua, He would not have repeated His invitation to that nation in the days of David, centuries later.

Jesus. That is, Joshua. The English name Jesus is a transliteration of the Greek, which in turn is a transliteration of the Hebrew equivalent of Joshua (see on Matt. 1:1).

Had given them rest. Joshua did, indeed, give Israel literal “rest” in Canaan, that is, he led them in a successful conquest and settlement of considerable portions of the land (see Vol. II, pp. 43, 44). But he did not lead them into the spiritual “rest” God designed for them because they were not willing (see on ch. 3:11).

Afterward. That is, after the days of Joshua, in the days of David.

Spoken. That is, the words of Ps. 95:7–11.

Another day. That is, the “day” of David, as v. 7 makes evident (see comment there). The fact that in the days of David and Solomon, Israel was in full possession of the land of Canaan makes it clear that the “rest” here referred to was not the occupation of literal Canaan but the glorious role God intended for the nation (see Vol. IV, pp. 26–30).

9. There remaineth therefore. See on v. 6. Verse 9 states the conclusion, already alluded to in v. 6. drawn from the line of argument begun in v. 3 to prove the assertions of vs. 1, 3. This line of argument may be set forth briefly as follows:

1. As originally made to ancient Israel God’s promised “rest” included: (a) permanent settlement in the land of Canaan, (b) a transformation of character that would make the nation a fit representative of the principles of God’s kingdom, and (c) the role of being God’s chosen instrument for the salvation of the world (see Vol. IV, pp. 26–30; see on ch. 3:11).
2. The generation to whom the promise of “rest” was originally made failed to enter the land of Canaan because of unbelief (see on ch. 3:19).
3. Joshua did led the next generation into the land that had been promised (see on ch. 3:11), but because they were spiritually stiff-necked he could not lead them into the spiritual “rest” God intended them to find there (see on ch. 4:7, 8).

4. The same promise had been repeated in the days of David (v. 7). This was evidence that Israel had not, at that time, entered into the spiritual “rest,” and also that their failure to do so in the days of Moses and Joshua had not invalidated the original promise.
5. The ultimate accomplishment of God’s purposes is certain, despite the failure of successive generations (see on vs. 3, 4).
6. The writer’s earnest plea to God’s people of apostolic times to “enter into that rest” (vs. 11, 16) is further evidence that the invitation remained valid and that God’s people, as a group, had not truly entered into that “rest” even in apostolic times.
7. Accordingly, the promise of, and invitation to enter into, God’s spiritual “rest” remains valid (vs. 6, 9), and Christians should “labour therefore to enter into that rest” (v. 11).

It should be noted that the “rest” that remained in Christian times was the spiritual “rest” originally promised to literal Israel (see on v. 3). Obviously, what remains must have been there to begin with.

Rest. Gr. *sabbatismos*, “a resting [from previous activity],” “a cessation [from previous activity],” later “a Sabbathkeeping,” from the verb *sabbatizōs*, “to rest,” “to cease,” “to keep Sabbath.” *Sabbatismos* appears elsewhere neither in the Bible nor in ancient literature until the 2d and 3d centuries, with the possible exception of a single occurrence in Plutarch *Moralia* 166A. Consequently, some have concluded that the writer of Hebrews coined the word as he wrote this passage (see Moulton and Milligan, *Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament*).

Sabbatismos and *sabbatizō* are Greek renderings of the Hebrew noun *shabbath* and its related verb *shabath*, respectively, and the meaning of the latter may be expected to cast light on the meaning of the former. *Shabbath* occurs 101 times in the OT, where it generally means “Sabbath,”—the seventh day of the week—or “week,” a period of seven days marked off by successive Sabbaths. It is also used of the sabbatical year (Lev. 25:6; 26:34, 43; 2 Chron. 36:21). The verb *shabath* occurs 70 times, 7 times with reference to the Sabbath rest and 63 times with reference to other kinds of rest. For instances of the latter usage see Gen. 8:22; Joshua 5:12; Neh. 6:3; Lam. 5:14; Isa. 14:4; 24:8; 33:8. The root meaning of the verb *shabath* is “to cease,” “to rest.” The word sometimes denotes the weekly Sabbath rest. But the noun *shabbath*, derived from *shabath*, commonly denotes the weekly Sabbath rest, and also the space of time marked off by successive Sabbaths, the week (Lev. 23:15), and the sabbatical years (ch. 26:35; etc.). It may be noted also that *shabbathon*, which is simply *shabbath* with the ending *-on*, is used of the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:31; 23:32), of the sabbatical year (Lev. 25:4, 5), of the Feast of Trumpets (Lev. 23:24), and of the first and last days of the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev. 23:39)—as well as of the seventh-day Sabbath.

Sabbatizō is used seven times in the LXX, once of the literal seventh-day Sabbath (Ex. 16:30), once of other sabbaths (Lev. 23:32), and five times of the land’s resting in the sabbatical year (Lev. 26:34, 35; 2 Chron. 36:21). In the LXX of Ex. 16:30; Lev. 23:32; 26:34, 35 *sabbatizō* is from the Hebrew *shabath*. Accordingly, the fundamental idea expressed by *sabbatizo* in the LXX is that of resting or ceasing from labor or other

activity. Hence usage of the related Greek and Hebrew words implies that the noun *sabbatismos* may denote either the literal Sabbath “rest” or simply “rest” or “cessation” in a more general sense. Thus, a linguistic study of the word *sabbatismos* in Heb. 4:9 leaves it uncertain whether the weekly Sabbath “rest” is here referred to, or simply “rest” or “cessation” in a general sense. Context alone can decide the matter.

The writer of Hebrews appears to use *katapausis* and *sabbatismos* more or less synonymously:

1. Because Joshua could not lead Israel into spiritual “rest” (*katapausis*, v. 8), a *sabbatismos* (v. 9) remains for Christians. Consistency seems to require that what remains be the same as what was there to begin with. Because Joshua did not lead literal Israel into spiritual “rest” would be no reason for the Christian to observe the Sabbath.
2. From vs. 1, 6 it is clear that what remains for the people of God in NT times is a *katapausis*; in v. 9 it is said that a *sabbatismos* remains. To declare that what remains for “the people of God” is the weekly Sabbath, is to declare that what Joshua failed to lead Israel into was the weekly Sabbath.
3. The fact that in the LXX, the Bible of the NT church, *katapauō* (Gen. 2:2, 3); Ex. 20:11) and *sabbatizō* (Ex. 16:30; Lev. 23:32) are used interchangeably to denote the seventh-day Sabbath, would tend to preclude the suggestion that the writer of Hebrews intended to make a distinction between the noun forms of these words in Heb. 3; 4.

It may be noted, further, that the Jews of Paul’s time, whether Christian or non-Christian, were punctilious in their observance of the fourth commandment. Certainly, in writing to Jews, the author of Hebrews would not consider it necessary to prove to *them* that Sabbathkeeping “remaineth.” If the conclusion of the extended argument beginning with ch. 3:7 is that Sabbathkeeping remains for the people of God, it would seem that the writer of Hebrews is guilty of a *non sequitur*, for the conclusion does not follow logically from the argument. There would have been no point in so labored an effort to persuade the Jews to do what they were already doing—observing the seventh-day Sabbath. Furthermore, in apostolic times the seventh-day Sabbath was observed by all Christians, Jew and Gentile alike, and any argument to prove the validity of the Sabbath in those early Christian times would have been pointless. Furthermore, it may be observed that the section of the book of Hebrews consisting of chs. 3 and 4 opens with an invitation to “consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus” (ch. 3:1), and closes with an earnest plea to “come boldly” before Him in order to “obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (ch. 4:16). What relationship a protracted argument designed to prove that Sabbath observance remains as an obligation to the Christian church might have to the declared theme of chs. 3 and 4—the ministry of Christ as our great High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary—is obscure indeed.

“The rest here spoken of is the rest of grace” (EGW Supplementary Material on Heb. 4:9; cf. GC 253). It is “the true rest of faith” (MB 1).

We enter into God’s “rest” when we “consider” Jesus (ch. 3:1) and listen to His voice (chs. 3:7, 15; 4:7), when we exercise faith in Him (ch. 4:2, 3), when we cease from our own efforts to earn salvation (v. 10), when we “hold fast our profession” (v. 14), and when we draw near to the throne of grace (v. 16). Those who would enter into this

experience must beware of “an evil heart of unbelief” (ch. 3:12), of hardening their hearts (chs. 3:8, 15; 4:7). They must strive to enter into God’s “rest” (ch. 4:11).

Those who enter into God’s “rest” will “hold fast” their “profession” (v. 14). They will “come boldly unto the throne of grace” to “obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (v. 16).

People of God. That is, Christians, who are now God’s chosen people as truly as the literal Israelites of old were in their day (Ex. 19:5, 6; 1 Peter 2:9, 10; see Vol. IV, pp. 35, 36).

10. He that is entered. Rather, “he who entered,” that is, any one of “the people of God” (v. 9). The Greek construction makes it clear that some have already entered into God’s “rest.”

Rest. Gr. *katapausis* (see on ch. 3:11). Although the word for “rest” in ch. 4:10 is different from that of v. 9 (*sabbatismos*), the context makes evident that both refer to the same thing (see on v. 9). The “rest” that remains (v. 9) is obviously the “rest” into which the believing Christian of v. 10 enters. The word “for” of v. 10 makes v. 10 contingent upon, and a conclusion drawn from, v. 9.

He also. That is, in addition to, or in the same manner as, God.

Hath ceased. Gr. *katapauō*, the same word translated “did rest” in v. 4 and “given ... rest” in v. 8 (see on ch. 3:11). Although the translation “hath ceased” obscures the relationship of the statement here made to other instances in which *katapauō* and *katapausis* appear in chs. 3 and 4, it is nevertheless more appropriate to the thought of v. 10 in that it stresses the idea of cessation from “works” rather than the continuing state of “rest” that follows upon cessation.

His own works. Upon entering into God’s “rests,” which consists of confidence in the saving grace of Jesus Christ, the Christian has of necessity *already* “ceased” from attempting to become righteous by his own works. The writer may also have in mind the Christian’s “rest” from the “works” of sin, works that prevented the generation of Israelites who were delivered out of Egypt from entering the Promised Land, and later generations from entering into God’s spiritual rest (see on chs. 3:8, 9; 4:8).

11. Let us labour. Or, “let us be zealous,” “let us make every effort.” Diligent, determined effort is necessary in order to enter into God’s “rest.”

Therefore. Verses 11–16 make a practical application of the principle established by the argument set forth in chs. 3:7 to 4:10, that a “rest” remains “to the people of God” (v. 9). This practical application to Christian experience consists of a threefold appeal: (1) to labor to enter into God’s “rest,” ch. 4:11; (2) to “hold fast our profession,” v. 14; and (3) to “come boldly unto the throne of grace,” v. 16. He who follows this admonition will enjoy the “rest” of soul God designs every sincere Christian to experience in this life.

Rest. Gr. *katapausis* (see on ch. 3:11).

Lest. He who strives wholeheartedly “to enter into that rest” thereby avoids the pitfall of unbelief into which ancient Israel fell.

Fall. The opposite of entering in. The fact that ancient Israel “fell in the wilderness” (ch. 3:17) implies that they had left Egypt intending to enter the Promised Land. When a man falls short of God’s “rest” the implication is that he had, at one time, purposed to enter into it. Halfhearted Christians are the ones who, today, “fall after the same example

of unbelief.” Counsel with respect to this problem is set forth in the parable of the Sower (see on Matt. 13:5–7).

The same example. That is, the example of the choice and fate of ancient Israel, first at Kadesh-barnea and later when they were settled in the Promised Land.

Unbelief. Or, “disobedience” (see on ch. 3:19).

12. For. At first sight vs. 12 and 13 may appear to have no direct connection with the theme of chs. 3 and 4. However, as the word “for” indicates, there is a close, logical relationship. Verses 12 and 13 explain how to avoid falling in unbelief (v. 11) and how to cease from one’s “own works” (v. 10), and set forth the means God has provided to enable His children to enter into His “rest.”

Word. Gr. *logos* (see on John 1:1). In the context the “word” here referred to is the “word” that was “preached” both to ancient Israel and to Christians (Heb. 4:2), particularly with respect to the invitation to enter into God’s “rest.” As v. 2 makes clear, this “word” is equated with the “gospel” message. In an extended sense the “word” of v. 12 may also be thought of as including all the writings of the Sacred Canon, inasmuch as the entire Bible is the “word” of God and sets forth the “gospel” of Jesus Christ.

Quick. That is, “living.” It takes a living and active force to create in man a new heart and to renew a right spirit within him (cf. Ps. 51:10). The “word” of God is living, and imparts life. Thus it was in the work of creation (Ps. 33:6, 9 and thus it is in the re-creation of the image of God in the soul of man. Christ, the incarnate Word, likewise has life in Himself (John 1:4, 12; 5:26). The “word of God” is the energizing force in conversion. The Christian is “born again, . . . by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever” (1 Peter 1:23).

Powerful. Gr. *energēs*, “effective,” “active,” “powerful” (cf. on 1 Cor. 12:6). Our word “energy” is derived from *energēs*. There is power in God’s “word” to transform sinners into saints.

Sharper. The nature of this sharpness is explained in the remainder of v. 12. The “word” of God is living, powerful, and sharp—fully able to accomplish His beneficent purposes for mankind (see Isa. 46:10; 55:10, 11).

Twoedged sword. See Eph. 6:17; see on Rev. 1:16.

The dividing asunder. Gr. *merismos*, “division,” “separation.”

Soul and spirit. Gr. *psuchē kai pneuma*, here, “life and breath.” On *psuchē* see on Matt. 10:28, and on *pneuma* see on Luke 8:55. This and the expression “joints and marrow” are used figuratively. The idea of dividing between “soul and spirit” and between “joints and marrow” describes the sharpness of God’s “word.” The value of the figure is based on the idea that “life” and “breath” are, for practical purposes at least, inseparable.

Joints and marrow. Also, presumably, in the figure, practically inseparable.

Discerner. Gr. *kritikos*, “able to discern,” “able to judge,” “able to discriminate,” that is, possessed of the quality of discernment or discrimination. The English word “critic” is derived from *kritikos*. By a favorable response to the impression made upon the conscience by God’s “word” the sincere Christian avoids falling into “unbelief,” ceases from “his own works,” and enters into God’s “rest” (vs. 6, 10, 11; cf. ch. 3:10, 12).

Thoughts and intents. Or, “thoughts and motives,” “thoughts and intentions” (RSV). Like a sharp blade separating “joints” from “marrow,” the clear principles of the “word of God” discern between good and evil thoughts, right and wrong motives.

Heart. That is, the mind.

13. Neither. Literally, “and.”

Creature. Gr. *ktisis*, any “thing created,” that is, constituted an entity in and of itself (see on Rom. 8:19), here, doubtless, the man of v. 12 whose thoughts and motives have been judged by God’s “word.” Men are able to judge only on the basis of a man’s words and acts, but God’s “word” goes back of man’s words and deeds to the place where they originate and judges a man on the basis of what goes on in the mind. “Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart” (1 Sam. 16:7).

Not manifest in his sight. Or, “hidden before him.” No man can hide his thoughts and motives from God. Try as he may, no man can run away from God (cf. Ps. 139:7–10).

All things. That is, the thoughts and motives of each “creature,” or man.

Naked and opened. Or, “uncovered and exposed.” Nothing can be concealed from God.

Him with whom we have to do. Literally, “with whom, for us, the reckoning,” that is, before whom we must give an account of ourselves. The realization that he must account for his words and deeds before so discerning a Judge may well sober the most callous of sinners; certainly it should make the professed Christian give the most diligent consideration to his thoughts and motives. Compare Rom. 14:10–12; 2 Cor. 5:10.

14. Then. That is, in view of the fact that “the word of God” discerns the nature of a man’s thoughts and motives, and that nothing concerning us is hidden from God (vs. 12, 13), and more particularly because we have an understanding and sympathetic “high priest” who has experienced the very same problems we have to face (chs. 2:17; 4:15).

High priest. See on ch. 2:17. Christ as our great High Priest is the theme of the book of Hebrews (see p. 390). Having introduced Christ in this role (ch. 3:1), chs. 3 and 4 develop the concept of our need for His ministry in the courts of heaven and of the experience of “rest” of soul that comes when we avail ourselves of it. Chapters 5 through 10 are concerned with various aspects of His ministry on our behalf. The Christian system of salvation by faith finds its center in the person of Christ as of our great High Priest.

Passed into. Literally, “passed through,” doubtless meaning through the atmospheric and the stellar heavens. See Acts 1:9; cf. on Gen. 1:8.

Jesus. See on Matt. 1:1.

Son of God. See on Luke 1:35; John 1:14; 3:16.

Hold fast. Gr. *krateō*, “to seize,” “to cling to tenaciously,” as for one’s life. Christ is worthy of our full faith and confidence, and we should permit nothing to enter in between ourselves and Him (see on Rom. 8:38, 39). See on Matt. 24:13; Heb. 10:35, 36.

Our profession. See on ch. 3:1.

15. Be touched. Gr. *sumpatheō*, “to sympathize,” literally, “to experience together with.” Having, through His human nature, experienced the weaknesses that are common to man—though without the least taint of sin—Christ is fully sympathetic with the problems and difficulties that the sincere Christian has to face. In fact, one purpose of the incarnation was that Deity might come so close to humanity as to experience the very

same problems and infirmities that are our common lot. By so doing, Christ qualified to become our High Priest and to represent us before the Father.

Infirmities. Or, “weaknesses.” The negative form in which the statement is expressed makes it even more impressive than a positive statement would have been.

All points. That is, every type of temptation. For comment on some of the respects in which Jesus was tempted see on Matt. 4:1–11; cf. DA 687–694. In some mysterious way that we cannot understand, our Lord experienced the full weight of every conceivable temptation the “prince of this world” (John 12:31) could press upon Him, but without in the least degree, even by a thought, responding to any of them (see John 14:30). Satan found nothing in Jesus that responded to his cunning devices (see DA 123). See on Heb. 2:18.

As we are. In all respects, sin excepted, He became one with us (see Vol. V, p. 918; see on Phil. 2:6–8).

Without sin. Herein lies the unfathomable mystery of the perfect life of our Saviour. For the first time human nature was led to victory over its natural tendency to sin, and because of Christ’s victory over sin we too may triumph over it (see on Rom. 8:1–4). In Him we can be “more than conquerors” (Rom. 8:37), for God “giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 15:57), over both sin and its wages, death (see on Gal. 2:20).

16. Let us therefore. Verse 16 states the practical conclusion of the entire line of thought presented in chs. 3 and 4. God’s “rest” of grace remains to the people of God (v. 9); “let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace.”

Boldly. Gr. *parresia*, translated “confidence” in ch. 3:6 (see comment there; cf. ch. 10:35). We come boldly, not because God is indebted to us, but because God freely offers His grace to all who seek it.

Throne of grace. That is, a throne characterized by the quality of grace (see on Rom. 3:24; 1 Cor. 1:3). Instead of vain, laborious attempts to earn salvation by a rigorous compliance with the requirements of the legal system of Judaism, or, for that matter, any system of righteousness by works, the Christian has the privilege of free access to the grace of a loving Father.

Obtain mercy. That is, secure forgiveness for sins (see on 1 John 1:9). At the throne of judgment all will find strict justice untempered by mercy. The sinner’s only hope is God’s mercy, offered while probation lingers.

Grace. Gr. *charis* (see on John 1:14; Rom. 1:7; 3:24; 1 Cor. 1:3).

To help in time of need. That is, in time of temptation. We need grace to endure hardship and suffering, and grace to overcome temptation. He who makes it a habit to come daily to the throne of grace for a fresh supply of God’s mercy and grace enters into the “rest” of soul God has provided for every sincere believer.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

3 Ed 130; PP 115

7 COL 281; FE 335, 367

9 EW 31; ML 358; 1T 155

9, 10 DA 207; 4T 247

10–12EW 25

11 5T 701

- 12 AA 562; Ev 148, 151, 236, 336, 698; GW 267, 383; TM 144; 2T 560; 7T 155; 8T 55, 315; 9T 143, 239
- 12, 13 CH 412; LS 322; TM 463; 3T 82; 4T 469, 583, 590; 5T 147
- 13 Ed 225; MB 67, 100; ML 10; PK 252; PP 217, 721; 1T 163, 468; 4T 646; 5T 485; 8T 272
- 14–16 DA 166; SR 155; TM 20, 355
- 15 CH 528; DA 24, 329, 389; Ed 78; FE 106, 276; GC 416; GW 266; MH 71, 164, 249, 424; ML 292, 300; MM 19; MYP 165; SC 37, 93; Te 120; TM 187, 391; 1T 391; 1T 391; 2T 201, 313, 438, 509; 3T 371; 4T 86, 294; 5T 346, 347, 422, 426, 639, 649; 8T 209, 287; 9T 68
- 15, 16 GC 347; 2T 509
- 16 GC 518; 7T 42

CHAPTER 5

2

1 *The authority and honour of our Saviour's priesthood.* 11 *Negligence in the knowledge thereof is reprov'd.*

1. High priest. The essential qualifications of the office of high priesthood are here set forth (vs. 1–4) to show that Christ possessed these qualifications (vs. 5–10).

Taken from among men. This phrase qualifies the term “high priest.” The author is here discussing human high priests. Later (vs. 5–10) he will discuss Christ as high priest.

Ordained. Gr. *kathisetēmi*, “to appoint,” “to put in charge.” The appointment is by God (see v. 4).

For men. Or, “in behalf of men.” The service of the high priests was in behalf of men, as mediators between them and God.

Things pertaining to God. See on ch. 2:17.

May offer. This was doubtless the most significant function of the high priestly office.

Gifts. Gr. *dōra*, in the LXX denoting specifically the “meat offerings” (Heb. *minchoth*, sing. *minchah*, see on Lev. 2:1), though in Gen. 4:4 the word is used of the offering of Abel.

Sacrifices. Gr. *thusiai* in the LXX generally denoting blood sacrifices, though not without exception. In Gen. 4:5 *thusiai* is used of the bloodless offering of Cain. It is doubtful that any distinction should be sought between *dōra* and *thusiai*. The two terms are probably used together as a generic phrase denoting the whole round of offerings and sacrifices involved in the Jewish ceremonial system.

For sins. The gifts and sacrifices had to do with the sins of the people. The ceremonial system was designed to teach men God's abhorrence of sin and His plan for dealing with it.

2. Who can. Literally, “being able.” The basis of his ability is his own frail humanity.

²Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Heb 2:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

Have compassion. Gr. *metriopatheō*, “to moderate one’s feelings,” “to deal gently with,” “to feel gently toward.”

The ignorant. Gr. *agnoeō*, “not to know,” “not to understand,” “to be ignorant,” “to do wrong,” “to sin in ignorance.” The last meaning seems to be particularly appropriate here. Those who sin through ignorance need to be gently dealt with inasmuch as their offense is not willful. They need enlightenment and encouragement. They are unwitting offenders and should not be classed with those who commit the same offenses with full knowledge of the evil of their course.

That are out of the way. Rather, “those who are being led astray,” or “those who are being deceived.”

Compassed with infirmity. The high priest was subject to like passions as his people were. His personal, experiential knowledge of the weaknesses and temptations of the flesh led him to have a sympathetic understanding of the weaknesses and failures of others, and qualified him to give counsel and help to those in temptation. Compare on chs. 2:17; 4:15.

3. By reason hereof. Or “on account of this,” that is, on account of the fact that he himself was beset with infirmity. He had the same propensities toward sin as had his people, and the ancient ceremonial system required him to offer sacrifice for his personal sins.

Ought. Gr. *opheilō*, “to be obligated.” The obligation was based on the requirements of the ceremonial law (see Lev. 16:6; cf. ch. 4:3). The fact that the high priest was required to offer sacrifices for his own sins would lead him to have compassion on the people. How could he blame others when he himself committed the same, or perhaps worse, wrongs? He needed to maintain a humble attitude, and regard with deep compassion those who failed. As a man considers his own weaknesses, he is not likely to condemn others mercilessly. Compare Gal. 6:1.

For the people. The reference is probably to the Day of Atonement, when the high priest made “an atonement for the children of Israel” (Lev. 16:34).

For himself. See above under “ought.”

4. Honour. Gr. *timē* “honor,” “respect,” “a place of honor,” “office.” Here “office” or “place of honor” would be suitable meanings. The office of high priest was a position of honor.

Called of God. The office of high priest was by divine appointment. It was God who selected Aaron for the position (Ex. 28:1). The succession in the family of Aaron was also presumably ordered by God as implied in the text under consideration. In the course of Israel’s history many priests held the office who were unworthy of their position, but the author is here not concerned with this. It is his purpose to set forth divine appointment as an essential qualification of the true high priesthood, in order to show that Christ met this as well as other requirements (Heb. 5:5–10).

5. So also Christ. Verses 5–10 show that Christ met the qualifications for high priesthood set down in vs. 1–4. These are: (1) the high priest must share humanity (vs. 1–3); (2) he must be appointed by God (v. 4).

Glorified not himself. Christ did not assume the honor of the high priest’s office uninvited. It was God who appointed Him. Compare John 8:54.

Thou art my Son. See on ch. 1:5. The citation is here given to prove that Christ's exalted position was by His Father's appointment. See on Acts 13:32, 33.

6. *He.* That is, God, the speaker in v. 5.

Thou art a priest. A citation from Ps. 110:4, here quoted as evidence that God had appointed His Son to priestly office. The priesthood of Christ is fully discussed in subsequent chapters (Heb. 7–10).

For ever. In contrast with earthly high priests, who because of death held office for limited periods.

Order. Gr. *taxis*, “fixed succession,” “order,” “position,” “nature,” “quality,” “post,” “rank.” Here the definitions “fixed succession” or “order” do not appear suitable, for Melchisedec had no line of successors. Preferable are definitions like “quality” or “nature,” “manner.” The passage may be rendered, “according to the nature of Melchisedec.” In Ps. 110:4 the Hebrew word for “order” is *dibrah*, which means “manner.” This supports the idea that succession is not the point of comparison here intended.

Melchisedec. A transliteration of the Gr. *Melchisedek*, which in turn is from the Heb. *Malki-šedeq*. The spelling “Melchizedek” (Gen. 14:18) is a transliteration of the Hebrew. For the identity of Melchisedec see on Heb. 7:2.

7. *Who.* That is, Christ (see on v. 5). The grammatical construction is somewhat involved. The principal verb of the sentence is “learned” (v. 8), and the principal thought, Christ learned obedience.

Days of his flesh. That is, the period of his earthly life (see on John 1:14).

When he had offered up. That is, by offering up, or, in offering up. The idea of the passage is that in offering up his prayers and supplications and in being heard Jesus learned obedience. The obedience was learned *by* these experiences, not following them.

Prayers. Gr. *deēseis*, “petitions,” “entreaties,” “prayers,” from the verb *deomai*, “to ask,” “to beg as a favor.”

Supplications. Gr. *hiketēriai*, used of olive branches held in the hands of suppliants, from which custom the word came to denote the earnest supplications themselves.

Strong crying and tears. This seems to refer especially to the experience in the Garden of Gethsemane. Although the gospel writers do not mention tears in connection with the agony there experienced, these can easily be imagined. Some believe the author is referring also to the experience on the cross. See Matt. 26:36–44; 27:46; Mark 14:32–41; 15:34; Luke 22:39–44; 23:46.

Able to save. The fact that the Father was able to save the Son from death made the trial so much the greater. The humanity of the Son of God shrank from the horror of separation from the Father. While He was willing to go through the deep waters alone, He prayed earnestly to be exempted from drinking the cup if there was another way. But there was not other way, and so He drank it.

From death. Literally, “out of death,” which may imply that Christ would experience death, but that God would save Him out of it, that is, raise Him.

Was heard. This statement has caused some difficulty, because of the fact that Christ was not saved from death; and yet the assertion is made that Christ “was heard.” If the phrase “from death” be understood as explained above, the passage presents no difficulty.

If “from death” be understood as signifying that Christ would not experience death, then the following explanation is pertinent: The text does not say that Christ asked to be saved from death, but that He prayed to Him who is able to save Him from death; and the accounts in the Synoptics clearly state that Christ prayed that “if it were possible, the hour might pass from him” (Mark 14:35). In Matthew He is quoted as praying, “O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done” (Matt. 26:42). These statements can be understood only in the light of Christ’s desire to be spared from death, if it were possible and consistent with God’s will.

Had Christ in His prayer peremptorily demanded that He be saved from death, then it must be admitted that His request was denied. But Christ did not demand this. When He added the words of submission, “Thy will be done,” He cleared the way for the Father to do as He thought best, and pledged Himself to accept His decision. As Christ’s will was also the Father’s will, whatever He should decide would likewise be Christ’s decision. In this way Christ *was* heard, and in this way every prayer is heard that ascends to God in submission to His will.

Let no Christian think that his prayer is not heard. Every earnest prayer *is* heard, even though it be not answered favorably. No is as definite an answer as Yes; though often the answer is neither Yes nor No, but Wait. Submission to the will of God is the great secret of effective prayer.

In that he feared. Gr. *apo tēs eulabeias*, “from his piety,” that is, because of his piety, or from his anxiety. Commentators are divided as to whether *eulabeia* should be regarded as reverent fear or as ordinary fear and anxiety. If as ordinary fear, the passage would mean, “he was heard [that is, delivered] from his anxiety.” However, scriptural usage of *eulabeia* and its related forms favors the definition “piety,” or “reverent fear.” For example, *eulabeia* is rendered “godly fear” in ch. 12:28. Compare the use of the adjective *eulabēs* in Luke 2:25; Acts 2:5; 8:2, and of the verb *eulabeomai*, in Acts 23:10; Heb. 11:7.

8. Though he were a Son. This has reference to the divinity of Christ. Though He took humanity, Christ was nevertheless divine. The two natures were mysteriously blended in Him (see on John 1:14). The resurrection especially declared Him to be the Son of God (see on Rom. 1:4), but prior to that event He was already Son (see on Luke 1:35). The thought of the passage is that though He was divine, He learned “obedience by the things which he suffered.”

Learned. Gr. *manthanō*, “to learn,” “to come to know,” “to come to understand.” Christ came to understand what obedience meant. For Him it entailed suffering and death; He “became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Phil. 2:8). He came to this earth to do the will of God (Heb. 10:9), and from this course He could not be swerved. Doing His Father’s will involved Jesus in constant conflict, but not once did He yield to temptation. Knowing by personal experience the involvements of human obedience to the divine will, He is able “to succour” those who are tempted to swerve from the path of obedience (ch. 2:18).

Sometimes the question is raised how it could be said that Christ, who is perfect and at every moment has been perfect, needed to learn obedience. Two observations may help to answer this query: (1) As far as His earthly life is concerned Christ developed like

other human beings. He “increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man” (see on Luke 2:52). He learned by observation and experience as do others. (2) Though as God prior to the incarnation Christ was omniscient, yet He did not know *by experience* the problems confronting men as they seek to render obedience to God. By becoming man and by facing the temptations of life as a man, Christ gained this knowledge. He thus met one of the essential qualifications for the high priesthood, namely that the appointee belong to the human family (see on Heb. 5:1–3).

9. Being made perfect. Gr. *teleioō* (see on ch. 2:10). The verb form may be translated “having been made perfect,” or “having been completed.” The thought is that of having attained a goal, of having finished a task. Christ achieved that which He had set out to accomplish through His humanity. He had demonstrated His obedience to the point of death, and was perfected. He was now qualified for the office of high priest (see on ch. 5:1–3).

Author. Gr. *aitios*, “cause,” “source.” It was the fulfillment of the plan laid before the foundation of the world with regard to His incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and glorification, that made Him the source of salvation. See Acts 4:12.

That obey him. Obedience is directly involved in the plan of salvation, not that salvation is earned by obedience, but that faith leads to obedience. For the relationship of works to faith see on Rom. 3:31.

10. Called. Gr. *prosagoreuō*, “to greet,” “to salute,” “to name,” “to designate.” The word occurs only here in the NT. The usual word for call is *kaleō*, the word used in v. 4. *Prosagoreuō* refers to Christ’s being formally designated by God as high priest.

High priest. The Christian world in general is acquainted with Christ as “the Lamb of God” that “taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). It is acquainted with Christ as the crucified One, who gave Himself for us that we might be saved. But not all Christians are acquainted with Christ as the high priest who ministers His blood in the sanctuary above. Yet without that ministry the plan of salvation would be ineffective. In the institution of the Passover in Egypt God commanded the Israelites not simply to slay the lamb, but to put its blood on the doorposts (see Ex. 12:7–13). So in the antitype the blood of Christ, our Passover (1 Cor. 5:7), is not simply shed, it is *ministered* for us in heaven above by our great High Priest, as a vital part of God’s plan to save us.

Order of Melchisedec. See on v. 6.

11. Of whom. Or, “concerning which.” The Greek may be understood either way. “Of whom” would apply to Melchisedec, concerning whom the author says many things (see ch. 7). “Concerning which” would apply to the high priesthood of Christ after the manner of Melchisedec.

Hard to be uttered. Or, “hard to explain.” The author realized the difficulty of his subject, and that spiritual perception was needed on the part of the church. It is evident that he was well acquainted with his readers, or he would not dare speak of them as he does.

Dull of hearing. Or, “slow [or “sluggish”] of hearing.” This condition makes it difficult for the author to present his subject. His difficulty is twofold: a hard subject and dull hearers. The limitation of the student is the limitation of the teacher.

12. For the time. Rather, “on account of the time [elapsed].”

Ought to be teachers. These were not new converts, or this statement could not be true. But they had apparently not progressed as far and as rapidly as it was their privilege to do.

Teach you again. They had been taught before, but they had forgotten their lessons and needed to be taught again. The same condition exists today. Old and young waste time on that which is not essential, fail to improve their opportunities, and need to learn again the first principles of Christianity. This is a lamentable condition.

Principles. Gr. *stoicheia*, “elements [of learning],” “fundamental principles” (see on Gal. 4:3; Col. 2:8).

Oracles. Gr. *logia* (see on Acts 7:38; Rom. 3:2).

Milk ... strong meat. By these are indicated the fundamental principles of the gospel and the advanced principles. For this figure see on 1 Cor. 3:1, 2. God wants all to grow up into the full stature of manhood in Christ, and “henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine” (see on Eph. 4:14).

13. Unskillful. Gr. *apeiros*, “unacquainted with,” “unskilled.” The one who is *apeiros* is not necessarily unacquainted altogether with the Word of righteousness, but his knowledge is limited and his spiritual growth retarded. As men become skillful in a trade or profession, so God wants us to become skillful and experienced in the use of the Word.

Word of righteousness. Here, doubtless, a general term synonymous with “gospel.”

Babe. Here a figure of underdevelopment (cf. on Eph. 4:14).

14. Strong meat. See on v. 12. The author is preparing his readers to receive advanced instruction in certain matters relating to the true position of Christ. He wishes to stir up his readers to a greater degree of interest in that which he is about to impart. He thinks the time has come for them to take a forward step, throw off their infantile habits, and become adults.

Them that are of full age. Gr. *teleioi*, “mature” (see on Matt. 5:48).

Use. Gr. *hexis*, “exercise,” “practice.”

Senses. Gr. *aisthētēria* literally, “the organs of sense,” figuratively, “the senses,” here the faculties for making the proper moral decisions. The passage may be translated, “having the faculties trained to distinguish between good and evil.”

Exercised. Gr. *gumnazō*, “to train,” “to exercise.” Our word “gymnasium” is derived from this root (cf. on 2 Peter 2:14).

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- 1, 2 CSW 179; CT 196
- 2 DA 297, 499; Ed 270, 294; 2T 509
- 2, 3 FE 268
- 7 ML 31; 2T 508; 3T 379; 7T 42
- 9 1T 370; 3T 18
- 12 Ev 355; FE 266; 7T 24
- 13, 14 Ev 200, 252, 300

CHAPTER 6

1 *He exhorteth not to fall back from the faith, 11 but to be steadfast, 12 diligent, and patient to wait upon God, 13 because God is most sure in his promise.*

1. Therefore. The author continues the exhortation he began in ch. 5. His readers have been subsisting on milk when they should have had stronger food. They were still children, and were satisfied to remain so. He wants them to go on to the deeper things of God and not continue to be satisfied with their present attainments.

Principles. Literally, “the beginning,” denoting the elementary principles of the doctrine of Christ. These are defined in the latter part of v. 1 and in v. 2.

Perfection. Or, “maturity.”

Foundation. It is well to lay a good foundation, but the one who does not build on it will never have a finished structure. The author proposes to leave the first principles, taking for granted that the people are well grounded in them. In leaving them he does not forsake them; he leaves them in the same sense in which a builder leaves the foundation when he proceeds with the structure itself.

The author enumerates six foundation principles upon which Christianity is built. He merely mentions them and does not discuss them, as he feels this has already been well done.

Repentance. Gr. *metanoia*, “a change of mind” (see on 2 Cor. 7:9). This is the first in the list of foundation principles. He who truly repents evaluates his past actions, weighs them in the moral scale, repudiates all unworthy motives and acts, and by the grace of God exchanges the old carnal mind for the mind of Christ. He is transformed by the renewing of his mind (Rom. 12:2). Repentance is not primarily an emotional experience; it is rather a deep process affecting the mind and life, issuing in a new creature” so that “old things are passed away,” and “all things are become new” (2 Cor. 5:17).

Dead works. Probably “dead” in the sense of being sinful. The sinner is “dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph. 2:1). These are works he knows he must lay off before he becomes a Christian. Compare Heb. 9:14.

Faith toward God. This is second in the list of fundamental principles. Repentance is *from* dead works, faith is *toward* God. Repentance presents the negative, faith, the positive, side of the Christian mind. The old must be abandoned, the new must be grasped. Repentance from dead works expresses a complete change of mind—a new spiritual attitude—which leads the believer to forsake dead works and turn toward God.

These two, repentance and faith, are placed first among the foundation principles of the gospel. If a man is thoroughly converted, if he has turned from his past life and renounced dead works, if he has turned in faith toward God, he has a solid foundation that will not fail him when the evil days come.

2. Baptisms. Gr. *baptismo*i (sing. *baptimos*). This is not the usual word for Christian baptism, which is *baptisma* (cf. on Matt. 3:6). *Baptismos* occurs only here and in Mark 7:4, 8; Heb. 9:10. Important textual evidence may also be cited (cf. p. 10) for its reading in Col. 2:12. In Mark 7:4, 8; Heb. 9:10, the word has reference to the many acts of purification in the Jewish ritual. This, however, could not be its primary meaning here, since the regulations concerning these washings would not be considered a fundamental doctrine of Christianity. It is possible, however, that the author is thinking of Christian baptism but is employing the term *baptismo*i as representing the rite in its most elemental aspects.

Some see in *baptismoī* a reference to the two baptisms in the Christians church, baptism by water and baptism by the Spirit. Concerning the two John the Baptist said, “I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost” (Mark 1:8). After His resurrection Jesus said, “John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence” (Acts 1:5; cf. John 3:5; Acts 11:16; 1 Cor. 12:13). However, if these two forms of Christian baptism were primarily in the author’s mind we would expect him to use the form *baptismata* instead of *baptismoī*, especially since the latter term occurs later in the epistle with a clear reference to ceremonial washings (Heb. 9:10). Therefore the explanation that regards *baptismoī* as representing Christian baptism in its most elemental aspects seems preferable.

Laying on of hands. This is the fourth of the fundamental doctrines being presented. The gesture of laying on of hands on OT times signified the transference of blessing and office (see Gen 48:9–14; Num. 8:10, 11, Deut. 34:9). In the NT the same custom was followed. Particularly significant was the apostles’ laying on of hands following baptism, an act by which believers received the Holy Spirit (see Acts 8:17, 18; 19:6). Since the author has immediately before mentioned “baptisms,” he probably had this particular function in mind. For the gesture in ordination see Acts 6:6; 1 Tim. 4:14.

Resurrection of the dead. For the importance of this doctrine see on 1 Cor. 15.

Eternal judgment. The doctrine of the judgment occupies a prominent place in both the OT (cf. Ps. 9:3–8, 15, 16; Dan. 7:9, 10; cf. Jude 14, 15), and the NT (see Matt. 12:41, 42; 25:31–46; Luke 11:31, 32; 2 Cor. 5:10). It should be noted that with these six principles Jewish Christians would have no difficulty, for these are all set forth in the OT. The danger confronting these Christians lay in contentment with what they had brought over from Judaism and a reluctance to accept wholeheartedly the tenets of Christianity.

3. Will we do. Important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 10) for the reading “let us do.” The author encourages his readers to go beyond (v. 1) the elementary principles of the gospel for the present, hoping and believing that they are well understood. He would leave these fundamentals in the sense that a child leaves his first A-B-C book when he progresses to his first reader. But in reality no child, nor the wisest scientist, will ever leave the alphabet behind. He will always use these 26 letters. So with these foundation principles; they are not discarded, they are built upon. The author would go on from primary to deeper truths.

If God permit. Compare on Acts 18:21; 1 Cor. 4:19; cf. 1 Cor. 16:7.

4. It is impossible. Verses 4–6 deal with the fate of those who fall away from God. The question at issue is the possibility of restoring such as have had a deep Christian experience but have fallen away. Can they be restored to Christian fellowship and again receive mercy? This passage has been the source of great perplexity and discouragement to many. It seems to teach that those who fall away from the faith are irrevocably lost.

Among the various views that have been held two are worthy of consideration. (1) That the apostasy here spoken of is the commission of the unpardonable sin (see on Matt. 12:31, 32), since this is the only form of apostasy that is hopeless. (2) That the passage correctly understood does not teach the absolute hopelessness of the apostasy here described but a conditional hopelessness (see on Heb. 6:6). Most commentators accept the former view, although the latter has merits and can be defended on the basis of the Greek.

The idea that repentance was impossible under certain circumstances was current among the Jews. They taught, for example, that such was the case of the man who sinned wantonly, trusting in future repentance: “If one says: I shall sin and repent, sin and repent, no opportunity will be given to him to repent. [If one says]: I shall sin and the Day of Atonement will procure atonement for me, the Day of Atonement procures for him no atonement” (Mishnah *Yoma* 8. 9, Soncino ed. of the Talmud, p. 423). They taught also that repentance was impossible for the man who led the multitude into sin: “Whoever causes the many to be righteous, sin occurs not through him; and whoever causes the many to sin, they do not afford him the faculty to repent” (Mishnah *Aboth* 5. 18, Soncino ed. of the Talmud, p. 71). Of interest also is a passage from the Book of Sirach: “Say not, ‘I have sinned, but what happened unto me?’ For Jahveh is longsuffering. Count not upon forgiveness, That thou shouldst add sin to sin. And say not, ‘His mercies are great, He will forgive the multitude of mine iniquities’; For mercy and wrath are with Him, And His indignation abideth upon the ungodly. Delay not to turn unto Him, And put (it) not off from day to day; For suddenly doth His wrath come forth, And in the time of vengeance thou shalt perish” (ch. 5:4–7; R. H. Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, vol. 1, p. 332).

Enlightened. Or, “illuminated” (see on Eph. 1:18).

Tasted. Gr. *geuomai* (see on ch. 2:9). The meaning “to experience” seems to apply here. Compare Ps. 34:8.

Heavenly gift. That is, the gift of salvation or perhaps a special gift of the Spirit (Rom. 5:15; 1 Cor. 12).

Partakers of the Holy Ghost. That is, they have received an outpouring of the Spirit either as the divine energy in conversion (John 3:5) or through the impartation of some special gift (1 Cor. 12).

5. Tasted. Gr. *geuomai* (see on v. 4). The word suggests more than a superficial acquaintance. It suggests study, meditation, and acceptance.

Powers. Gr. *dunamis* (see on Acts 1:8), here probably meaning “miracles,” as in Heb. 2:4. In the early apostolic age many miracles were wrought, deliverances effected, the sick healed, and even the dead restored to life (Acts 3:6–9; 5:15, 16; 6:8; 8:6; 12:7; 20:9–12). To taste these powers is to have a part in them, either as the subject of healing or of some other miracle, or as having performed them, or as having witnessed them. Those here brought to view had seen the mighty power of God in doing that which it was not possible for man to perform.

World to come. Or, “coming age,” here probably a reference to the future age, of which the Gospel Era with its miracles was a foretaste, or an earnest.

These different qualifications are enumerated to show that these persons had had a genuine experience. They had witnessed God’s mighty power in their own lives and in the lives of others. Much had been entrusted to them, and much might be expected.

6. If they shall fall away. Or, “having fallen away.” The extent of the fall may be judged by the privileges enjoyed. The context suggests a major apostasy.

To renew ... unto repentance. That is, to bring about a desire for repentance. The case is not that of a man seeking to return to God, finding repentance impossible, but that

of a man with no desire to return to the experience from which he has fallen away. For the meaning of repentance see on v. 1.

Seeing. The interpretation of the passage depends to a large extent upon the translation here. The Greek has simply the participle for “crucifying.” The word “seeing” is supplied in the KJV in an endeavor to show the relationship between the participle and the rest of the sentence. But it is possible to supply other words. The Greek participial construction may express time, cause, condition, or purpose. Some commentators suggest that the sense here is temporal and that the passage should be rendered, “It is impossible to renew while they keep on crucifying the Son of God.” Such a temporal use of the participle is common. If adopted, the passage teaches that those who fall away cannot be restored as long as they continue unrepentant.

If the causal use of the participle (“seeing,” “since,” “because,” etc.) be adopted, then the passage should be treated as dealing with the unpardonable sin, for only those guilty of this sin cannot be renewed to repentance. This sin ordinarily manifests itself in continued resistance to the call of God and the wooing of the Spirit. It consists in a hardening of the heart, till there is no longer any response to the voice of God. Hence, a person who has sinned against the Spirit has no remorse, no feeling of sorrow for sin, no desire to turn from it, and no conscience that accuses him. If one has a sincere desire to do right, he may confidently believe that there is still hope for him.

This should be a source of comfort to the discouraged soul, but it is by no means to be used as an incentive to carelessness. God desires to comfort the disconsolate, but He would also warn His people of the danger of reaching the point of no return.

Crucify ... afresh. Gr. *anastauroō*, “to crucify,” “to crucify afresh.” In non-Biblical writings *anastauroō* means simply “to crucify,” but in the present passage the context favors the figurative meaning “to crucify again,” or “to crucify afresh.” Such a meaning is especially significant since those addressed are Jewish Christians whose race had been guilty of crucifying the Son of God the first time (Acts 3:14, 15). Now if these Christians should reject their Saviour and return to their former ways, it would be as if they crucified Him anew.

Put him to an open shame. Or, “hold him up to contempt.” This phrase may be rendered: “as long as they keep on holding up Christ to contempt” (see above under “seeing”).

7. Drinketh in the rain. The picture here is that of the earth, which receives rain from heaven, and in return brings forth herbs and food for man. This is an illustration of the human heart, which receives the blessed rain and dew from heaven and in return should produce fruit to the glory of God.

Dressed. Literally, “cultivated,” “tilled.”

Blessing from God. That is, in its productiveness.

8. Thorns and briers. God had blessed the Hebrew Christians, and He expected them to bring forth fruit. If with all the blessings He had given them and with all the light that had illuminated their path, they still refused to bring forth fruit, or if they fell away, there would be but one end for them: separation from God and oblivion.

Nigh unto cursing. Compare Gen. 3:17, 18. The author does not imply that the Hebrew Christians are already in the hopeless state described in Heb. 6:4–6. But without fruitfulness such a state is “nigh.” They are duly warned against adopting a course that will result in their rejection (cf. chs. 2:1–3; 10:26–29).

Burned. Compare Deut. 29:23.

9. Beloved. This is the only occurrence of this affectionate term in Hebrews.

Better things. The author has spoken sharply to his readers by way of warning and admonition. Now he soothes them. He is persuaded that they have no intention of rejecting God's call, and yet they need admonition. They are in danger of drifting, of not giving heed to the things they have heard (ch. 2:1–3). They are in danger of repeating the mistake of Israel of old of not entering in (ch. 4:1). They have not progressed or grown satisfactorily, but are still babes when they should be full grown (ch. 5:11–14). And in the present instance he is telling them that there is real danger of their losing out. He softens this somewhat by saying that he is persuaded of better things of them, and yet he leaves the impression that their condition is serious and they must beware lest they lose out on eternal life.

That accompany salvation. Or, “that belong to salvation.” The author does not here state what these things are, but from what he has already written, the readers could not fail to know.

10. God is not unrighteous. An appeal to the justice and equity of God.

To forget. God does not forget any act of kindness, however small. It is all recorded, and will be taken into account in the day of judgment. A cup of cold water is not forgotten (Matt. 10:42); the tear of sorrow or sympathy is remembered and recorded (cf. Ps. 56:8).

Labour. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the omission of this word.

Toward his name. That is, toward Him. “Name” here, as often, stands for person (cf. on Ps. 7:17).

Ministered to the saints. This may seem a small matter to mention, when there are so many weightier matters that call for attention. Help in time of distress, a night's lodging, food and drink for the wayfarer, hospitality and kindness—these are all recorded in the book of God. And God is not forgetful of such acts of kindness (cf. Matt. 10:42; 25:31–40).

11. Desire. Gr. *epithumeō*, “to long for earnestly.”

Diligence. Gr. *spoudē* (see on Rom. 12:8).

Full assurance of hope. Compare Col. 2:2. The believers to whom the epistle is addressed had been zealous in entertaining the saints. They needed to continue their ministrations, but they should be as diligent in other matters relating to salvation.

Unto the end. It is good to begin; it is better to finish. However good a beginning may be, it is useless unless it is continued unto the end. God's promise is that “he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it” (Phil. 1:6). Too many who begin do not finish.

12. Slothful. Gr. *nōthroi*, “lazy,” “sluggish.” Connected with hearing, *nōthroi* is translated “dull” in ch. 5:11. Slothfulness, or laziness, is the opposite of diligence. To many, religion is a casual matter that can be attended to at leisure. It is not first on their program, but near the end of the list. For them everything else must be done first, and God may have what is left. This needs to be reversed.

Followers. Literally, “imitators.”

Faith. This essential qualification is dealt with at length in ch. 11 (see comment there).

Patience. Gr. *makrothumia*, “steadfastness,” “endurance,” “patience.”

Inherit the promises. Compare ch. 4:1.

13. God made promise to Abraham. Abraham is set forth as an example of one who by patient endurance “obtained the promise” (v. 15).

Swear by no greater. See on v. 16.

Sware by himself. A reference to Gen. 22:16, 17.

14. Blessing I will bless. Rather, “surely I will bless.” The phrase “blessing I will bless” translates literally a Hebrew idiom that gives strong emphasis to the action of the verb.

Multiplying I will multiply. Rather, “I will surely multiply” (see above under “blessing I will bless”).

15. Patiently endured. See on v. 12. Abraham is set forth as an example for others to imitate.

He obtained the promise. That is, in the birth of Isaac. This son of promise was an earnest of the multitude of descendants through whom, and particularly through the seed, “Christ” (Gal. 3:16), a blessing was to come to all nations.

16. The greater. Men customarily swear by God. But God, not having any greater by whom He could swear, swore by Himself (v. 13).

Confirmation. Gr. *bebaiōsis*, here used as a legal term meaning “legal surety,” or “warranty.” An oath has a positive effect—it provides legal surety—and a negative effect—it ends controversy.

17. Willing ... to shew. It was not necessary for God to swear. His word is as good as His oath. It was a wonderful thing that He would so put Himself on a level with man that He would consent to swear to the truth of the promise.

Unto the heirs. Not only Abraham but all the heirs including the spiritual descendants of Abraham (Gal. 3:29).

Immutability of his counsel. Or, “unchangeableness of His purpose.”

Confirmed. Gr. *mesiteuō*, “to mediate,” “to act as surety,” “to guarantee.” The confirmation of God’s word by an oath is recorded in Gen. 22:16–18.

18. Two immutable things. That is, God’s promise and His oath. God’s word in itself is unchangeable. No oath can add anything to what God has said, or make it surer. That God confirmed it with an oath is entirely for our sake. Men use an oath for confirmation, and so God condescends to do the same, to help us in our faith. This oath was doubtless a definite help to the people living before Christ. If any doubt should come up in their minds, they could fall back on the fact that not only had God promised but He had confirmed it with an oath. He would therefore surely keep His word. Thus the oath would help strengthen their faith.

Strong consolation. Rather, “strong encouragement.”

Fled for refuge. The illustration may be taken from the ancient practice of a person who, believing himself to be in danger, fled to the tabernacle as a place of refuge (see Ex. 21:13, 14; 1 Kings 2:28–34).

To lay hold. Or, “to seize.” The phrase should be connected with “consolation” (encouragement).

Hope. See on Rom. 5:4; 8:24; 12:12.

Set before us. Or, “lying, before us.” The hope of salvation is set before all and may be grasped by all.

19. Anchor. A change in metaphor. An anchor holds a ship in a storm and keeps it from drifting on the rocks. There are times when anchors slip. But not so with the anchor of “hope.” The metaphor of an anchor occurs only here in Scripture.

Which entereth. That is, the hope entereth.

Within. Gr. *esōteros*, “inner,” “behind.” The word occurs in the NT only here and in Acts 16:24, where it describes the inner prison into which Paul and Silas were cast.

Esōteros is more frequent in the LXX (see Ex. 26:33; Lev. 16:2, 12, 15; etc.).

Veil. Gr. *katapetasma*, “curtain,” “veil.” The word occurs six times in the NT. Three times it is used of the veil of the Temple that was rent at the time of the crucifixion (Matt. 27:51; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45). The other occurrences are in Hebrews (ch. 6:19; 9:3; 10:20). In the references to the sanctuary in the LXX *katapetasma* is used to describe (1) the curtain that separated the holy and most holy places (Ex. 26:31, 33), (2) the curtain at the door of the tabernacle (Ex. 26:37; 36:37; Num. 3:26), (3) the curtain for the gate of the court (Ex. 38:18). The fact that the curtain at the door of the tabernacle and the inner curtain separating the holy from the most holy place were both called *katapetasma* provides a simple explanation for the use of the term “*second veil [katapetasma]*” in Heb. 9:3 to describe the inner curtain. The question is: To which curtain does the author refer in ch. 6:19, as the one within which our hope enters?

Some non-Adventist Bible students who teach that Christ, immediately upon His ascension, entered on His work in the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary hold that *katapetasma* here refers to the curtain separating the most holy place from the holy place. They note that “within the veil” is a translation of the Greek phrase *esōteron tou katapetasmatos*, which, in its four occurrences in the LXX (Ex. 26:33; Lev. 16:2, 12, 15), always describes the most holy place. However, it does not necessarily follow that if “the veil” here refers to the veil dividing the holy from the most holy place, Christ therefore began, at His ascension, to carry on His mediatorial work in the most holy place (see under “1” below).

Following are three possible explanations of the expression “within the veil,” all of which are consonant with the Seventh-day Adventist view of the sanctuary.

1. “The veil” means the dividing curtain between the two apartments. But Paul is speaking of Christ’s entrance into the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary in order to dedicate it, along with the rest of the sanctuary, upon His assumption of His high-priestly office. This dedication is mentioned in Dan. 9:24 (see comment there) and typified in the anointing of the earthly sanctuary following its erection (Ex. 40; cf. ch. 30:26–29).

2. In Heb. 6:19 Paul leaves the word “veil” undefined. He wishes to call attention, not to the *veil*, but to that which is “*within [or “behind”] the veil*,” namely, the place where Christ our High Priest ministers. In other words, Paul is using the word “veil” (*katapetasma*), not in terms of a technical discussion of the structure of the heavenly sanctuary, but as a figure of speech to describe that which divides the seen from the

unseen, the earthly from the heavenly. Hence, “within the veil” means simply to be in the presence of God. According to this view, hope is represented as entering the very presence of God, where Christ Himself has gone (v. 20; cf. ch. 9:24).

3. Paul, elsewhere in Hebrews, specifically describes the veil separating the holy from the most holy place, as “the second veil” (ch. 9:3). Hence, when he speaks simply of “the veil” (ch. 6:19) he must refer to the veil at the door of the tabernacle. Further, inasmuch as the heavenly sanctuary, and the sequence of its services, was prefigured by the earthly, when Christ ascended prefigured by the earthly, when Christ ascended to heaven He “entered” the holy place—the first apartment—to begin the first phase of His heavenly ministry (see GC 420).

20. Whither. Or, “where.”

Forerunner. Gr. *prodromos*, “going [or “running”] before.” The word occurs only here in the NT. It occurs twice in the LXX, once in Num. 13:20 and once in Isa. 28:4, of first-ripe (*prodromoi*) figs. Applied to Jesus, the thought seems to be that He has gone before to be in the presence of God and we will follow after Him. The idea is similar to that expressed in Heb. 2:10 in the term *archēgos* (see comment there).

High priest for ever. See on ch. 5:6. The author now skillfully comes back to the topic from which he digressed in chs. 5:11–6:19. The subject is fully discussed in ch. 7.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 GC 470; 2T 124

5 CH 33; FE 173; ML 293; 5T 745; 6T 444

6 AA 306; AH 328; FE 284; MB 10; PP 580; TM 39, 147; 1T 133; 3T 438; 5T 243

7, 8 Ed 216

13 1T 203

17 PK 164; 1T 203

18 PP 371, 517

18, 19 GC 350

19 EW 72; 1T 300, 566; 2T 304; 5T 113

19,20 GC 421, 489; ML 8; 5T 742

CHAPTER 7

1 *Christ Jesus is a priest after the order of Melchisedec, 11 and so, far more excellent than the priests of Aaron's order.*

1. Melchisedec. The historical facts mentioned in this verse are recapitulated from Gen. 14:18–20 (see comment there).

2. Abraham gave a tenth. See on Gen. 14:20. Abraham would not have given Melchisedec a tenth of all had he not known him to be a priest, and hence to have a right to receive the tithe.

There has been much discussion as to who Melchisedec was. Information concerning him is meager. He is mentioned in the OT only in Gen. 14:18–20; Ps. 110:4, and in the NT only in the book of Hebrews. There are some who believe that He was Christ; others, the Holy Spirit; others, Shem; still others, a supernatural being from another world. In the absence of good evidence for any of these positions, this commentary holds that Melchisedec was one of the contemporaries of Abraham, king of one of the small principalities of that time (see on Gen. 14:18). He is set forth in Hebrews as a type of Christ, a representation based on the Messianic prediction in Ps. 110:4.

King of righteousness. Attention is called to the name because of its significance when applied to the Messiah (see on Ps. 72:3; 85:10).

King of Salem. See on Gen. 14:18.

Peace. A term appropriately applied to the Messiah (see Isa. 9:5, 6; Zech. 9:10). See Ps. 72:3; 85:10, where righteousness and peace are mentioned together as characteristics of the Messianic kingdom.

3. Without father, without mother. These words have given rise to the speculation that Melchisedec was some supernatural being, as he must of necessity have been if he was actually without parents, without beginning of days and without end of life. Such an assertion in its totality can be literally true of the persons of the Godhead only. However, it is not necessary to take this view of the wording. The author may simply mean that there is no record of who Melchisedec's father and mother were.

Without descent. Gr. *agenealogētos*, literally, "without genealogy." The Jews were very careful to record and preserve their genealogies. This was especially true concerning the priests (see Ezra 2:61–63). No one could serve as priest unless he belonged to the family of Aaron of the tribe of Levi, and this he must be able to prove without any doubt whatever. If there was a break in the line somewhere, he would be counted out and thus lose the privileges accorded the priests. For this reason every Jew, and particularly the priests, preserved carefully their genealogical records. Of melchisedec no genealogy exists.

Beginning of days. That is, there is no record of his birth, or of his death, as indicated by the phrase "nor end of life."

Made like. Or, "resembling." Melchisedec was a type of Christ. Nothing is known of his birth or death because there is no record of either. All this fits into the picture of Christ, who had no beginning or end of days (see on John 1:1–3).

Abideth a priest. There is no record of the termination of his high-priestly office.

4. How great. The Jews held Abraham in high esteem (see John 8:52). The author of Hebrews now proceeds to prove that Melchisedec was still greater. And if he was greater, then Christ's priesthood, which was after the manner of Melchisedec (see on Heb. 5:6), was greater than the Aaronic.

Even. Textual evidence is divided (cf. p. 10) between retaining and omitting this word.

Patriarch. Gr. *patriarchēs*, "father of a nation." Abraham is here called "patriarch" to heighten the effect. Melchisedec was so great that "even the patriarch" paid him tithe. In doing so, Abraham acknowledged the superior, priestly authority of Melchisedec.

Tenth. See v. 2.

Spoils. Doubtless the spoils of the recent battle (Gen. 14:14–16).

5. Commandment to take tithes. The Levites had the right to receive tithes by virtue of a divine command (see Num. 18:21). However, they were not the first to take tithes. Melchisedec did so before them. If they were divinely ordained, so was Melchisedec. And the fact that "even the Patriarch Abraham" paid tithes to Melchisedec shows that Melchisedec had the highest endorsement. If the Levites were authorized by God to receive tithes, Melchisedec was even more so.

6. Descent is not counted from them. See on v. 3. Only Levites could receive tithe. Melchisedec was not a Levite, and yet he received tithe from Abraham. Abraham has met

a man greater than he is. He recognizes Melchisedec's superiority and pays the priest tithe.

Blessed him. See Gen. 14:19.

Had the promises. See on ch. 6:13, 15.

7. Without all contradiction. Or, "apart from all dispute."

The less ... the better. The matter of superiority is settled by the fact that Abraham was the one who paid tithe and who received a blessing.

8. Here. That is, in the Levitical system.

There. That is, with reference to the Melchisedec priesthood.

He liveth. This, of course, would not be literally true of Melchisedec, nor is the explanation adequate that this simply means that there is no record in the Bible of Melchisedec's death. It appears that these words reach beyond Melchisedec to the greater One whom he represents. Of Christ it is affirmed that "he ever liveth" (v. 25). The Melchisedec priesthood lives in Jesus Christ's priesthood.

9. Levi ... payed tithes. This observation is set forth to give further evidence that the Melchisedec priesthood was superior to the Levitical. The manner in which Levi paid tithe to Melchisedec is shown in v. 10.

10. In the loins. Whatever Abraham the patriarch did, his posterity did also. Thus when he paid tithe Levi paid tithe. This the author cites as another proof of the greatness of Melchisedec.

11. Perfection. The Levitical priesthood and the ceremonial law were provisional and shadowy, pointing forward to the work that Christ was to perform. Perfection came not through the law but through the Christ to whom it pointed. This thought is further developed in chs. 9; 10.

Law. Here, the entire Jewish system instituted at Sinai (see on Gal. 3:17).

What further need. The Levitical system was never intended to be an end in itself. It was to point men to Christ, in whom alone is salvation. If the system could have provided salvation apart from the work of Christ, then there would have been no need for the ministry of Christ.

12. The priesthood being changed. That is, from the Levitical to the Melchisedec.

Change also of the law. The law provided that only the Levites could serve at the tabernacle, and that only the sons of Aaron could be priests. Furthermore, it regulated the services of the priests with reference to the dispensation in which they served. It would be necessary to change the law if a priest were selected from another tribe (v. 13) and a new order of things were introduced (ch. 8:13).

13. He. That is, Christ (v. 14).

Another tribe. See on v. 14.

Gave attendance. Or, "officiated."

14. Juda. See Micah 5:2; Matt. 1:1; Mark 10:47, 48; Luke 3:33; Rom. 1:3; Rev. 5:5.

Moses spake nothing. The laws regulating the priesthood were given through Moses (Num. 3; 4).

15. More evident. This seems to refer to the proposition set forth in v. 12, namely, that a change in law was necessary. Some hold that it refers to the temporary character of the Levitical priesthood. The prophecy referred to in v. 17, predicting that the new priesthood would be of a different order, makes it more evident that there must be a change in the laws of the priesthood, or that the Levitical priesthood was provisionary.

16. Carnal commandment. Doubtless called “carnal” with reference to the fact that the commandment specified succession by physical descent (Ex. 29:29, 30; Num. 20:26, 28).

Power. Note the contrast of this word with “law.”

Endless. Gr. *akatalutos*, “indestructible,” “not subject to dissolution.”

17. Priest for ever. The author returns to this statement from Ps. 110:4 again and again (Heb. 5:6, 10; 6:20; 7:21). On this rests his argument. No mere man could be a priest forever. The Levitical priests served only a few years. If, therefore, one is to come who is to serve forever, he must be more than a man, more than a Levite. Hence, it is “far more evident” (v. 15) that there must be a change of the priestly law if that kind of priest is to officiate.

18. For there is. According to the Greek the connection between vs. 18, 19 is as follows: “There is, on the one hand, a disannulling of the commandment . . . and on the other, the bringing in of a better hope.”

A disannulling. A stronger term than “being changed” (v. 12). The law of the Levitical priesthood was designed to operate only until Jesus Christ, the great High Priest, took over His office. Then it was to be annulled.

Going before. Or, “preceding,” “former.”

Weakness and unprofitableness. Not that it was so inherently for God Himself had instituted it. But it failed because of the people’s attitude toward it. They made the law an end in itself and believed that obedience to it would bring them salvation. They had the gospel preached unto them, but it did not profit them, not being mixed with faith (ch. 4:2).

19. The law made nothing perfect. That is, the law in and of itself. This does not mean that salvation was impossible for men in OT times. Perfection was possible, but by the same means it is achieved today—faith in Jesus Christ. “The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ. . . . But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster” (see on Gal. 3:24, 25).

Bringing in of a better hope. For the connection of this phrase with its context see on v. 18. The better hope centers in Christ. He takes the place of the Levitical priesthood. This is the hope that is “set before us,” our “anchor,” “which entereth into that within the veil” (ch. 6:18–20).

Draw nigh unto God. This had been the purpose of the Levitical priesthood, but through faulty instruction and administration men felt that God was far removed from them. Now Jesus Christ, the High Priest, has entered “within the veil” (ch. 6:19). He is seated “on the right hand of the Majesty on high” (ch. 1:3); therefore men may “come boldly unto the throne of grace” (ch. 4:16) and in full assurance draw near to God.

20. Not without an oath. See on ch. 6:17.

21. With an oath. The contrast is here set forth to show the superiority of the Melchisedec high priesthood. For the importance of the oath see on ch. 6:17.

Repent. Gr. *metamelomai*, “to change one’s mind,” “to regret” (see on 2 Cor. 7:8, 9).

After the order of Melchisedec. Textual evidence is divided (cf. p. 10) as to the retention or omission of this phrase. It is fully attested in v. 17.

22. By so much. That is, in that it was confirmed by an oath, whereas the Levitical priesthood rested on a temporary command.

Jesus. This name emphasizes his human side (see on Matt. 1:1).

Surety. Gr. *egguos*, “a pledge,” “a guarantee.” The word here has the meaning of one who becomes responsible for, or guarantees, the performance of some agreement, here, the “better testament.”

Testament. Gr. *diathēkē* (see on Gal. 3:15). This word is rendered both “testament” (Matt. 26:28; 1 Cor. 11:25; 2 Cor. 3:6; etc.) and “covenant” (Luke 1:72; Gal. 3:15; Heb. 8:6–10). In the text under consideration “covenant” would be a preferable translation, because the author is speaking of the new covenant (*diathēkē*), a subject he develops in ch. 8:6–13. *Diathēkē* is the word used elsewhere for “covenant.”

23. Many priests. The contrast here is between the many priests under the Levitical system and the one priest under the order of Melchisedec.

24. Unchangeable. Gr. *aparabatos*, “permanent,” “unchangeable.” The Levitical priests could not continue by reason of death. But Christ “ever liveth to make intercession” (Heb. 7:25; cf. Rev. 1:18).

25. Uttermost. Gr. *pantelēs* “completely,” “fully,” “wholly,” “forever,” “for all time.” Commentators are divided as to which meaning applies here. Both are true, for Christ saves both completely and for all time.

Come unto God. See on v. 19.

Ever liveth. See on v. 24.

Make intercession. Gr. *entugchanō* (see on Rom. 8:34).

26. Became. Gr. *prepō*, “to suit,” “to be fitting,” “to be becoming.” Compare the use of *prepō* in ch. 2:10. It was fitting that we should have a high priest of Christ’s nature.

Holy. Gr. *hosios*, “devout,” “pious,” “pleasing to God” (see on Acts 2:27).

Harmless. Gr. *akakos*, “guileless,” “innocent,” not vindictive.

Undefiled. Gr. *amiantos*, “pure, in a religious and moral sense.” Compare the use of the word in Heb. 13:4; James 1:27; 1 Peter 1:4.

Separate from sinners. Or, “having been separated from sinners.” Some believe this refers to Christ’s ability to mingle with sinners and yet be separate from them during the incarnation. Others believe the description is of Christ, not in His incarnation, but in His role as high priest, and that therefore “separate from sinners” refers to the completion of His work for sinners as far as His sacrificial death was concerned (see ch. 9:28). They believe the phrase should be interpreted in the light of the following phrase, which refers to Christ’s removal from this world and thus from literal contact with sinners, to be in the very presence of God. Those who hold this second view believe as truly as do those who hold the first, that Christ was ever “holy, harmless, undefiled.”

Made higher than the heavens. Christ, in His exaltation, is at the Father’s right hand. It is this kind of high priest that is fitting for us.

27. Who needeth not daily. There is no record of the high priest’s bringing a sin offering daily. There was an offering commanded to be offered daily by Aaron and his successors, but this appears to be a meal offering and not a sin offering (Lev. 6:20–22). The difficulty is therefore with the statement that the high priest of old presented a sin offering daily, and that Christ did not need to do this.

This difficulty has been explained by the consideration that whatever services the priests performed, they did as deputies of the high priest. They officiated in his place, and what they did was counted as though the high priest himself did it. They were merely helpers, and as they did offer sin offerings daily, the high priest can be said to offer daily.

For his own sins. On the Day of Atonement the high priest offered first for his own sins and then for the sins of the people (Lev. 16:11, 15). This was necessary. Being sinful, he could not appear before God in the most holy place unless and until he had brought an offering for himself. Christ did not need to do this. He was sinless.

This he did once. The question has been raised as to what is meant by “this.” Did Christ offer for His own sins once, as did the high priest, and then for the people? Christ had no sin of His own. The only sins He had were those He bore for us. He was *made* to be sin (2 Cor. 5:21). When, therefore, He offered Himself once, He provided for all the sins He carried. Those sins were *our* sins, which He bore in His body on the tree. They were *His* sins only as He had taken upon Himself the responsibility for them. He bore them vicariously.

Offered up himself. Christ was both priest and victim.

28. The law. See vs. 11, 12, 16.

Maketh men. Or, “appoints men.”

Infirmity. Or, “weakness” (cf. ch. 5:2).

The oath. See vs. 20, 21.

Since the law. The ceremonial system expired at the cross (see on Rom. 6:14; Eph. 2:15; Col. 2:14). Christ assumed His high-priestly office following the expiration of the law that regulated the Levitical priesthood.

Maketh the Son. Or, “appoints One who is Son.” The article is not present in the Greek. However, to translate “a Son” instead of “the Son” does not correctly convey the force of the Greek. The absence of the article lays stress on quality; hence the preferred rendering, “One who is Son” (cf. on Dan. 7:9, 13).

Consecrated. Gr. *teleioō*, “to perfect” (see on ch. 2:10).

For evermore. In contrast with the temporary service of the Levitical priests.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 DA 578; PP 136, 157, 703; 3T 393

5 AA 336

24 DA 52

25 AH 544; COL 149, 156; CSW 111; DA 166,751, 835; FE 178, 184; GC 482; GW 155; MB 9; MH 243, 424; ML 33; MM 33, 181; MYP 407; SC 102; Te 280; TM 20; 1T 543; 2T 60, 321; 5T 200, 633, 741; 6T 123, 231; 8T 287; WM 193

26 AA 570; DA 25

CHAPTER 8

3

1 *By the eternal priesthood of Christ the Levitical priesthood of Aaron is abolished. 7 And the temporal covenant with the fathers, by the eternal covenant of the gospel.*

³Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Heb 5:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

1. Sum. Gr. *kephalaion*, “chief point,” “sum total,” “gist of the matter.” The author sets forth the principal point of what he has so far been saying.

Such an high priest. Christ is not an ordinary high priest, such as those in the Aaronic priesthood. They served on earth (v. 4); He serves next to the throne of God.

On the right hand. See on ch. 1:3.

2. Minister. Gr. *leitourgos*, “servant,” “minister” (cf. on Rom. 13:6; cf. Phil. 2:25; Heb. 1:7).

The sanctuary. Gr. *ta hagia*, literally, “the holies,” or “the holy [places].” The feminine *hai hagai* is most unlikely here (see on ch. 9:2). Scholars quite uniformly hold that the Greek form is a neuter plural. There are differences of opinion as to the force and function of the plural in this instance. Some believe that the plural designates two apartments in the heavenly sanctuary corresponding to the two apartments in the earthly. Others believe that the plural is an intensive plural denoting simply the concentration of holy things in the sanctuary. The uncertainty arises from the fact that in ch. 9:2, 3 textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) a plural form for the Greek term that describes the first apartment and also for the term that describes the second apartment (see comment there). In view of this, the fact that *ta hagia* is a plural does not of itself prove that there are two apartments in the heavenly sanctuary. However, that Christ’s work in the heavenly sanctuary is conducted in two apartments, or “two great divisions,” is transparently evident from a comparison of the earthly with the heavenly, for the earthly was “a copy of the true one” (ch. 9:24, RSV) in heaven. See also on Ex. 25:9; Dan. 8:14; cf. Additional Note on Heb. 10.

And of. Rather, “that is of.”

True. Gr. *alēthinos*, “genuine,” “real.” The earthly sanctuary was but a type of the heavenly.

Tabernacle. Gr. *skēnē*, “tent.” The terminology of the earthly sanctuary is used for the heavenly.

Pitched. A figurative expression, here used because the sanctuary is described as a “tabernacle,” or “tent.” We must not think of a literal tent in heaven, literally pitched by God. Compare Ex. 33:7.

The idea of a heavenly sanctuary was not new to the Jews, as shown by the following extracts from their literature of about the 1st century B.C.: “The angel opened to me the gates of heaven, and I saw the holy temple, and upon a throne of glory the Most High” (Testament of Levi 5:1; R. H. Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, vol. 2, p. 307); “Thou gavest command to build a sanctuary in thy holy mountain, And an altar in the city of thy habitation, A copy of the holy tabernacle which thou preparedst aforehand from the beginning” (Wisdom of Solomon 9:8; *ibid.*, p. 549).

3. Ordained to offer. The work of the priests in the tabernacle consisted mostly in offering “gifts and sacrifices.” They were ordained for that purpose. Morning and evening they offered for the nation, and during the day they offered for individuals.

Somewhat also to offer. Compare chs. 5:1; 9:25.

4. Were on earth. The author is thinking of the time of writing, at which time the Temple was presumably still standing (see p. 389).

Not be a priest. The rules of the Levitical priesthood were strictly enforced, and if Christ were on earth, He would not be able to qualify. Only those of the tribe of Levi were eligible, and Christ belonged to the tribe of Judah. His was an independent and heavenly priesthood, after the order of Melchisedec.

Priests that offer. This statement is an argument in favor of dating the writing of this book before the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in A.D. 70 (see p. 389).

According to the law. That is, the system of law instituted at Sinai.

5. Example. Gr. *hupodeigma*, “copy,” “imitation,” “sketch,” “tracing,” “representation.” However, it is necessary to remember that an earthly “copy” can never, in all details, fully represent a heavenly original. For example, all of the various sacrifices for sin that were offered endlessly in the earthly sanctuary met their fulfillment in the one sacrifice of Christ.

Shadow. Or, “foreshadowing.” It is possible to understand the phrase “example and shadow” as a figure of speech meaning “a shadowy example.”

Admonished. Gr. *chrēmatisō*, “to impart a revelation,” the agent being God.

Make all things. See Ex. 25:40; Num. 8:4; Acts 7:44.

6. More excellent ministry. With this verse the author begins the discussion of Christ as “the mediator of a better covenant.” The ground for the more excellent ministry of Christ is here demonstrated by the fact that He is the mediator of a better covenant established upon better promises.

Mediator. Gr. *mesitēs*, “arbitrator,” “mediator,” one who mediates between two parties to remove a disagreement or to reach a common goal (cf. on Gal. 3:19). The word occurs six times in the NT, four times with reference to Christ. Christ is the mediator between God and man (1 Tim. 2:5), and can lay His hands on both. As God, He understands God and can speak for Him. As man He understands man and can sympathetically minister for him before the Father.

Better. The superiority is discussed in vs. 8–12.

Covenant. Gr. *diathēkē* (see on ch. 7:22).

Better promises. See on vs. 10–12.

7. First covenant. By this expression the author designates the system in force in OT times since Sinai, of which the Levitical priesthood was an integral part. For the relationship of this system to the covenant made at Sinai see on Eze. 16:60. For the meaning of the word covenant (*diathēkē*) see on Heb. 7:22. This system with its laws came to an end when Jesus became high priest after the order of Melchisedec (see on ch. 7:12, 18, 19).

Faultless. The implication is that it was faulty. Yet the fault was not with the covenant inherently but with the people who misapplied it (see on Eze. 16:60; Eph. 2:15). The law, in and of itself, made nothing perfect (see on Heb. 7:22), but correctly employed, it would have pointed them to the Saviour and salvation. The prophets’ repeated appeals for the people to accept the provisions of the everlasting covenant met with continued failure.

For the second. That is, the new (see v. 8).

8. Finding fault with them. It is possible to translate the passage, “finding fault, he saith to them,” but this is a less natural translation and has found little acceptance. The

weakness of the first covenant was not in the covenant itself; nor did the fault lie in God. It was the people who were faulty (see on Heb. 8:7; cf. Rom. 9:30 to 10:3; Heb. 3:18 to 4:2)

The days come. Verses 8–12 are a quotation from Jer. 31:31–34 agreeing with the LXX rather than with the Hebrew, although the differences are slight. Compare the comment on these verses verse in Jeremiah. In their original setting these words constituted a forecast of what God was willing to do for Israel and Judah, if they should learn the lessons from the captivity into which they were about to go, and truly return to God. Ever since Sinai He had been trying to lead the people to a higher spiritual experience such as is represented in the new covenant, but they rebelliously refused to progress beyond their restricted concepts of what constituted true religion. They clung to the belief that salvation could be achieved by a strict adherence to law, particularly laws regarding ceremonial acts and offerings. The occasion was auspicious. Perhaps what they had refused to learn in their own land they would learn from the rigorous discipline of captivity. But even their captivity failed to accomplish a true revival. The great majority of the returning exiles continued under the terms of the old covenant.

The spiritual experience under the new covenant was available in OT times, and would have come if the people had complied with the conditions, but the Jews, as a nation, refused it. Now, even though the teaching of Christ and the apostles made doubly clear the “gospel” that the Jews might earlier have accepted (Heb. 4:2), they found it difficult to relinquish the old system of forms and ceremonies. The book of Hebrews was designed to help them make the transition.

The author of Hebrews is appealing to prophecy to support his thesis of the high priesthood of Christ and of the introduction of a new order. Jeremiah had predicted a new order; now it was here.

New. New with respect to the “first covenant” (v. 7). The coming of Christ and His fulfillment of the types of the ceremonial law put an end to the Levitical system (see on Eph. 2:15). The shedding of His blood ratified the covenant made long ago with Adam and confirmed to Abraham and confirmed to Abraham (see on Eze. 16:60).

Covenant. Gr. *diathēkē* (see on ch. 7:22).

With the house of Israel. The new covenant is here mentioned as being made with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, since it was first offered to these two houses (Jer. 31:31–34). When the Jews turned down their religious privileges, “the kingdom of God” was taken from them (see on Matt. 21:33–43). The Christian church is the inheritor of the spiritual privileges and responsibilities that once belonged to literal Israel (see Vol. IV, pp. 35, 36).

9. Not according to. For a discussion of the old covenant see on Eze. 16:60.

They continued not. This is a cursory summary of the history of the Israelites as recorded in the OT. The people “mocked the messengers of God ... till there was no remedy” (2 Chron. 36:16), and God cast them off.

10. Put my laws. At Mt. Sinai the Lord wrote His laws on tables of stone (Deut. 4:13), and in a book (ch. 31:24, 26). He intended that these laws should also be written on the hearts of the people. But the Israelites were content to regard these statutes simply as an external code and their observance a matter of outward compliance. God did not intend that His laws should be thus regarded. He offered His people the experience of a new heart (see on Eze. 36:26), but they were content with only an external religion.

Under the new covenant men's hearts and minds are changed (see on Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 5:17). Men do right, not by their own strength, but because Christ dwells in the heart, living out His life in the believer (see on Gal. 2:20). They are born of the Spirit and bear the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22, 23). The change can be effected only by divine power. Only God can "put" His law in the hearts of His followers, though, of course, not without man's consent and cooperation (Rev. 22:17; cf. MB 142).

I will be to them a God. This is the objective of all God's covenants (cf. Ex. 6:7). God will have His rightful place, and the people will acknowledge Him as their God.

11. *They shall not teach.* There would be no need of continual admonition and counsel, for men would have a personal religious experience. Christians could now have direct access to God without an intermediary, the Levitical priesthood. They would be "led by the Spirit of God" (Rom. 8:14), "taught of God" (1 Thess. 4:9), and would have "an unction from the Holy One, and . . . know all things" (1 John 2:20). From early times Christians have had the entire canon of Scripture to teach them about God. However, this does not rule out the need of spiritual instructors. As gifts God has given to the church "pastors" and "teachers" (Eph. 4:11). Compare GC 485.

All shall know me. That is, all Christians will have a personal knowledge of God, no matter what their age, social standing, or mental equipment.

12. *I will be merciful.* When Jeremiah spoke these words on the eve of the Captivity, they were a promise of what God was willing to do for His wayward people if they would return to Him. For the Christian they are a promise of forgiveness full and free through the blood of Jesus, without the shedding of the blood of animals as under the Levitical system.

Remember no more. That is, God will no longer hold these sins against the transgressor (cf. on Isa. 65:17). God will cast all our sins behind His back (Isa. 38:17). He will cast them into the depths of the sea (Micah 7:19).

13. *Covenant.* This word is supplied, and correctly so, as the Greek indicates. The adjective translated "new" is in the same gender and number as the word for "covenant." That "covenant" is correctly supplied is further shown by the fact that "he saith" refers back to the quotation cited in vs. 8–12 (from Jer. 31:31–33), which employs the phrase "new covenant."

Hath made the first old. The quotation from Jeremiah (cited in vs. 8–12) clearly shows that the new was to *replace* the old, not to be in addition to it. This was a difficult point for the Hebrew Christians to grasp.

Decayeth. Or, "is growing old." The question may be raised as to why this word is in the present tense if the old covenant passed away at the cross. Some commentators think that the reference is to the time that Jeremiah uttered his prophecy concerning the new covenant (Jer. 31:31–33). However, it is possible to understand the reference also to the time when the book of Hebrews was written. It is true that the ceremonial system was fulfilled when Jesus died on the cross (see on Eph. 2:15). However, even for devout Christians, the transition from the old to the new system was gradual (see on Heb. 9:9; cf. on Rom. 14:1).

Ready to vanish away. Readers of the epistle are being prepared for the time when the old system would be done away completely (see on ch. 9:9).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

2 DA 166; GC 417; PK 685; PP 356; SR 376, 377
5 CT 62; DA 209; Ed 35; GC 413, 415, 418, 420; LS 342; PP 351, 356; SR 377, 378
6 PP 372
7, 8 PP 371
10 EW 58; 1T 361

CHAPTER 9

1 *The description of the rites and bloody sacrifices of the law, 11 far inferior to the dignity and perfection of the blood and sacrifice of Christ.*

1. The first covenant. “Covenant” is supplied, but correctly so, as in ch. 8:13 (see comment there). The reference is to the covenant made with Israel at Sinai (see on Heb. 8:7; cf. on Eze. 16:60).

Had also. The fact that the first covenant *also* had ordinances, assumes that the new covenant has them. The author has already introduced the service of Christ as high priest (chs. 5:5, 6; 6:19, 20; 7:22–25; 8:1, 2). Now he enlarges upon that service.

Ordinances. Gr. *dikaiōmata*, “regulations,” “requirements,” “commandments.”

Divine service. Gr. *latreia* (see on Rom. 9:4; 12:1).

A worldly sanctuary. That is, the sanctuary was adapted to the earth, the sanctuary was terrestrial. This is noted by way of contrast with the sanctuary of the new covenant, “the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man” (ch. 8:2).

2. Tabernacle. Gr. *skēnē*, “tent,” “lodging,” “booth,” “dwelling.”

The first. That is, “the first tent,” or “the first tabernacle.” The first apartment is here designated a tent as is the second apartment (v. 3). Throughout the year the first apartment was the only part of the sanctuary proper that was entered. The second apartment, the holiest of all, was entered only on the Day of Atonement.

The candlestick. The furnishings are described as they existed in the ancient tabernacle, not in the Temple then standing (cf. on v. 3). For a description of the candlestick see Ex. 25:31–40.

The table. See Ex. 25:23–30.

The shewbread. See Lev. 24:5–9.

The sanctuary. Gr. *hagia*. Textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 10) for the reading *ta hagia* (see on ch. 8:2), also for the reading *hagia hagiōn* (see on ch. 9:3). But scholars generally agree that the reading *hagia* is to be preferred. There is a grammatical problem to be settled with respect to *hagia*. Taken by itself its unaccented form may be: (1) A feminine singular form that would make it an adjective modifying *skēnē*, “tabernacle.” The clause would then read, “which is called holy [tent].” (2) A neuter plural form that would be rendered “holies,” or “holy [places].” The spelling of the two forms is the same; however, when the word is accented, the feminine singular form has the accent on the second syllable, whereas the neuter plural form has the accent on the first syllable. Since the earliest manuscripts were unaccented, it is impossible, on the basis of them, to determine which form may here have been intended. The later manuscripts, which have the accents, overwhelmingly favor the neuter plural form. The Textus Receptus, the Greek text of the KJV, accents the first syllable, hence regards *hagia* a neuter plural. The

same is true of Nestle's Greek Text. In fact there is little textual support for the singular reading. The Vulgate and some of the late Greek manuscripts are about the only unequivocal witnesses.

True, all this is not conclusive evidence against a singular reading, for the manuscript copiers, who supplied the accents, were uninspired men. They placed the accent where they felt the context required it. In this case the neuter plural form seemed the more natural. However, even though the possibility of a singular form cannot be denied, such a form seems quite unlikely. *Hagia* as a plural thus seems to designate the first apartment (cf. v. 3, where the second apartment seems likewise to be thus designated). See on ch. 8:2.

3. After. Gr. *meta*, "behind," "beyond," "on the far side."

The second veil. That is, the veil separating the holy and most holy places, called "second" because the word here used for "veil" (*katapetasma*) is used also of the veil at the entrance of the holy place (see on ch. 6:19).

Tabernacle. Compare v. 2.

Holiest of all. Gr. *hagia hagiōn*. The same question on *hagia* confronts us here as in v. 2, namely, whether it is singular or plural (see comment there). Because of this the phrase may be translated either "holy [tent] of holy [places]," or "holy [places] of holy [places]." The Greek may also be translated "holies of holies."

4. Censer. Gr. *thumiātērion*, literally, "a place [or "vessel"] for the burning of incense," hence, either a censer or the altar of incense. For examples of the latter meaning see Josephus *War* v. 5. 5 [216]; *Antiquities* iii. 6. 8; 8. 3 [147; 198]; cf. *Herodotus* 2. 162. In Hebrews the altar of incense is probably meant. This altar was the most important object in the holy place. It seems unlikely that the author would omit mentioning it, especially since he is enumerating the articles which each apartment contains.

However, the translation "altar of incense" introduces a problem, since this altar seems here to be represented as situated in the most holy place, whereas in the ancient tabernacle it stood in the first apartment (Ex. 30:6). It is to be noted that the author does not state that the altar of incense *stood* in the second apartment; but only that the most holy "had" the altar. The word translated "had" may be rendered "contain," but this is not its only or necessary meaning.

The connection between the altar and the most holy place here indicated may be that its function was closely connected with the most holy place. The incense offered daily on this altar was directed to the mercy seat in the most holy. There God manifested His presence between the cherubim, and as the incense ascended with the prayers of the worshipers, it filled the most holy place as well as the holy. The veil that separated the two apartments did not extend to the ceiling but reached only part way. Thus incense could be offered in the holy place—the only place where ordinary priests might enter—and yet reach the second apartment, the place to which it was directed. In 1 Kings 6:22 the altar of incense of Solomon's Temple is described as being "by the oracle," that is, related to the most holy place, or belonging to the most holy place.

Ark. See Ex. 25:10–16.

Of the covenant. The ark is so designated because it contained "the tables of the covenant," the two tables of stone on which God had written the Ten Commandments. In

Deut. 4:13 the Ten Commandments are declared to be the covenant that God commanded His people to perform.

The golden pot. See Ex. 16:33, 34. The idea of “golden” comes from the LXX, which in Ex. 16:33 reads “golden pot.” The Hebrew simply reads “pot.”

Aaron’s rod. See Nu. 17:1–11. The pot and Aaron’s rod are here seemingly declared to be in the ark. In the OT they are said to be “before the Lord,” or “before the Testimony” (Ex. 16:33, 34; Num. 17:10). There is no necessary discrepancy here, for these latter expressions may also designate a position inside the ark. The statement in 1 Kings 8:9 that “there was nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone, which Moses put there” may imply that at one time there were other articles in the ark such as those mentioned here (see comment there).

Some have tried to resolve the apparent discrepancy by making “wherein” refer back to “the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all” (Heb. 9:3). Though this is grammatically possible, the general construction is against such a relationship. Furthermore, the fact that the tables of the covenant are included in the list of items following “wherein” strongly suggests that it is the ark and not the most holy place that is referred to.

Tables of the covenant. See Ex. 25:16; 32:15, 16; Deut. 9:9; see above under “of the covenant.”

5. Cherubims. Rather “cherubim.” The word is a transliteration of the Heb. *kerubim*, a plural form, and hence does not require the addition of “s” to make it a plural. For a description of the cherubim see Ex. 25:18–20.

Of glory. The cherubim are probably thus designated with reference to the glory of God that was manifested between the cherubim (see Ex. 25:22; Num. 7:89; 1 Sam. 4:4; Ps. 80:1).

Mercyseat. Gr. *hilastērion* (see on Rom. 3:25).

Cannot now speak. The author does not wish to go further into detail, since an extended discussion of these matters is not his present purpose.

6. Ordained. Rather, “prepared,” “furnished.” The idea is that the tabernacle had been erected and furnished.

Went. Rather “go.” The tense of the Greek verb is present. The action is represented as habitually going on (cf. on v. 9).

First tabernacle. That is, the first apartment (see on v. 2).

Accomplishing the service. Part of the service was the daily offering of incense in the holy place and the trimming of the lamps (Ex. 27:20, 21; 30:7, 8). Weekly the shewbread was set in order on the table (Lev. 24:5–9). Also, whenever the anointed priest, or the whole congregation, sinned, a bullock was sacrificed, and the priest took of this blood and brought it into the first apartment. There he dipped his finger in the blood and sprinkled it seven times before the veil, and also put some of the blood on the horns of the altar of sweet incense before the Lord (Lev. 4:5–7, 16–18).

7. Into the second. The high priest was the only one who was permitted to enter the second apartment, and he could enter on only one day in the year, the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:2, 24; 23:27).

Not without blood. The high priest entered the most holy place, first with the blood of a young bullock as a sin offering for himself and for his house (Lev. 16:3, 4, 11–14).

When he entered the second time, he carried the blood of the Lord's goat, by which the sanctuary as well as the people were cleansed (Lev. 16:15–17).

For. Gr. *huper*, “in behalf of,” “for the sake of,” “with reference to.” In the present context *huper* may be translated, “to make atonement for” (see Lev. 16:30).

Errors. Gr. *agnoemata*, “sins committed in ignorance” (cf. Lev. 4:2, 13). There is no warrant for the thought that there was no provision for the forgiveness of sins on the Day of Atonement.

8. Holy Ghost. Or, “Holy Spirit.” The Spirit is the divine interpreter of truth (see on John 14:26).

Signifying. Compare 1 Peter 1:11.

Holiest of all. Gr. *ta hagia*, “the holies,” or “the holy [places]” (see on chs. 8:2; 9:24, 25). The context makes clear that *ta hagia* here refers to that “greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands” (ch. 9:11), that is, the heavenly sanctuary (cf. vs. 24, 25).

True, the translators of the KJV rendered *ta hagia* “holiest of all.” But it does not follow that they had in mind the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary. It is doubtful that they held any detailed views concerning that sanctuary. They apparently thought of the heavenly sanctuary, or of “heaven itself,” where Jesus went (v. 24), as the holiest place of all, corresponding to the most holy place in the earthly sanctuary. However, it should be remembered that the meaning of the passage must be decided not by an English translation but by the Greek, with careful attention being given to grammar and syntax.

First tabernacle. Some hold that this expression refers to the first apartment of the earthly sanctuary. This view is based on the fact that in vs. 2, 6 the expression is thus used. Since vs. 6–8 are closely connected, proponents of this view maintain that the force and logic of this passage would be lessened if “first tabernacle” were not given the same meaning in v. 8 as is given to it in v. 6.

Others hold that “first tabernacle” as here used refers to the whole Mosaic tabernacle contrasted with the heavenly tabernacle (ch. 8:2). They declare that Paul's purpose is to contrast the sanctuaries of the two covenants (ch. 9:1), and that v. 8 teaches that the service in heaven could not begin till the earthly service was closed.

Both views are consistent with Paul's thesis that Christ's high-priestly ministry in the “more perfect tabernacle” (v. 11) could not begin until the earthly tabernacle service ended.

Was yet standing. Rather, “is yet standing.” The Greek does not necessarily denote the standing of the *building* as such, but may have reference to the validity of the functions of the building. For the sense in which the “first tabernacle” was still standing, see on v. 9. The phrase “was yet standing” may thus mean, “is filling its appointed place,” or “is retaining its divinely appointed status.”

9. Which. The Greek makes clear that the antecedent of this word is “first tabernacle.” Therefore, the interpretation of v. 9 depends on the definition given to “first tabernacle” (see on v. 8).

Was. This word is supplied. In view of the Greek tenses in the remainder of this verse and in v. 10, all of which are present, the word “is” should be supplied (see below under “time then present”).

Figure. Gr. *parabolē*, “parable” (see Vol. V, pp. 203, 204; cf. Vol. III, p. 1111).

Time then present. Rather, “the time now present.” Possibly for reasons of diplomacy Paul grants that the earthly sanctuary service is still operative even though actually Christ, as the Mediator of a better covenant (8:6), has already been seated on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens (chs. 1:3; 9:11, 12). Services were still carried on in the Temple (ch. 8:4), in which many of the Jewish Christians apparently took part (see AA 189). Only gradually did these Jewish converts come to understand that the types of the ceremonial system had been fulfilled in Christ, and that therefore that system had come to an end. The Jerusalem Council had ruled that the Gentiles were not to be required to be circumcised and keep the law of Moses (see Acts 15; cf. AA 188–200), but there is no record that this council made any ruling for Jewish Christians. They apparently were left to settle, on the basis of their conscience, the matter of compliance with at least certain of the rites of the ceremonial law (cf. on Rom. 14:1, 5). Thus it seems that because the services in the Temple were still going on, and many Jewish Christians were showing deference for the rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic law, the author felt free to speak of the system as still in force. It is his aim to show that something better has been inaugurated.

Were offered. Literally, “are being offered” (see above under “time then present”).

Gifts and sacrifices. A general expression for the various Levitical offerings.

Could not make ... perfect. Rather, “cannot make ... perfect” (see above under “time then present”). The author has already dealt with the inadequacy of the ancient system (see on ch. 7:18, 19).

Conscience. Gr. *suneidēsis* (see on Rom. 2:15). The worshiper could fulfill all the outward requirements and yet not have peace of soul and the assurance of acceptance with God. Only as he had personal faith in Christ could he find such peace. But few attained this higher experience. The majority of Jews depended on the meticulous performance of a multitude of regulations for acceptance with God.

10. Which stood. These words are supplied, and in harmony with the Greek tenses in v. 9, should read, “which stand,” or “which deal with” (cf. RSV).

Only. The external nature of the Levitical system is highlighted.

Meats and drinks. Rather, “foods and drinks.” “Meats” is an Old English word meaning foods in general. Here is a reference to the various meat or cereal and drink offerings of the Jewish ceremonial law (Ex. 29:40, 41; Lev. 2:1–15; 23:13, 18, 37; Num. 6:15; etc.).

Divers washings. See Mark 7:3, 4, 8; cf. Ex. 29:4; Lev. 11:25; Num. 8:7; etc. Some of the “washings” had value in teaching sanitation and personal cleanliness, aside from the spiritual implications they might have had. But to the original ordinances the Jews had added many others that God never commanded. Thus “washings” were made to assume an important role in religion.

And carnal ordinances. Textual evidence favors the omission of “and.” “Carnal ordinances” would thus stand in apposition with “gifts and sacrifices” (v. 9), or perhaps also with the “meats,” “drinks,” and “washings” mentioned in v. 10. “Ordinances” is literally “regulations” (cf. on v. 1). “Carnal” is here evidently to be contrasted with “spiritual.” The carnal regulations failed to bring spiritual satisfaction; carrying them out did not make men perfect as pertaining to the conscience (v. 9).

Imposed. Gr. *epikeimai*, literally “to lie upon,” “to be imposed,” “to be incumbent.”

Time of reformation. Literally, “time of setting straight.” The Levitical system is thus clearly shown to be temporary. Its ordinances pointed forward to the work of the Messiah and were intended to be in force only until the Messiah came. The transition from the old system to the new may here be called a “reformation,” because of the abuse of the old system (see on Eph. 2:15).

11. But Christ. The high-priestly work of Christ now comes up for consideration and is shown to be vastly superior to the services performed by the earthly high priest.

Being come. Gr. *paraginomai*, “to come,” “to arrive,” “to be present,” “to appear.” The verb form is preferably translated “having come,” or “having appeared.” Christ is here presented at the moment that He is inaugurated high priest of the heavenly sanctuary.

Good things to come. Textual evidence is divided (cf. p. 10) between this and the reading “good things having come.” Both readings may be fitted into the context. The phrase “good things to come” would take account that the period when Paul wrote was one of transition and that the new had not completely replaced the old. This was especially true with regard to Jewish Christians (see on v. 9). The translation “good things having come” would take note of the fact that when Jesus was installed as the high priest in heaven above, the good things of the new covenant had also come.

By. Gr. *dia*, “through,” “by means of,” “with.” The preposition also has many other meanings. The context must determine the precise meaning. The context here does not favor the idea of passing through something. Certain commentators adopting this idea interpret “tabernacle” here as the lower heavens, through which Jesus passed on the way to heaven. But there is insufficient reason for adopting a different meaning for “tabernacle” here from that given to it in ch. 8:2 (see comment there.) Furthermore, the lower heavens are “of this building,” literally, “of this creation.” However, the idea of passing through is only one of the many meanings of *dia*. The instrumental idea is very common, and that meaning here, in the sense of “employing,” makes excellent sense in the context. The passage may thus be translated, “But Christ having appeared as high priest of good things to come, employing the greater and more perfect tabernacle . . . entered once for all into the holy place [or “places].” To perform their services the earthly priests employed a handmade tabernacle; for His services Christ employed a greater and more perfect tabernacle.

One other view may be mentioned. The majority of the Church Fathers, both Greek and Latin, held that the word “tabernacle” here refers to the body of Christ, or to His humanity. They gave to *dia* an instrumental force and taught that it was by means of the incarnation that Christ was prepared for His high-priestly ministry. This is a fact and one that the author has already emphasized (see on ch. 5:7–9). Proponents of this view note that Jesus spoke of the temple of His body (John 2:21), and that the word “dwelt” in John 1:14 is literally “tented” (Gr. *skēnaō*, the noun form of which is *skēnē*, the word translated “tabernacle” in Heb. 9:11). They also cite other texts to show that the human body is referred to by “tabernacle” (2 Cor. 5:1, 4) or “temple” (1 Cor. 6:19). The principal objection to this view is that it does not seem to conform well with the context. It introduces a definition for “tabernacle” that disrupts the consistent use the author has at

least thus far made of the word. It is therefore safer to give to “tabernacle” a definition already given to it in the context, especially since no difficulty is encountered in interpreting the passage in this way.

Greater and more perfect. No earthly structure can represent the vastness and glory of the heavenly temple where God dwells (see PP 357).

Tabernacle. See on ch. 8:2; cf. ch. 9:24.

Not made with hands. That is, not made with human hands. Earthly high priests functioned in handmade temples. Christ, the great High Priest, functions in a vastly superior tabernacle “pitched” by the Lord (ch. 8:2).

Building. Literally, “creation,” here probably meaning the visible creation (cf. on Rom. 8:19).

12. Blood of goats and calves. Or, “blood of goats and young bulls.” For the part played by goats and bulls in the sin offerings of the Day of Atonement see Lev. 16:5–9, 11–16.

His own blood. The superiority of Christ’s ministry is further established. It has already been shown to excel in that it is performed in a “greater and more perfect tabernacle” (v. 11). Now its supereminence is shown by the fact that the blood involved in the services was that of the Son of God Himself in contrast with the blood of mere animals. For the significance of the blood of Christ see on Rom. 3:25.

Once. Gr. *ephapax*, “once for all” (cf. on Rom. 6:10). Christ needed not to make repeated sacrifices in order to carry on His high-priestly work in the sanctuary in heaven (Heb. 9:24–26).

The holy place. Gr. *ta hagia* (see on chs. 8:2; 9:8). After Christ had offered “his own blood” on Calvary, and had ascended to heaven, He entered “within the veil” (see on ch. 6:19; cf. Additional Note on ch. 10).

Having obtained. The redemption secured on the cross is evidently referred to, as indicated in vs. 13–17.

Eternal. In contrast with the temporary provisions of the Levitical system.

Redemption. Gr. *lutrōsēs*, “ransoming,” “releasing,” “redemption,” “deliverance.” The word occurs in the NT only here and in Luke 1:68; 2:38. The related word *lutron*, “ransom,” occurs in Matt. 20:28 (see comment there). *Lutrōtēs*, “deliverer” or “redeemer,” occurs in Acts 7:35 (see comment there), and *apolutrōsis*, also meaning “redemption,” in Rom. 3:24 (see comment there).

For us. These supplied words are not necessary to an understanding of the text, though, nevertheless, true. The ransom was made to redeem us.

13. Blood of bulls. See on v. 12.

Ashes of an heifer. For the purification effected by the ashes of the heifer see on Num. 19.

Sprinkling the unclean. Or, “sprinkling the defiled.” See Num. 19:18.

Sanctifieth. Gr. *hagiazō*, “to consecrate,” “to dedicate,” “to sanctify,” “to purify.” *Hagiazō* here seems to have the meaning of “purify” as in the LXX of Num. 6:11, where the KJV reads “hallow.”

Purifying of the flesh. This is contrasted with the purging of the conscience (v. 14). The criticism lodged against the Levitical rites is that they are external. They provide ceremonial purity but not true spiritual rest of soul (see on ch. 3:11). See on ch. 7:11, 19.

14. How much more? The superiority of Christ's offering is emphasized.

Blood of Christ. In contrast with the blood of animals (cf. on v. 12).

Through the eternal Spirit. There is no article here in the Greek, thus suggesting, though not proving, that it is not the Holy Spirit that is here spoken of, but Christ's own divine nature, which is eternal. While He was in His eternal pre-existent state, Christ offered to give His life for man (Rev. 13:8).

Himself. Christ gave His life a voluntary sacrifice. He had power to lay down His life, and He had power to take it again (John 10:18).

Purge. Gr. *katharizō*, "to make clean," "to cleanse," "to purify." Compare the use of *katharizō* in Acts 10:15; 15:9; 2 Cor. 7:1; Eph. 5:26; Titus 2:14; James 4:8; 1 John 1:7, 9. The tense of the verb is future, doubtless in terms of those to whom the epistle was written who had not fully entered into the experience awaiting them under the new covenant (Heb. 8:10–12; see on ch. 9:9). Under the old system they had found only ceremonial purity, but now they could find peace of soul in Christ.

Conscience. See on v. 9.

Dead works. See on ch. 6:1.

To serve. The object of purification is service. Men and women are redeemed for service. The cleansing is not an end in itself; it prepares men to render acceptable service to God (see on Rom. 12:1).

Living God. A common title of God in both the OT and the NT (see Deut. 5:26; Joshua 3:10; Heb. 3:12; etc.). Here the title seems to be chosen because of the mention of dead works. Those who serve the living God bring forth living fruits unto righteousness.

15. For this cause. That is, because of the efficacy of Christ's blood to cleanse the conscience.

Mediator of the new testament. Or, "mediator of the new covenant." The author has already introduced Christ as "the mediator of a better covenant" (see on ch. 8:6). For the new covenant see on ch. 8:8–12. For "testament" see on ch. 9:16.

By means of death. Literally, "death having occurred." The reference is to the death on the cross (cf. on ch. 2:14).

Redemption. Gr. *upolutrōsis* (see on Rom. 3:24).

Under the first testament. Or, "under the first covenant" (see on chs. 7:22; 9:16). Under the sacrificial system forgiveness for sin was granted on the basis of the blood of the Lamb of God that was to be shed. The blood of animals in and of itself was powerless to remit sins. It was merely symbolic of the death of Christ for the sins of the world. If Jesus had not given His life, the forgiveness offered under the first covenant would never have been validated.

Called. See on Rom. 8:28, 30.

Might receive. The receiving of the inheritance was dependent on the sacrifice of Christ. If Christ had not offered up His life, then those under the old covenant would have hoped in vain.

Inheritance. See on Gal. 3:18.

16. Testament. Gr. *diathēkē*. This word may mean either “covenant” or “testament” in the sense of “will” (see on Heb. 7:22; Gal. 3:15). In Heb. 9:15–18 there is a play on the two meanings of this word. The “inheritance” mentioned in v. 15 probably suggested the idea of a will or testament, and the phrase “by means of death,” literally, “death having occurred,” probably called to mind the fact that Christ died leaving us an inheritance, and that this inheritance was left us in a testament.

Of necessity. A will has no force whatever so long as the testator lives. For it to become effective, the testator must die.

17. Testament. Or, “will” (see on v. 16).

Otherwise. The well-known fact that a will, or testament, does not go into effect until the testator dies is further emphasized.

18. First testament. Here, probably more accurately, “first covenant” (see on v. 16), for the author is speaking of the covenant made with Israel at Sinai (see on ch. 8:7).

Dedicated. Gr. *egkainizo*, “to inaugurate,” “to dedicate.” The word occurs in the NT only here and in ch. 10:20, where the author is speaking of a new and living way being inaugurated.

19. When Moses. For the incident here described see on Ex. 24:3–8.

Goats. These are not mentioned in Ex. 24:3–8, which identifies only the animals of the peace offerings (see Ex. 24:5).

Water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop. These items are not mentioned in the account in Ex. 24:3–8. Their use in other connections is mentioned in Lev. 14; Num. 19. There is nothing in the Exodus account that is inconsistent with the added details given by the author of Hebrews.

Book. The sprinkling of the book is not mentioned in Ex. 24:3–8, but is not inconsistent with the ceremonies there described.

20. Saying. The wording here is somewhat different from that in Ex. 24:8, but the general thought is the same (see Additional Notes on Matt. 3, Note 2). There is a notable similarity between the language of Hebrews and that of Christ when He served the wine at the institution of the Lord’s Supper (Matt. 26:28).

21. Sprinkled with blood. This item is not mentioned in the OT account, which refers only to an anointing with oil (Ex. 40:9–11) Josephus, describing the consecration of the tabernacle, speaks of blood being sprinkled on both the tabernacle and the vessels belonging to it (*Antiquities* iii. 8. 6 [206]). This tradition the writer of Hebrews confirms.

22. Almost all things. There were certain exceptions. Some things were cleansed with fire or water, without any use of blood (Num. 19; 31:23, 24).

By the law. That is, the law of Moses (cf. on ch. 7:12, 19).

Purged. Gr. *katharizō* (see on v. 14).

Without shedding of blood. See Lev. 17:11. However, under certain circumstances sins could be atoned for with flour instead of blood (Lev. 5:11–13). But as a general rule the Levitical ritual required the shedding of blood for atonement.

Remission. Gr. *aphesis*, “forgiveness” (see on Matt. 26:28). In nearly every occurrence of this word in the NT the word “sins” follows. *Aphesis* stands without the object only here and in Mark 3:29. But it seems clearly evident that the word “sins” should be understood. The great truth taught by the stipulation that the shedding of blood

was required for forgiveness, was that the salvation of man would one day require the death of the Son of God. Compare Matt. 26:28. Every animal sacrifice pointed forward to the supreme sacrifice of the “Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).

23. Therefore. That is, because of the general principle laid down in v. 22.

Patterns. Gr. *hupodeigmata* (see on ch. 8:5). The wilderness tabernacle and its furnishings were representations of heavenly realities, foreshadowing the work that our great High Priest would do for sins.

Purified. Gr. *katharizō*, “to cleanse” (see on v. 14).

With these. That is, the things mentioned in vs. 18–22.

The heavenly things. The word “things” is supplied. The Greek has merely a plural article with the plural adjective. However, the neuter gender indicates that “things” is appropriately supplied. The author is contrasting heavenly things with the various earthly items he has mentioned. The term is very general and may refer to anything connected with the heavenly service of Christ. The emphasis of the passage is not upon the act of cleansing, but upon the need for cleansing by a better sacrifice, namely, by the blood of Christ.

There has been much discussion among commentators as to why anything in heaven, which is a place of purity, should require cleansing, and what it is that was purified by the blood of Christ. Some assert that it is quite impossible to understand the author’s meaning. Others make suggestions, such as that the cleansing consisted of the appeasing of the wrath of God. This view must be rejected, for it reveals a misunderstanding of the nature of God, and of the atonement (see on Rom. 5:10).

Perhaps the difficulty arises from trying to press the author’s comparison too far. His main point is clear: he is showing that Christ’s sacrifice was vastly superior to that of the animal sacrifices. The blood of calves and of goats cleansed “things” (Heb. 9:22) relating to the earthly tabernacle, the sanctuary of the old covenant (v. 1). Christ’s blood was related to the service in the “true tabernacle” (ch. 8:2), the sanctuary of the new covenant (ch. 9:11, 15). The former provided ceremonial purity, the latter, moral (see on vs. 13, 14).

Christ has appeared “in the presence of God *for us*” (v. 24). “He ever liveth to make intercession” for us (ch. 7:25). The reason we need someone to appear in the presence of God for us and to intercede for us is that we have sinned. Christ “appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself” (ch. 9:26). Now he is ministering the benefits of His atonement in the sinner’s behalf. As a result of this the sinner’s conscience is purged (v. 14). The word here translated “purge” is *katharizō*, which in v. 23 is translated “purified.” Compare with 1 John 1:9, where *katharizō* is translated “cleanse.” Thus Jesus as minister of the true tabernacle, appearing in the presence of God for us, and interceding for us, is carrying on a work of cleansing, a cleansing that has to do with the sins of repentant men.

However, Christ also performs a special work of cleansing the heavenly sanctuary, which answers to the service performed by the high priest in the earthly sanctuary on the Day of Atonement (see on Lev. 16). Of this special work of Christ, the prophet Daniel speaks: “Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed

[*katharizō*, LXX]” (Dan. 8:14). When the year-day principle is applied to this his time period its termination is A.D. 1844 (see on Dan. 8:14). By that time the earthly temple, a pattern of the things in the heavens, had long since disappeared. The reference (Dan. 8:14) must therefore be to the sanctuary of the new covenant, “the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man” (Heb. 8:2). See on Dan. 8:14.

Better sacrifices. The plural is here used for the single sacrifice of Christ, probably because the one sacrifice took the place of the multitude of sacrifices under the old system.

24. Holy places. Gr. *hagia* (see on chs. 8:2; 9:8, 25).

Made with hands. See on v. 11.

Figures. Gr. *antitupa*, “copies,” “representations.” Our English word “antitype” comes from this Greek word, although we generally use “antitype” for that which is foreshadowed by the type. The Greek word may refer either to the original or to the copy. It occurs only once more in the NT (1 Peter 3:21).

Heaven itself. Here the “greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands” (v. 11) is equated with “heaven itself.” “The heavenly temple, the abiding-place of the King of kings, where ‘thousand thousands minister unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stand before him,’ that temple filled with the glory of the eternal throne, where seraphim, its shining guardians, veil their faces in adoration—no earthly structure could represent its vastness and its glory” (PP 357).

Now. The author emphasizes the thought that Christ is already functioning as high priest. He is appealing to his readers to cease placing any dependence on the old Levitical system and to take full advantage of the glorious privileges provided by the new covenant (cf. on v. 9).

Presence of God. In contrast with the high priest of the earthly sanctuary (see on v. 8), who could appear only in the presence of the manifestation of the Deity in the Shekinah glory (see on Gen. 3:24), and that only once a year.

For us. Or, “in behalf of us.” He makes intercession for us (ch. 7:25). “If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father” (see on 1 John 2:1).

25. Offer himself. Compare the phrase “his own blood” (see on v. 12).

Often. Christ’ offering of Himself and His entrance into “heaven itself” (v. 24) were single, once-for-all, acts.

As the high priest. See on v. 7.

The holy place. Gr. *ta hagia* (see on chs. 8:2; 9:8). *Ta hagia* may, in this context, be regarded as referring particularly to the most holy place, or in a more general sense to the sanctuary as a whole, as in ch. 8:2.

Blood of others. That is, blood that was not his own. The high priest’s entrance is contrasted with that of Jesus, who entered in “by his own blood” (v. 12).

26. For then. That is, if Jesus’ offering had had but temporary efficacy as had the offering of the earthly high priest.

Often have suffered. His incarnation and death would have had to be repeated often.

Once. Gr. *hapax*, “once for all.”

End of the world. Or, “consummation of the ages.” “End of the world” is here used synonymously with “in these last days” of ch. 1:2, and should be understood in the light of the comment there given.

Hath he appeared. That is, His first advent.

To put away sin. Christ came to “save his people from their sins” (Matt. 1:21). He was “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). See Isa. 53:6; 1 Peter 2:24; cf. Dan. 9:24; Heb. 9:23.

Sacrifice of himself. See on v. 14.

27. And as. Verses 27 and 28 are parenthetical. The argument of v. 26 is carried on in ch. 10:1.

Appointed. Gr. *apokeimai*, “to store up,” “to lay away,” “to be stored up,” “to be reserved.” Compare the use of the word in Luke 19:20; Col. 1:5; 2 Tim. 4:8. The mention of Christ’s dying once apparently suggested the thought of men dying once. Because of Adam’s sin death passed upon all men (Rom. 5:12).

Once to die. It is appointed unto men to die only once prior to the judgment. This does not contradict the idea that if they are unfavorably judged they die again (Rev. 20:15).

After this the judgment. Death is not the end of man. All must one day appear before the judgment seat of Christ (see on 2 Cor. 5:10). This fact is here mentioned seemingly to show a parallel with the work of Christ, whose first coming was not His final coming.

28. Was once offered. The Bible speaks of Christ’s giving Himself (Gal. 1:4), or, offering Himself (Heb. 9:14), and of the Father giving His Son (John 3:16). But it also speaks of Christ as taken, crucified, and slain by wicked hands (Acts 2:23).

Bear the sins. See on Heb. 9:26; cf. on 2 Cor. 5:21.

Of many. Literally, “of the many,” equivalent to “all” (see on Rom. 5:15).

Look for. Gr. *apekdechomai*, “to await eagerly” (see on Rom. 8:19).

Appear. Gr. *horaō*, in the form here found, “to become visible,” “to appear.” Compare the use of the word in Luke 24:34; Acts 7:2; 1 Tim. 3:16.

Second time. His incarnation being the first time. This is the only place in the NT where the return of Christ in power and great glory is qualified by the adjective “second.”

Without sin. This is in contrast with the phrase, “to bear the sins of many.” At His first advent Christ took upon Himself the sins of the world (cf. 1 John 2:2). He was made “sin for us, ... that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor. 5:21). But the work he came to do for sin is all completed ere He comes the second time.

Unto salvation. That is, for the purpose of salvation.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 GC 413

1–5GC 411

2, 3 EW 251

3–5EW 252

4, 5 EW 32

7 PP 426

8–12DA 166

9 GC 413; PK 685; PP 356; SR 376

12 CSW 111; DA 757; GC 421; 4T 122

13, 14 TM 98; 4T 123
14 AA 565
19, 20 PP 312
21 PP 357
22 GC 418; PP 71; SR 52
22, 23 GC 417
23 PK 685; PP 356
23, 24 GC 413; PP 343, 357; SR 376
24 AA 566; GC 420, 482; PP 367
28 DA 422; GC 315, 485; PP 411; 5T 15

CHAPTER 10

1 *The weakness of the law sacrifices.* 10 *The sacrifice of Christ's body once offered, 14 for ever hath taken away sins.* 19 *An exhortation to hold fast the faith, with patience and thanksgiving.*

1. The law. The word is here used as in ch. 7:11 to describe the Jewish system of laws instituted at Sinai. The term is almost equivalent to the expression "first covenant" as the author uses that expression (see on ch. 8:7). "Law," or "first covenant," stood for the system in force in OT times since Sinai.

Shadow. A shadow shows only the general outlines of the original. Hence, too close similarity between the shadow and the object casting the shadow must not be expected. The word is here contrasted with "image" (*eikōn*), a word indicating a much closer representation (see on 2 Cor. 4:4; Rev. 13:14).

Good things to come. That is, such as would be introduced with the coming of the reality.

The very image. Or, "the image itself." See above on "shadow."

Never. The inability of the "law" to perfect forever is strongly emphasized.

Those sacrifices. The reference is particularly to the Day of Atonement sacrifices, though the statement would be true of the daily sacrifices as well. The reason the yearly sacrifices are here singled out seems to be that these were performed by the high priest, and Jesus is set forth in the book of Hebrews as the great High Priest of the new and better covenant (chs. 8:1; 9:11). Compare ch. 9:25, 26, where the work of Christ is again contrasted with that of the earthly high priest on the Day of Atonement.

Continually. Gr. *eis to diēnekes*, "forever," "for all time," "continually."

Commentators are divided as to whether this adverbial phrase should go with the verb "offered" or with the verb "make ... perfect." Either connection makes good sense, but the latter seems to be favored in v. 14, where the one offering of Christ is said to perfect "for ever" (*eis to diēnekes*) those who are sanctified. The ancient sacrifices were of temporary, instructional value, and were never designed in and of themselves to perfect the worshiper. They needed to be repeated until the time that the reality arrived in the one sacrifice of Christ once for all.

Comers thereunto. That is, those taking part in the Day of Atonement services.

Perfect. See on chs. 7:18, 19; 9:9; 10:14.

2. Ceased to be offered. That is, they would have ceased if they could have accomplished what the sacrifice of Christ did in perfecting forever (v. 14). Christ dealt

with the sin problem once and for all. There was no need that His sacrifice be repeated (cf. ch. 9:25, 26).

Once purged. Or, “once cleansed.” This cleansing did not take place until Christ “offered himself” (ch. 9:14). Only then was there remission for the transgressions that were under the first covenant (ch. 9:15).

No more conscience. Or, “no more consciousness” (cf. on ch. 9:9). At best the OT worshiper could, by faith, look forward to the time when the real sacrifice for sin should be made. If faith was lacking, his worship was dead and formal indeed.

3. Remembrance again. The sacrifices occurring year after year were a constant reminder of the fact that the true sacrifice for sin had not yet been made.

4. Not possible. The inability of the blood of animals to take away sin has already been stressed (see ch. 9:9–14).

5. When he cometh. That is, at the time of the incarnation. Christ is represented as uttering the words of Ps. 40:6–8 at the time of His entrance into the world. The preexistence of Christ is here clearly implied.

Sacrifice and offering. The statement that God did not desire these apparently has reference to the offering of these sacrifices merely as a fulfillment of a ritual requirement without true devotion of heart. It was Christ who instituted the sacrificial system. Properly used, it would have brought a blessing to the conscientious worshiper. But God found no pleasure in the sacrifices of the insincere worshiper (see 1 Sam. 15:22; Hosea 6:6).

A body hast thou prepared me. This is the reading of the LXX. For the reading of the Hebrew and its significance see on Ps. 40:6. The writer of Hebrews was doubtless aware of the two readings, and of the two he chose that of the LXX. The wording of the LXX taught a significant truth, and his use of that reading gives an endorsement to the truth taught without necessarily endorsing the translation as being a faithful representation of the Hebrew.

For the meaning the author gives to “body” see on v. 10.

6. No pleasure. See on v. 5. The insincere worshiper believed that God was highly pleased with his formal sacrifices.

7. I come. Rather, “I have come.” The word seems to express an immediate response to a situation that required a remedy.

Volume. Rather, “roll.” See on Ps. 40:7.

To do thy will. In the original context this phrase described moral obedience to the will of God. The author of Hebrews uses the phrase to show that the sacrifice of Christ fulfilled the will of God in providing an acceptable atonement, which the animal sacrifices had not provided. This point he proceeds to amplify.

8. Above. Literally, “higher up.” The reference is to vs. 5, 6 earlier quoted. The major portion of these verses is repeated in vs. 8, 9.

Sacrifice and offering. See on vs. 5, 6.

By the law. Or, “according to the law.” For the law here referred to see on v. 1.

9. To do thy will. See on v. 7.

Take away the first. First the author quoted the passage from the Psalms (vs. 5–7), then he repeated the significant portions of it for his present purpose (vs. 8, 9), and now he makes his application. He uses this passage to prove that the old system was done away with when Christ came to do the will of God, that is, to provide an effective

sacrifice. The passing away of the old is indicated by the statement that God had no pleasure in the sacrifices offered by the law. The establishment of the new is indicated by the statement that Christ did the will of God in providing the true sacrifice. Compare on ch. 8:13. The fact that the old system was obsolete was a difficult point for the Hebrew Christians to grasp. The author of Hebrews is attempting to prove to them that this was predicted in the OT, the writings held sacred by those who lived under the old system.

10. By the which will. Meaning, perhaps, either that by the fulfillment of that will in the perfect sacrifice of Christ we are sanctified, or that in that will which gave Jesus as a sacrifice for men, is included our sanctification (cf. 1 Thess. 4:3).

We are sanctified. The Greek emphasizes the thought that we were sanctified and now stand in a state of sanctification. Sanctification is here viewed, not from the aspect of a continual process (for which, see on Rom. 6:19), but in terms of the original change from sin to holiness, and as a continuation in that state. This meaning is found elsewhere. Thus Paul, addressing the Corinthian believers, speaks of “them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus” (see on 1 Cor. 1:2). He also reminds them that they “are sanctified,” literally, “were sanctified” (1 Cor. 6:11).

Offering of the body. Here is the application the author makes of the passage “but a body hast thou prepared me” (see on v. 5). Christ took a human body, which body was offered (cf. on ch. 2:14). Through the offering of this body men obtained sanctification. Jesus Christ was “made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption” (1 Cor. 1:30).

Once for all. There was no need to have the sacrifice repeated. It accomplished the needed cleansing for sin (ch. 9:14). It was not, like the sacrifices of the law, a mere shadow.

11. Standeth. There seems to be a special emphasis on this word. It signifies an unfinished task. By contrast Christ “sat down” (v. 12), signifying that His work, as far as His sacrifice was concerned, was complete. The continuous nature of the priestly sacrifices is further emphasized by the words “daily” and “oftentimes.”

Take away sins. See on v. 4.

12. This man. Rather, “this one.” There is here no word for “man” in the Greek. The humanity of Jesus is not denied, it is simply not expressed.

One. In contrast with the many offered by earthly priests (v. 11).

For ever. Gr. *eis to diēnekes* (see on v. 1). Here the translation “for all time” seems the most appropriate. The benefits of that one sacrifice were of permanent value.

Sat down. Signifying a completed task (see on v. 11).

Right hand of God. See on ch. 1:3.

13. From henceforth. Gr. *to loipon*, “from now on,” “henceforth,” “in the future.”

Expecting. Or, “waiting.” Christ is here represented as waiting for the moment of final triumph over all His enemies.

Till his enemies. An allusion to Ps. 110:1 (see on Heb. 1:13; cf. on 1 Cor. 15:24–28).

14. One offering. This thought is repeatedly emphasized (see on vs. 10, 12).

Perfected. The one sacrifice of Christ accomplished that which the continual sacrifices of the priests could not, for they could not purge the conscience (see on chs. 9:9, 14; 10:2). When the sinner accepts by faith the benefits of that one sacrifice he is accepted in the Beloved, being counted as perfect, because Christ his substitute stands in his place (see on Rom. 5:1; cf. SC 62).

For ever. Gr. *eis to diēnekes* (see on v. 1). The meaning is not that the man once saved cannot fall from grace, for the author of Hebrews has already denied such a proposition (see on ch. 6:4–6). The emphasis is on the continued efficacy of the one sacrifice of Christ (cf. on ch. 10:10, 12).

Are sanctified. The form of the Greek verb here used is different from the form translated “are sanctified” in v. 10 (see comment there). Here the meaning is “are being sanctified.” However, this form does not necessarily imply that the author is now speaking of sanctification as a continued process. It is unlikely that he would use the same word with such different meanings in such a close contextual relationship. The phrase “are being sanctified” is here probably used to describe the continued influx of new believers into the Christian church.

15. Holy Ghost. The testimony of Scripture is here presented as the witness of the Holy Spirit (see on 2 Peter 1:21).

Said before. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the omission of the word “before.” There is some difficulty in the construction of vs. 15–17. The simplest explanation seems to be to regard vs. 15, 16 as the statement referred to by the phrase “after that he had said before.” Then v. 17 becomes the conclusion of the sentence. If we supply some words like “then he says” to introduce v. 17, the suggested relationship becomes clear. The emphasis of the passage is upon the forgiveness of sins (vs. 17, 18). Verse 16 is introduced simply to show that it is the new covenant that provides this glorious benefit.

16. This is the covenant. See on ch. 8:10. The wording is different from ch. 8:10. The author may be quoting from memory, or may be simply selecting salient points from Jeremiah’s prophecy sufficient for his present purpose.

17. Remember no more. See on ch. 8:12. Now sins could be forgotten for the sacrifice for them had been made, which fact was not true under the old covenant (see on ch. 10:2).

18. Remission. Gr. *aphesis* (see on ch. 9:22).

No more offering. See on vs. 1, 2.

19. Having therefore. A new section begins here. The writer sums up briefly what he has established, namely, that through Jesus Christ we have direct access to God, and draws practical lessons for the Hebrew Christians. This practical section continues from here to the end of the epistle.

Brethren. See on ch. 3:1. This is the first time this form of address appears since ch. 3:12.

Boldness. Gr. *parrēsia*, “outspokenness,” “frankness,” “plainness of speech,” “courage,” “confidence,” “boldness,” “fearlessness.”

To enter. Under the old covenant this had been the privilege of only the high priest, and that only once a year (ch. 9:7, 25). Now every believer has free access.

The holiest. Gr. *ta hagia* (see on chs. 8:2; 9:8).

By the blood of Jesus. Not as the earthly high priest, with the blood of animals, which could not take away sins (v. 4), but by the blood of the efficacious, once-for-all, sacrifice of Christ.

20. New. It was new in the sense that it had not previously existed. The old covenant had not provided such a way. It is also new in the sense that it is always fresh—always efficacious.

Living. Christ “ever liveth to make intercession for us” (ch. 7:25). The new way centers in a person who is alive forevermore. He is the “way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). All this is in contrast with the dead sacrifices offered under the old covenant.

Consecrated. Gr. *egkainizō*, “to inaugurate,” “to dedicate.” The way was inaugurated by the death of Christ.

Veil. Gr. *katapetasma* (see on ch. 6:19). Ancient commentators generally understood the veil here to represent the means of entrance, that is, the doorway by which the divine presence is approached. However, “veil” seems here to be used in the sense of that which hides the divine presence. This interpretation of the word seems to be more in harmony with the symbolism of the veil in ch. 6:19, also with the significance of the rending of the veil at the time of the crucifixion of Christ (see on Matt. 27:51). That rending signified not only that the sacrificial system was at an end but also that “a new and living way is prepared” (DA 757).

That is to say, his flesh. “Flesh” here designates the humanity of Jesus (cf. ch. 5:7). The term would comprehend all that was involved in Christ’s first advent to this earth, including His sacrificial death.

The question to be answered is this, Does “flesh” stand in apposition with “veil” or with “way”? Grammatically in the Greek either connection is possible, although the second appears more natural. However, the interpretation of the passage is simpler with the former connection. There are commentators on both sides. If “flesh” stands in apposition with “way,” then Christ’s incarnation, life, and death are represented as the way through the veil to the presence of God. Verse 20 is then simply an amplification of v. 19, where the “blood of Jesus” is represented as the means by which we have entrance into the “holiest.”

If “flesh” stands in apposition with “veil” then the meaning is that Christ’s passing through the experience of incarnation made possible our entrance into the “holiest” (v. 19). There is no problem with this interpretation if it is not pressed too far. Further points of comparison between “flesh” and “veil” must be avoided, such as that Christ, having passed through His humanity, no longer possesses His human nature (see on John 1:14), or that Christ’s humanity in any sense acted as a barrier separating men from access to God.

Whatever the specific meaning of this text, the general significance is clear. Most of the difficulties in this passage are the result of reading into it more than the writer intended to say.

It might be well to note that this is one of several passages where the writer of Hebrews gives special emphasis to the thought that through Christ Jesus man has direct access to God. This seems to be the central thought of the whole message of the book of Hebrews. Because of the sacrifice of Christ in our behalf a veil no longer exists between us and our God. Our hope enters “into that within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus” (ch. 6:19, 20). “Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, ... but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us” (ch. 9:24). The writer of Hebrews seeks to establish the superiority of the heavenly service of our Lord over the earthly service conducted by earthly priests. He cites as one of the best proofs of this, the glorious fact that there is no longer a veil, a barrier, between us and our God. See Additional Note at end of chapter. See on Ex. 25:9; Dan 8:14.

21. An high priest. Literally, “a great priest.” Here the writer reaffirms the theme of the book of Hebrews, the priesthood of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary (see p. 390). See on chs. 2:17; 4:14.

House of God. That is, the church (see on ch. 3:3–6).

22. Let us draw near. It is not enough to believe in Christ and His priestly ministry in the courts above. The sincere believer will make use of the facilities Heaven has so graciously provided by which he may “obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (see on ch. 4:16). To “draw near” implies intimate communion and fellowship.

A true heart. This is the first of four qualifications set forth which those who would benefit by the saving merits of our great High Priest must meet. He who draws near with a “true heart” does so in all sincerity, without hypocrisy or reservations of any kind. Compare the “perfect heart” of Isa. 38:3.

Full assurance. Those who “draw near” must do so with unwavering faith in the power of Christ to cleanse the soul from sin and to impart grace to live above sin. Doubt and unbelief rob a person of the capacity to appropriate the saving merits of the Saviour. The importance of faith to a living Christian experience constitutes the theme of chs. 10:38 to 11:40.

Faith. Gr. *pistis* (see on ch. 11:1).

Hearts sprinkled. Anciently, the sprinkling of such things as persons and the clothing they wore represented dedication to sacred service (see Lev. 8:30; etc.). The old covenant was ratified, or confirmed, by the sprinkling of blood (Heb. 9:19). In a similar manner, he who draws near to Christ will heartily accept the provisions of the new covenant and will dedicate himself to the new way of life provided by that covenant.

Evil conscience. Here equivalent to the “old man” of Rom. 6:6; Eph. 4:22; Col. 3:9. A new heart has replaced the old, and the earthly desires that formerly motivated the life have been abandoned. The mind and love of Christ are now in control (see on 2 Cor. 5:14; Phil. 2:5).

Bodies washed. There is outward evidence testifying to the inward transformation that has taken place. The rite of baptism proclaims to all men the intention of each candidate to enter into the privileges and to accept the responsibilities that follow upon conversion. Concerning the significance of the rite of baptism see on Rom. 6:3–6.

Pure water. In the physical world water is an important and valuable cleansing agent, and it is a fitting symbol of the cleansing of the life from sin.

23. Let us hold fast. Again and again Christ and the NT writers stress the importance of endurance and perseverance (see Matt. 10:22; 24:13; Col. 1:23; etc.). There is danger that those who have entered upon the new life in Christ will become “weary in well doing” (Gal. 6:9), that they will relax their hold upon the eternal verities of God’s Word. See on Heb. 3:6.

Profession. See on ch. 3:1.

Our faith. Literally, “our hope,” that is, the hope of salvation through Christ (see on Titus 2:13; cf. Heb. 3:6; 6:11, 18, 19).

Without wavering. “Wavering” is the opposite of holding fast (see on Matt. 24:13; cf. Heb. 4:14; 10:35, 36). As a result of “wavering” at Kadesh-barnea the generation of Israelites that left Egypt could not enter into the Land of Promise. Their “wavering” was the result of a lack of faith (see on Heb. 3:12, 18, 19; 11:1).

He is faithful. That is, God is faithful in keeping His promises—of deliverance from Egypt and entrance into Canaan, and of deliverance from sin and entrance into the blessings of salvation in Christ Jesus. Since God is faithful and does not waver in fulfilling His promises, we should be faithful and not waver in accepting them. The faithfulness of Christ as our great High Priest is stressed in ch. 3:2, 5, 6.

That promised. The writer doubtless thinks back to the promises made to Abraham and his descendants with respect to the land of Canaan (see on Gen. 15:18; Heb. 4:1), but the promise of salvation through Jesus Christ is uppermost in his mind (cf. John 3:16; see on Matt. 1:21).

24. Let us consider. This verse may be translated, “Let us consider how to encourage one another in love and good works.” Instead of doing and saying things that will make it more difficult for others to “hold fast . . . without wavering” (v. 23), the true Christian will actively consider what he may do to encourage them in so doing. This is an application of the great principle of love toward one’s fellow men, which is reflected in the second table of the Decalogue (see on Matt. 5:43, 44; 22:39). Sincere concern for the temporal and eternal welfare of others is the measure by which Heaven determines the sincerity of a man’s professed love for God (see on 1 John 2:9–11; 3:10, 14).

Love. See on Matt. 5:43, 44.

Good works. That is, love in action, love expressed in deeds of kindness and mercy. We encourage others to be kind and considerate by being kind and considerate ourselves. Such an example is irresistible. See on James 1:27; 2:18.

25. Not forsaking. Or, “not neglecting.”

The assembling. The writer here refers to Christian gatherings for the purpose of worship and mutual encouragement, which in NT times were commonly held in the homes of believers (see Vol. VI, p. 47).

The manner of some. Or, “the custom of some.” Apparently, some were neglecting to fellowship with their brethren in seasons of worship and devotion, to their own detriment. In so doing they were living in contravention of the counsel of v. 24 to encourage their fellow believers in love and good works. In view of the political situation prevailing at the time the book of Hebrews was written, some may have absented themselves from fear of incurring governmental displeasure and possibly civil penalties. Others remained absent from religious services because of carelessness and indifference (see vs. 26, 27).

Exhorting. Or, “encouraging.” Words of exhortation would encourage others to “hold fast” their “faith without wavering” (v. 23). Those who are firmly established in the faith should never forget that some of their fellow believers, whose opportunity for the development of Christian character may have been less favorable, may be passing through doubt and discouragement. “A word in season to him that is weary” (Isa. 50:4) may be the means, in God’s providence, of converting a “sinner from the error of his way,” of saving his “soul from death,” and of hiding “a multitude of sins” (James 5:20).

So much the more. As trouble, difficulty, and persecution should increase, mutual exhortation and encouragement would prove to be of even greater benefit. The danger to personal safety that might be incurred by attending public worship would be far outweighed by the courage and strength that result from Christian fellowship.

The day. Reference here is to the day “of judgment and fiery indignation” (v. 27), the day when “he that shall come will come” (v. 37). The expression, “see the day

approaching,” doubtless points back to the admonition of our Lord in response to the disciples’ question, “When shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?” (Matt. 24:3). The disciples’ question and our Lord’s reply alike encompass both the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and the end of the world (see on Matt. 24:3). In view of the fact that the book of Hebrews was doubtless written but a short time prior to the year A.D. 70 (see p. 389), it is not improbable that the writer looked forward also to the fateful events of that year. However, as the context makes evident (see especially Heb. 10:27, 37), he is thinking primarily of the second coming of Christ (see Additional Note on Rom. 13).

26. For it. In vs. 26–31 the writer explains more fully the nature of the wavering referred to in v. 23 and the state of mind of those mentioned in v. 25, who were neglecting to attend the appointed gatherings of believers.

Sin wilfully. That is, continue to sin willfully, as the form of the Greek verb indicates. As the context makes evident (see v. 29), reference here is not to single acts of sin committed in the full knowledge of their heinous character, but to the attitude of mind that prevails when a person deliberately renounces Christ, refuses salvation, and rejects the Holy Spirit. This is deliberate, persistent, defiant sin. It is a considered reversal of the former decision to accept salvation in Christ and to yield one’s heart and life to Him. It is premeditated apostasy, and leads to the unpardonable sin (see on Matt. 12:31, 32). It is a continuing state of revolt against God.

After that. To be sure, all sinners are in a state of revolt against God (see on Rom. 8:7). But, as Paul explained to the Athenians, before sinners have received the knowledge of the truth God winks at their ignorance (Acts 17:30). Before the light of truth shines into men’s hearts God does not hold them accountable for the darkness that prevails there (see John 15:22; cf. Eze. 3:18–21; 18:2–32; 33:12–20; Luke 23:34; 1 Tim. 1:13). God loves sinners, and, indeed, sent His Son to save them (see on John 1:4, 5, 9–12; 3:16; cf. Matt. 9:13). But when light comes and men choose darkness instead, they stand self-condemned before God (John 3:19), and “there remaineth no more sacrifice for [their] sins” (Heb. 10:26; cf. James 4:17).

Knowledge. Gr. *epignōsis*, “full knowledge.” The persons referred to are fully aware of the results of the course of action they have chosen.

Truth. That is, the “truth” about the love of God the Father for sinners as revealed in the plan of salvation and the gift of His Son (see ch. 2:1–3).

No more sacrifice. The Mosaic law prescribed death—not sacrifice—for confirmed and obdurate apostates (see on v. 28). Such were Nadab and Abihu (see Lev. 10:1–5), and Korah, Dathan, and Abiram and the 250 men associated with them (see Num. 16:1–35). For such persons sacrifices would have been unacceptable to the Lord, for sacrifices were of value only to the extent that they represented repentant hearts.

27. Fearful looking for. Or, “fearful prospect of” (RSV).

Judgment. Gr. *krisis*, the act of executing judgment, here the final judgment, as the additional expression “fiery indignation” makes evident (see on Acts 17:31; Heb. 9:27).

Fiery indignation. Rather, “intenseness of fire,” that is, the fires of the last day (see 2 Peter 3:7, 10–12; Rev. 20:9–15). Reference is to the intensity of the fire, not to the divine attitude that finds expression in the fire (see on Rom. 1:18).

Devour. Or, “eat up,” “consume.”

The adversaries. That is, the deliberate, confirmed sinners of v. 26.

28. Despised. Gr. *atheteō*, “to refuse to recognize,” “to reject,” “to nullify.” Those who “despised Moses’ law” did so by living in open violation of its precepts. They flouted the authority of the law and challenged its jurisdiction over them.

Moses’ law. Here referring to the entire legal code promulgated by Moses under divine direction, particularly as recorded in the book of Deuteronomy (see Deut. 31:24–26).

Died without mercy. There was no appeal. There was no higher court to extend mercy. There was no escape from the penalty the law prescribed. Avowed apostates must die lest their influence contaminate others.

Under. Literally, “on [the testimony of].”

Two or three witnesses. In case of serious crime, such as murder, Moses stipulated that at least two witnesses must be in agreement on the essential details before a verdict of guilty could be pronounced (Deut. 17:6; cf. on Matt. 26:60; see Vol. V, p. 539). This merciful and wise provision tended to discourage false accusations and to assure justice. The same principle is valid today.

29. Sorer punishment. Or, “more severe retribution.” The most severe penalty possible under the law of Moses was death. It deprived a man of the remainder of his natural life. But the “fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries” of the Lord (v. 27) on the last day, will deprive men of eternal life. There is a resurrection from the first death but not from the second, and the second death is, accordingly, a “much sorer punishment.”

Suppose ye? In the form of a question the truth here stated is much more emphatic than it otherwise would be.

Thought worthy. That is, by the great Judge of the universe.

Trodden under foot. That is, as a deliberate act of contempt (cf. Matt. 7:6). Those here referred to not only reject Christ’s offer of mercy but spare no pains to let it be known that they despise His offer.

Son of God. See on Luke 1:35.

Counted. That is, considered.

Blood of the covenant. That is, the blood of Christ, by which the provisions of the new covenant are made operative (see ch. 9:11–26).

He was sanctified. The apostate here referred to had at one time professed to accept salvation through the atoning grace of Christ. He had once professed to appreciate that which he now despised, and thereby bore unwitting testimony to the fact that his present attitude was not based on ignorance.

An unholy thing. Literally, “common.” The man who rejects God’s love does not appreciate the supreme value of that gift. Contrast this man’s attitude with that of the pearl merchant (see Matt. 13:45, 46) and of the man who discovered treasure hidden in a field (v. 44).

Done despite. Gr. *enubrizō*, “to insult,” “to outrage.” The persistent refusal to heed the promptings of the Holy Spirit reflects contempt for them. Concerning the various ways by which men may insult the Holy Spirit and commit the unpardonable sin see on Matt. 12:31, 32; Eph. 4:30.

Spirit of grace. That is, the Spirit through whose agency the grace of Christ is applied to each repentant sinner.

30. Vengeance. The quotation is from Deut. 32:35. For comment see on Rom. 12:19.

I will recompense. God will “render to every man according to his deeds” (Rom. 2:5–10; cf. Rev. 22:12). In the great final day of judgment those who have despised God’s mercy and insulted His Spirit need expect no mercy. Their just dues will be paid in full.

Shall judge. A citation from Deut. 32:36, which repeats the thought of v. 35.

31. A fearful thing. The dread that overtakes sinners when ushered into the presence of a righteous God is awful to imagine (cf. Rev. 6:14–17). How much more terrible it will be to go through that experience!

Fall into the hands. Many forget that although God is, indeed, “merciful and gracious,” nevertheless He “will by no means clear the guilty” (Ex. 34:6, 7). Those who despise God’s mercy should never forget that “whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Gal. 6:7).

The living God. God lives! His warnings of retribution are not to be taken as idle threats, such as those made in the name of a heathen deity, which is but wood or stone (see Isa. 37:19).

32. Call to remembrance. The writer again addresses his readers directly. They may understand what he means by reflecting on their own past experience as Christians.

The former days. That is, the experiences that came to them soon after conversion. The first intended readers of the book of Hebrews were Jews (see p. 389). As numerous passages in the book of Acts reveal, nonbelieving Jews, from the very first, persecuted their brethren who accepted Christianity.

After ye were illuminated. That is, by the light of the gospel.

Ye endured. Those to whom the writer addresses himself had patiently borne persecution and hardship in the past; why should they become fainthearted now?

Fight. Gr. *athlēsis*, “contest,” “struggle,” “conflict.” Having endured “a great fight,” they should be well prepared to face the afflictions of the present. The nature of this “fight of afflictions” is explained further in vs. 33, 34.

33. Partly. Or, “sometimes.”

Made a gazingstock. Gr. *theatrizō*, “to expose publicly [as in a theater],” “to put to shame.” Anciently, criminals were often exposed to public ridicule and then executed in an arena or theater.

Reproaches. Gr. *oneidismoi*, “insults,” “abuses,” “reproaches.”

Afflictions. Or, “sufferings,” including, perhaps, such experiences as disinheritance, social ostracism, and the deprivation of means to earn a livelihood.

Companions. Even when not persecuted directly themselves they had been ready to share the “reproaches and afflictions” to which their brethren were subjected. The following verse cites a specific example of their companionship in suffering.

34. Ye had compassion. Literally, “you suffered with.” The words “of me” have been supplied by the translators. This “compassion” doubtless included visits with Paul while he was in prison, and food for him to supplement the meager prison rations.

In my bonds. Textual evidence is divided (cf. p. 10) between this and the reading “upon the prisoners [*desmioi*].” Textual evidence may also be cited for the reading, “upon the bonds [*desmoi*].” Because of these variations in the Greek text it is uncertain whether the writer refers specifically to a former personal experience or whether he may include himself as one of the various prisoners referred to collectively as “them” in v. 33. The

context may be understood as tending to favor the reading “prisoners.” Compare Eph. 3:1; 2 Tim. 1:8.

Took joyfully. See on Matt. 5:12; James 1:2; cf. 1 Peter 4:13.

Spoiling. Or, “seizure.” Some had experienced the confiscation of property and personal belongings.

Knowing in yourselves that ye have. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the reading, “knowing yourselves to have,” that is, knowing that *ye* have.

In heaven. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the omission of these words, though there can, of course, be no question that the Christian’s “enduring substance” *is* “in heaven” (cf. Matt. 6:19–21).

Better. Or, “preferable,” “more useful,” “more advantageous.”

Substance. Or, “existence,” “possession.”

35. Cast not away. As some were apparently doing (see v. 25). To “cast not away” is the same as to “hold fast” (v. 23). See on Matt. 24:13; Heb. 3:14.

Confidence. Gr. *parresia* (see on ch. 3:6).

Reward. The “reward” of faithfulness is eternal life (see on Rom. 2:6, 7).

36. Patience. Patience is a positive virtue. It calls for perseverance, persistence, and action despite weariness, discouragement, and obstacles that may block the way.

Done the will of God. For comment on the importance of doing God’s will see on Matt. 7:21–27.

The promise. That is, the promised reward, eternal life. As an athlete receives the prize after a successful performance, so the Christian receives “the promise” after having “done the will of God.” In the book of Hebrews “the promise” refers particularly to what is spoken of as God’s “rest” and as an “eternal inheritance” (chs. 4:1; 9:15; cf. ch. 11:13).

37. A little while. Literally, “a very little [time].” See Additional Note on Rom. 13.

He that shall come. That is, the One who has promised to return (see John 14:1–3). Compare Luke 21:27; James 5:8.

Tarry. Gr. *chronizō*, “to spend time,” “to delay.” Compare Hab. 2:3, where the LXX uses the same Greek word. God’s promises may seem long delayed, but eventually they are sure of fulfillment.

38. The just. The first part of the verse is quoted from Hab. 2:4 (see comment there and on Rom. 1:17; cf. Gal. 3:11). Here, “the just” are to “live by faith” while awaiting the promised coming of Christ. By faith they are to endure patiently the troublous times that precede His advent.

Draw back. That is, cast away his confidence (see v. 35).

My soul. A common Biblical expression meaning “I” (see on Ps. 16:10).

No pleasure. Those who “draw back” from the pathway of faith can never expect to hear the words, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant: ... enter thou into the joy of thy lord” (Matt. 25:21).

39. We are not of them. Tactfully, the writer includes all of his readers in the group that will “live by faith” (v. 38). The admonition of vs. 23–36 implies that some of them were in danger of drawing “back unto perdition.” But the writer now banishes the thought that any of them will actually do so.

Perdition. That is, final destruction (see on John 17:12).

Saving. Gr. *peripoiēsis*, “reserving,” “acquiring,” “preserving.” See on Eph. 1:14 where *peripoiēsis* is translated “purchased possession.”

ADDITIONAL NOTE ON CHAPTER 10

4

The Bible makes repeated statements concerning the great plan that God devised for the salvation of men, a plan that finds its center and circumference in the sacrifice of our Lord on Calvary and His ministry in heaven above for us. When God called out for Himself a chosen people, one of His first revelations to them was regarding the plan of salvation. God instructed Moses to build Him a sanctuary that He might dwell among them (see on Ex. 25:8). This sanctuary was divided into two apartments (see on Ex. 26:31–37), in each of which certain furniture was placed. In the first apartment, containing the table of shewbread, the seven-branched candlestick, and the altar of incense, certain services were conducted daily. In the second apartment, containing the ark of the covenant, a service was conducted only on the climactic day of the yearly cycle, the Day of Atonement. In connection with the services in both apartments animal sacrifices were offered—blood was poured out (see Vol. I, pp. 698–710).

This sanctuary was made according to a “pattern” that was shown to Moses “in the mount” (Ex. 25:40; see on 25:9; Acts 7:44). In heaven above is found the original of which the earthly sanctuary is a “shadow” (see on Heb. 8:5; 9:23). John the revelator, to whom were given repeated prophetic glimpses of heaven, speaks of “the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven” (see on Rev. 15:5). In that “temple” he saw the “ark” (ch. 11:19). He also saw in heavenly vision the altar of incense (see on ch. 8:3). Paul, the writer of Hebrews, speaks of our “High Priest” in heaven (see Heb. 3:1; 9:24), who has offered, once for all, the sacrifice of Himself, pouring out His blood in behalf of penitent sinners (see on chs. 9:24–26; 10:12).

From these and other passages that might be cited it is evident that the earthly sanctuary, with its two apartments, and its cycle of services, is a “shadow,” or outline, of the work of Christ for sinners on Calvary and in heaven above. Indeed, we probably are able to speak with more certainty regarding the sanctuary service than we can regarding almost any other aspect of God’s ways toward man, for there is actually presented before us, as adequately as earthly symbols can do so, the great original in heaven.

From what may be known of the earthly we can draw certain conclusions regarding the heavenly. As the earthly service could not begin until the priest had an offering to sacrifice, so Christ began His work as our High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary following the offering of Himself. As the earthly sanctuary service had two phases, represented by two apartments, even so the heavenly has two phases. And as the earthly service was in terms of the first phase until the climatic Day of Atonement, even so the heavenly service was in terms of the first phase until that time, near the close of earth’s history, when our great High Priest entered upon the second phase of His priestly ministry. The prophecy of Dan. 8:14 (see comment there), taken together with 9:25, shows that He began that second phase in 1844.

⁴Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Heb 8:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

However, as noted in the comment on Ex. 25:9, it is futile to speculate as to the dimensions, exact appearance, or precise arrangements of the heavenly sanctuary, for “no earthly structure could represent its vastness and its glory” (PP 357). Man is “in the image of God” (Gen. 1:27), yet only Christ is “the express image of his person” (Heb. 1:3). The earthly sanctuary was patterned after that in heaven to the extent that it was a vivid representation of the various aspects of Christ’s ministry on behalf of fallen man (PP 357). We may rightly speak of the “holy place” and the “most holy place” of the heavenly sanctuary, for thus we employ the language and symbols of the earthly sanctuary (Ex. 26:33, 34) to understand, as best we can, the truth regarding the heavenly sanctuary. But we should not permit any finite perplexity in visualizing a heavenly sanctuary on the order of the earthly, to blur in our minds the great truths taught by that earthly “shadow,” one of which is that Christ’s ministry for us is carried on in two phases, or “two great divisions,” to borrow the words of Ellen G. White (PP 357). This truth is vital to a proper understanding of the work of our great High Priest. For a more extended discussion of this truth the reader is invited to see the comments on the texts cited.

The epistle of Hebrews discusses the work of Christ as our High Priest. In certain instances, for example ch. 9, Paul speaks of the two apartments of the earthly tabernacle and makes a certain application to Christ’s ministry in heaven. Hence, this book has sometimes been the center of theological discussion as to the interpretation of Paul’s words on the matter, particularly as to whether he teaches that there are two apartments in the heavenly sanctuary—or “two great divisions” to Christ’s priestly ministry.

This commentary presents unqualifiedly the view that Christ’s heavenly ministry is carried on in “two great divisions,” or, to borrow Scripture symbolism, in the “holy” and then the “most holy place” of the heavenly sanctuary (see especially on Ex. 25:9; Dan. 8:14); but that the book of Hebrews is hardly the place for a definitive presentation of the matter.

In NT times the Hebrew Christians were greatly troubled with the problem of how to relate themselves to the earthly sanctuary service that they and their fathers before them for fifteen hundred years had considered to be the center and the circumference of true religious life (see Vol. VI, pp. 30–33). Paul seeks to show, by a series of parallels and contrasts, that the earthly sanctuary no longer should claim their loyalty and devotion, because now God has set up that of which the earthly was never more than a “shadow” (see Introduction to Hebrews, pp. 390–393, for an extended list of these parallels). For example, the writer of Hebrews speaks of the deathless priest in heaven compared with the dying priests on earth (see on Heb. 7:23, 24, 28), of the priceless sacrifice of Christ Himself contrasted with the sacrifice of animals (see on chs. 9:11–14, 23–26; 10:11–14), and comes to the grand conclusion that now there is a “more excellent ministry” (see on ch. 8:6) available for the child of God. We need no longer appeal to earthly priests to present before God our plea for forgiveness. We, ourselves, can now come boldly and directly to the throne of grace by virtue of our great High Priest in heaven (see on chs. 4:14–16; 10:19–22).

Paul had to establish this prime truth of the vast superiority of the heavenly sanctuary in order to persuade Jewish Christians to turn their eyes forever from earthly priests and an earthly sanctuary to a heavenly priest and a heavenly sanctuary. On this truth Paul focuses his impassioned argument regarding the sanctuary. This commentary holds that if

Paul's declarations in Hebrews are placed alongside other Bible passages, which deal more particularly with the "two great divisions" of the sanctuary service, there stands forth a well-rounded scriptural picture as to both the nature and the pre-eminence of Christ's high-priestly ministry for us.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1-397T 40
5-7DA 23
7 DA 757; 4T 121
16 MB 50; SC 60
19, 20 FE 309
21 DA 52
21, 22 4T 121
22 ML 129; TM 515
23 SR 247; 1T 121; 5T 630; 7T 274
25 1T 548; 6T 365; 7T 190
26, 27 PP 405, 517; TM 97
27 MB 26; SC 24
29 FE 434; GC 601; TM 91; 1T 429; 9T 48
31 PP 329; 4T 533
32 GC 39; SR 320; 6T 365; 8T 113
32, 33 3T 319
35 GC 408; MYP 111; SL 89; 2T 509; 5T 578
35-37COL 177; PK 732; 9T 287
35-39EW 25; GC 407; SR 374
37 5T 485; 9T 11
37, 38 GC 408
38 SC 69; TM 424; 4T 237
38, 39 5T 693

CHAPTER 11

1 *What faith is.* 6 *Without faith we cannot please God.* 7 *The worthy fruits thereof in the fathers of old time.*

1. Faith. Gr. *pistis*, "trust," "confidence," "faith," also "faithfulness," "reliability."

The word *pistis* may denote either an attitude of mind or a pattern of conduct, faithful conduct being the product of an attitude of faith. The two shades of meaning are closely interwoven throughout the chapter, for in each instance of faith cited an attitude of faith led to faithful deeds. Emphasis is on faithful deeds.

Chapter 11 abundantly illustrates the principle more succinctly stated in ch. 10, especially vs. 35-39, that faith and faithfulness are the supreme need of those who await the coming of the Lord. There is danger that some will cast away their confidence because the Lord appears to delay His coming. All such "have need of patience" in order that they may "live by faith." To a man, the worthies here listed "received not the promise" (ch. 11:39)—but only saw it "afar off" (v. 13). Nevertheless "these all, ... obtained a good report through faith." But now, in only "a little while, ... he that shall come will come, and will not tarry" (ch. 10:37). If the worthies of ages past were so fully "persuaded" (ch. 11:13) of the promises, "afar off" though they were from their

fulfillment, should not we, who are to see them fulfilled in “a little while,” be patient and faithful also?

Substance. Gr. *hupostasis*, “substantial nature,” “essence,” “actual being,” “reality,” and in an extended sense, as here, “confident assurance.” Compare the word *arrabōn*, “earnest” (see on 2 Cor. 1:22). There is no such thing as blind faith. Genuine faith always rests upon the firm, underlying “substance” of sufficient evidence to warrant confidence in what is not yet seen. *Hupostasis* is used in the ancient papyri of the legal documents by which a person proved his ownership of property. The documents were not the property, but they provided evidence of its existence and of his right to it. Accordingly, *hupostasis* might here be rendered “title-deed”—“Faith is the title-deed . . .”

By faith the Christian considers himself already in possession of what has been promised him. His utter confidence in the One who has made the promises leaves no uncertainty as to their fulfillment in due time. Faith thus enables a Christian not only to lay claim to promised blessings but to receive and to enjoy them *now*. Thus, the promised inheritance becomes a present possession. The good things to come are no longer only dreams to be fulfilled in the future, but living realities in the present. To the eye of faith what is otherwise invisible becomes visible.

Things hoped for. That is, the promised inheritance into which the saints are to enter at the coming of Christ.

Evidence. Gr. *elegchos*, here meaning “proof,” “conviction.” Faith is not abstract belief that evidence exists, but a settled assurance, based on confidence that God will fulfill His promises. We may never have seen the generator that produces the electricity we use in our homes, but we rightly consider the presence of the electricity sufficient evidence of the existence of the generator. Similarly, we believe that our physical, mental, and spiritual energy testify to the existence of a supernatural Source of life and power. On the other hand, faith is not to be confused with credulity, for faith is reinforced, to a degree, by evidence (see on ch. 12:1).

Things not seen. These are the “things hoped for,” the promised inheritance.

2. Elders. Gr. *presbuteroi*, here meaning “the ancients,” “men of old” (RSV), not necessarily old men.

Obtained a good report. Literally, “were witnessed to,” “were approved,” “were attested.” The faith of “the elders” led to faithful conduct, which in turn testified to the reality of their faith. It was their faith that won for them divine approval. We may wonder how some of those named in this chapter could ever have obtained “a good report.” But if only flawless heroes of faith were listed here, the account would provide little encouragement for the common man. If men who were subject to “like passions as we are” (James 5:17) could obtain “a good report,” there is every reason to believe that even the weakest of God’s children today may do likewise.

3. Through faith. Or, “by faith,” as elsewhere in the chapter.

Worlds. Gr. *aiōnes*, literally, “ages,” but here meaning this “world” considered from the viewpoint of time. Reference is not necessarily to other worlds than ours.

By the word of God. See on Gen. 1:3; cf. Ps. 33:6, 9. For a discussion of fiat creation versus evolution see Vol. I, pp. 46–63.

Things which are seen. That is, the natural world of earth, sea, and sky, together with their varied forms of life.

Not made. God was not indebted to preexisting matter. By His mighty power God called matter into being, and then by that same power imparted life to creatures formed from it. Prior to the dawn of the so-called Atomic Age it was one of the prime tenets of science that matter is eternal, that it can be neither created nor destroyed. But now scientists declare that matter and energy are interchangeable. Why, then, should it be thought strange that an almighty God can create matter that did not previously exist?

Things which do appear. The world and everything in it were made out of nothing, by the exercise of infinite power.

4. By faith. See on vs. 1, 3.

Abel. For the record of the incident here referred to see Gen. 4:3–10.

Obtained witness. Literally, “was witnessed to.” The clause may be rendered, “by which he was approved as righteous” (see on v. 2). By faith Abel grasped the promise of a Redeemer. His offering had no atoning value in itself, but faith in the promise led him to bring the sacrifice God had prescribed. God accepted his “gifts” as evidence of his faith.

God testifying. God accepted Abel’s “gifts” and refused those of Cain. The difference was not simply in the character of the gifts themselves, but also in the character and attitude of the givers as reflected in the gifts they brought (see PP 71, 72).

Yet speaketh. Abel’s faith has borne a living witness down through the centuries. There was power in Abel’s faith that led him to conform to the course of action God had prescribed, and the powerful influence of his faith lives on today—it “yet speaketh.”

5. By faith. See on vs. 1, 3.

Enoch. See on Gen. 5:22.

Translated. The writer does not mean that Enoch had faith that God would translate him, but that he was translated as a result of his faith and his faithfulness—“he pleased God.” Inspiration speaks only of Enoch and Elijah being translated to heaven without seeing death.

The Hebrew text of the Gen. 5 genealogy, if complete, puts Enoch’s translation a relatively few years after Adam’s death (see Vol. I, p. 185). The loss of Adam must have cast a shadow over the faithful, for despite his repentant, godly life he had died, even as every sinner dies.

If so, perhaps it is not unreasonable to conjecture that, in order to give his godly descendants the assurance that a life of faith will be rewarded, God translated Enoch, the seventh from Adam. As with Adam, God demonstrated that “the wages of sin is death,” so with Enoch He demonstrated that “the gift of God is eternal life” (Rom. 6:23). The translation of Enoch proved that although sin separates man from God, a way has been provided by which that separation may be terminated and man may return to God. That way is the way of faith.

Enoch is a type of those who are to be translated from the last generation, from among the living. Enoch became a friend of God, walked with Him, and at last went home with Him. All may therefore take courage. Whoever serves God with a heart full of faith and walks with Him day by day in the changing experiences of life will have an abundant entrance into the paradise of God.

Not see death. That is, not experience death.

Not found. These words imply an attempt to find Enoch after his disappearance. Such an attempt was later made following the translation of Elijah (see 2 Kings 2:16–18).

Before his translation. Enoch's godly way of life was well known to his contemporaries.

He had this testimony. Literally, "he was testified to." Through Enoch, God had provided the world with a demonstration of the kind of character that will meet with His approval. There was no possibility that men would ask, after the translation of so pious a saint, "How can God accept a man like that?"

Pleased God. Enoch's faith in God and his faithfulness to God met with divine approval. His life and character were a demonstration of what God would have all men be.

6. Without faith. Or, "apart from faith," or, "apart from faithfulness" (see on v. 1). Whereas the Creator is infinite, His creatures are irrevocably finite, and there are, accordingly, things which they must take by faith. Indeed, to take God at His word is the most exalted exercise of which the human mind is capable. Indeed, he must take God at His word if he is to fill perfectly the place designed for him in a perfect universe, for a realization of the love of God culminates in faith. In the divine-human person of the Saviour, Godlike love and human faith met together for the first time.

Impossible to please him. That is, impossible to measure up to His requirements. There is no room in a perfect universe for a created being who lacks faith in the Ruler of the universe. The only alternative to faith in God is fear and resentment, and ultimately, despair.

Cometh to God. That is, professes allegiance to Him.

Believe that he is. Belief that God really exists is the ultimate foundation of the Christian faith. Through nature, through His Word, and through His providential leading God has provided men with all the evidence of His existence that intelligent beings need and can make use of (cf. Rom. 1:20). The writer here rules out such distorted concepts of God as those held by pantheists.

A rewarder. Here, the writer rules out concepts of God such as those of Deism and universalism. It makes a difference whether men respond to God's love and comply with His revealed will. "He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world" (Acts 17:31), a day when He "will render to every man according to his deeds" (Rom. 2:6). The awful prospect of someday standing before the great Judge of the universe is undeniably a powerful incentive to right living. To be sure, great fear of the fires of hell will never save any man, but it may be a factor—a potent factor—in shaking him out of his lethargy. The infinite love of God as revealed in Christ Jesus provides man with the ultimate and only effective incentive to salvation.

Diligently seek him. Or, "seek him out," "search for him." To "seek" God is to endeavor to understand more fully His infinite character and His will for men. The writer does not imply that God has deliberately made it difficult for men to find Him, but stresses the need of an earnest desire to understand God and to become like Him both in mind and in character.

7. By faith. See on vs. 1, 3.

Noah. For the experience here referred to see Gen. 6:13–22.

Things not seen. There was no evidence that such a catastrophe as the Flood ever would, or ever could, happen. To prepare for the event was an act of faith on Noah's part.

Moved with fear. Noah was profoundly impressed by the revelation that God purposed to destroy the earth by a flood, and heeded the instructions given him. However, it was not so much fear of the coming flood that led Noah to build the ark as it was faith in what God had revealed to him concerning the catastrophe.

Condemned the world. The construction of the ark testified to Noah's decision against "the world," here meaning wicked men and their way of life. His renunciation of the world that then was, testified to his faith in God.

Heir of the righteousness. Noah's faith, as reflected by his faithfulness in action commensurate with that faith, entitled him, by God's grace, to be accounted righteous. For comments on righteousness by faith see on Rom. 1:17.

8. By faith. See on vs. 1, 3.

Abraham. For the experience here referred to see on Gen. 12:1–5.

Obedied. He believed what God told him and acted accordingly. His faith found expression in faithful obedience.

Not knowing whither. According to Gen. 12:5 Abraham and his family "went forth to go into the land of Canaan." This does not necessarily mean that he knew at the time of his departure what his destination was to be. He simply "went forth to go into [what turned out to be] the land of Canaan." Obviously God instructed him as to the direction in which he was to set out and the route he was to follow.

9. Sojourned. For a period of some 215 years (see Vol. I, p. 184). Events that occurred during Abraham's sojourn "in the land of promise" are recorded in Gen. 12 to 25.

Land of promise. That is, the land that God promised to Abraham.

Strange country. Or, "foreign country." Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob all lived as foreigners in the land God had promised them. God gave Abraham no inheritance in Canaan, "no, not so much as to set his foot on" (Acts 7:5).

Heirs with him. The original promise included Abraham's descendants, but God repeated the covenant promises to Isaac and later to Jacob.

10. A city. Here, apparently, not any city of the literal land of Canaan. Abraham's ultimate objective was the eternal inheritance God has provided for those who love and serve Him. Compare chs. 12:22; 13:14.

Foundations. Foundations imply permanence. Tents (v. 9) have no foundations.

11. Through faith. See on vs. 1, 3.

Sara. For the experience here referred to see Gen. 17:15–21; 18:9–15; 21:1–5.

Received strength. Sarah was 90 years of age at the birth of Isaac. Her childless state up to that time made conception a most impressive miracle.

Judged him faithful. From the human point of view there was no basis for believing God's promise that she would give birth to a child. The only way to accept the promise was by faith. Sarah accepted it only because she believed in God, and her acceptance of the promise testified to her faith.

12. Therefore sprang. On the birth of Isaac see Gen. 21:1–5.

Him as good as dead. Abraham was 100 years of age at the birth of Isaac. No one can read the record of events leading up to his birth without being impressed by the lack of faith displayed by both Abraham (Gen. 15:2–4; 16:1–3; 17:16, 17) and Sarah (ch. 18:9–15). But both finally overcame their natural doubts, and Isaac was, on both sides of the family, a child of faith.

As the stars. See Gen. 15:5; 22:17.

13. These all. That is, the faithful from Abel (v. 4) to Abraham (vs. 8–12). Doubtless many others during this long span of time met with God’s approval, but the worthies here named are singled out as shining examples of the principle that faith is the decisive factor in godly living.

Died in faith. They saw the promises afar off—by faith. They were persuaded of the reality of the promised inheritance. On the basis of these promises they renounced the present and lived exclusively for the future. They never entered into possession of the inheritance, either of the promised earthly Canaan or of the eternal kingdom.

Were persuaded. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 10) the omission of these words. Obviously, however, they “were persuaded” of the substantial reality of the promised inheritance or they would not have “embraced” the promises.

Embraced. Or, “greeted,” “saluted,” “welcomed.” Compare John 8:56.

Confessed. Or, “acknowledged.”

Pilgrims on the earth. Though in the world, they realized that they were not of it. They had another, grander objective in view. They realized the transient quality of things in this present life, and the permanence of things which, as yet, they saw only “afar off” by faith. They lived for the future, not for the present.

14. Say such things. That is, declare themselves to be “strangers and pilgrims on the earth.”

Country. Or, “homeland” (RSV), literally, “fatherland.” By declaring themselves to be “strangers and pilgrims on the earth,” the worthies of old made it clear that they did not consider this present world to be their home. They realized that there is more to live for than this present world has to offer.

15. Had been mindful. Literally, “had kept in mind,” “had been thinking [intently] of.”

Opportunity to have returned. Abraham doubtless had had a good home in Haran, as before that in Ur of Chaldea. When famine came to the land of Canaan (see Gen. 12:10), he might reasonably have considered returning to Haran, where he had friends and close relatives. But Abraham was not one to retreat to a land which the Lord had instructed him to leave.

16. Desire. Gr. *oregomai*, “to aspire to,” “to strive for,” “to desire.” Men of faith live with their eyes fixed on something better than this world has to offer. To them, eternal things alone are worth striving for. They see the things of time and eternity in their true perspective (see on Matt. 6:24–34).

God is not ashamed. He is not “ashamed” to be known as their God, because they reflect His character. Christ warned that in the last great day He will be “ashamed” of every man who has made the attempt to “save his life” by gaining what the world has to offer (see Mark 8:34–38). On the other hand, the man who is willing to “lose”—forfeit—his life for Christ will actually be saving it.

He hath prepared. Compare John 14:1–3; Rev. 21:2.

A city. The heavenly Jerusalem (see chs. 12:22; 13:14).

17. By faith. See on vs. 1, 3.

Abraham. For the record of the experience here referred to see Gen. 22:1–9.

Tried. Or, “tested.” The account of this experience in Genesis begins with the statement that “God did tempt [test] Abraham” (Gen. 22:1). To be sure, God knew in

advance what Abraham would do, and the test was not necessary so far as God's information about Abraham was concerned. But Abraham needed to go through this trying experience in order that his faith might reach maturity. It was the crowning experience of his life.

Offered up Isaac. See Gen. 22:1–19.

Only begotten. Gr. *monogenēs*, literally, “unique,” “only” (see on John 1:14).

Numerically speaking, Isaac was not Abraham's “only begotten,” or even his first begotten. Isaac was Abraham's “only” son in the unique sense that he was the only one of Abraham's children eligible to be the covenant heir (see on v. 18).

18. In Isaac. In view of God's repeated and emphatic declarations that Isaac was to be the one through whom the covenant promises were to be fulfilled, it was a most extraordinary demonstration of faith on the part of Abraham to be willing to comply with God's instructions to offer up Isaac as a sacrificial victim. It must have appeared to Abraham that God was on the point of rendering the fulfillment of His promises utterly impossible.

The insertion of this quotation from Gen. 21:12 at this point in the author's comment on Abraham's faith explains the sense in which he refers to Isaac as Abraham's “only begotten” in Heb. 11:17. Isaac was the only son of Abraham who could qualify as successor to the covenant promises made to Abraham.

19. Accounting. Or, “considering.” It was faith in the power of God to resurrect Isaac that gave Abraham the courage to set out to offer up his son. Only thus could the aged patriarch reconcile God's promise that Isaac was to be his heir, with God's mandate to take Isaac's life. To have faith in the integrity of a person who makes a promise and a demand that seem to be so mutually exclusive is the ultimate in the perfection of faith. Abraham must have realized that God was testing him, and concluded that God would, if need be, raise Isaac from the dead. In view of the fact that, as yet, no human being had been raised from the dead, this was faith of the highest order.

Whence also he received him. So far as Abraham was concerned, his son Isaac *was* dead. And when God halted the test and restored Isaac to his father, it was as if Isaac had indeed returned from death.

In a figure. Or, “figuratively speaking.”

20. By faith. See on vs. 1, 3.

Isaac blessed Jacob. For the record of this incident see Gen. 27:1–40.

Things to come. To Isaac, when he realized the deception that had been practiced upon him, the future of his family must have loomed dark indeed. His plans for Esau had been shattered. He was blind physically, but he lifted his eyes of faith and discerned the shape of “things to come,” the way by which the infinite purpose of God was to be accomplished.

21. By faith. See on vs. 1, 3.

Jacob. For the record of the incident here referred to see Gen. 48:1–22. Jacob sojourned, and eventually died, in a land of exile. Thus he revealed faith in the divine promises when he pronounced blessings on his sons.

22. By faith. See on vs. 1, 3.

Joseph. For the incident related see Gen. 50:24, 25; cf. Ex. 13:19. Joseph had no concrete evidence on which to base his expectation that the family would return to

Canaan and occupy the land. His request for interment in the Promised Land, *when the family should return to dwell there*, was based on faith in God's promises.

23. By faith. See on vs. 1, 3.

Moses. For the record of the incident referred to see Ex. 2:1–10. During Moses' infancy it was the faith of his parents that triumphed over "the king's commandment." It was faith in a higher destiny than servitude in Egypt that led Amram and Jochebed to act in contravention of the royal decree. As Moses reached maturity he exhibited the same kind of faith on his own behalf, as the writer of Hebrews goes on to relate (see Heb. 11:24–29).

24. By faith. See on vs. 1, 3.

Moses. For the record of the incidents referred to in vs. 24–29 see Ex. 2:11–25; 12:18–36; 14:10–31.

Refused. Moses refused present honor, rank, and power because of his confidence in the high destiny God had marked out for him and his people. To all appearances nothing could be more futile than to hope for such a thing, since the Hebrew people were in abject servitude to the strongest nation on earth. Only faith in the promises of God could have led him to refuse the throne of Egypt.

Son of Pharaoh's daughter. See on Ex. 2:5, 10, 15; cf. Vol. I, p. 192.

25. Choosing rather. His choice lay between the throne of the world's greatest empire and association with a race of slaves.

Suffer affliction. Even as leader of the Hebrew people he was subject to "affliction." They were irremediably stiff-necked and rebellious, and forever murmuring. From any point of view the lot he chose had little to offer by way of worldly power and renown.

The pleasures of sin. Moses might have reasoned that as king of Egypt he would be in an ideal position to liberate his people. But the ruler of Egypt was also a priest in its idolatrous system of religion. Furthermore, he always would have been subject to the corrupting influences of court life. See on Ex. 2:11.

26. Reproach of Christ. That is, "reproach" suffered for Christ or because of Christ. Moses understood the promise of the Messiah, and realized that more was involved in the liberation of the Hebrew people from Egypt than either they or the Egyptians realized at the time. A far off his eye of faith saw the coming of the seed promised to Abraham through whom all nations would be blessed (see Gen. 22:18; cf. Gal. 3:8, 16).

Treasures in Egypt. These included the land with all its wealth, the service of all its people, the splendor of its court, the power of its throne and its armies.

Had respect unto. Literally, "looked to." His eye was fixed upon the promises and privileges of the covenant relationship. Like Paul 15 centuries later (see Phil. 3:7, 8), Moses voluntarily exchanged the impressive but gaudy glory and power of the present for the less obvious, even invisible, promises and privileges of the covenant.

Recompence of the reward. Gr. *misthapodosia*, simply, "reward." The more remote reward, one that could be seen only with the eye of faith, appealed more strongly to Moses than the more immediate, material rewards that accompanied the throne of Egypt.

27. By faith. See on vs. 1, 3.

Forsook Egypt. See Ex. 2:15.

Not fearing. Noting the circumstances of Moses' flight from Egypt to Midian at the age of 40, some have assigned his departure of v. 27 to the Exodus, at the age of 80 years. It is true that the word translated "forsook" (*kataleipō*) may mean simply "to leave,"

without implying more than the simple fact of departure. It is also true that Moses boldly confronted a wrathful ruler throughout the time of the plagues, and that, by itself, v. 27 might be taken as applying to the Exodus. However, in this brief synopsis of incidents in Moses' life that reflect his faith, it seems that vs. 28, 29 were intended to cover the Exodus. Repetition of the expression "by faith" in v. 27 seems to imply that the writer was considering the occasion there referred to as distinct from the other incidents in the sequence on the faith of Moses (cf. vs. 23, 24, 28, 29). Compare Ed 63, 64.

From the narrative of Ex. 2:11–15 (cf. ch. 4:19) it appears that fear for his personal safety played no small part in Moses' decision to flee the land of Egypt. Nevertheless, uppermost in his mind was the fate of his people and the role envisioned for them by the promise made to Abraham. In fact, it was his abortive attempt to initiate a series of events he hoped would lead to their liberation that made his flight necessary (see Acts 7:25). In spite of his mistake he apparently had faith that, somehow, God would still use him to accomplish their deliverance. Accordingly, he sought a temporary refuge where he might await further developments.

Even before the incident with the Egyptian taskmaster it took great faith to believe that the covenant promises would be fulfilled—circumstances being what they were. Now that an error of judgment had banished him from Egypt altogether, Moses must have needed even greater faith to believe in their fulfillment. How could a forlorn exile in Midian whose death had been decreed by an imperial edict ever expect to liberate the slaves of the monarch who sought his life? Nothing could have seemed more impossible! Here, if ever, was opportunity for the exercise of faith!

28. Through faith. See on vs. 1, 3.

Kept the passover. For the record of events mentioned in this verse see Ex. 12:1–36. After the ninth plague Pharaoh had placed Moses under the threat of death should he again appear in the royal presence (see Ex. 10:28). It must have taken great faith on Moses' part to issue the instructions he did with regard to the tenth plague, the Passover, and the Exodus. For the duration of the first nine plagues Pharaoh had stubbornly refused to let Israel go. There was no human reason to believe he would do so under the tenth plague.

29. By faith. See on vs. 1, 3.

Through the Red sea. For the record of the incident here mentioned see Ex. 14:10–31. The deliverance of God's chosen people at the Red Sea is referred to more often throughout the OT than any other manifestation of divine provision for them in all their history. The greatness of the deliverance reflects the magnitude of the crisis, and the magnitude of the crisis is a measure of the degree of faith needed by God's appointed representative, Moses.

30. By faith. See on vs. 1, 3.

Walls of Jericho. For the record of the incident here referred to see Joshua 6:1–24. From a military point of view the procedure Joshua took to subdue Jericho was sheer folly, but the orders he issued were in accord with the instructions God had given him. As an experienced general, he might well have substituted what would have appeared to be a better plan. But Joshua was a man of great faith as well as of great military experience, and he was ready to place more confidence in God's revealed will than in his own knowledge of war. His faithfulness in carrying out the plan of battle God had revealed to him testified eloquently to his prowess as a man of faith.

31. By faith. See on vs. 1, 3.

Rahab. For the record of the incident here referred to see Joshua 2:1–24; 6:23–25. At first glance the name of Rahab may seem out of place in this roster of heroes of faith, for she was a heathen as well as a harlot. But this very fact makes her deed of faith all the more remarkable. For an insight into her thinking see Joshua 2:8–13. Her name appears also in Matthew’s genealogy (see on Matt. 1:5) as one of the honored progenitors of Christ.

32. What shall I more say? The list might be extended indefinitely, but enough illustrations have been provided to prove the principle that faith and faithfulness are the essence of godly living.

Time would fail. The writer’s purpose was not to prepare a catalogue of all of God’s faithful ones down through the centuries, but only to illustrate his point that faith and faithfulness are essential to patient waiting for the coming of the Lord and the fulfillment of His promises. The thrilling recital may have already taken more space than he at first intended, and he realizes that space does not permit an extension of what has provided a worthy climax to the theme of the book. He set out to prove that we have a great High Priest ministering on our behalf in the heavenly sanctuary, and to appeal to all Christians to enter into His presence by faith (see ch. 4:14, 16). In the 11th chapter he implies that, by faith, the worthies of old lived, as it were, in the very presence of God. Inasmuch as they enjoyed that privilege and were able to remain faithful, so may we.

Gedeon. Or, Gideon (see Judges 6 and 7).

Barak. See Judges 4 and 5.

Samson. See Judges 13 to 16.

Jephthae. Or, Jephthah (see Judges 11).

David. The exploits of David form a large part of the historical books of 1 and 2 Samuel and portions of other books.

Samuel. The ministry of Samuel as priest, prophet, and judge is recorded in 1 Samuel 2 to 25.

The prophets. Almost to a man the prophets suffered because of their faithful witness for God (see Acts 7:52).

33. Through faith. See on vs. 1, 3. The writer never tires of mentioning faith as the essence of triumph over every obstacle. Long lists of heroes might be compiled for nearly every category of achievement listed in vs. 33–37, but suffice it to say that each instance was a shining example of victory through faith.

Subdued kingdoms. Like Joshua and David.

Wrought righteousness. Like Samuel and Elijah. The expression may also be translated, “wrought justice,” or “enforced justice” (RSV). Numerous judges and kings might be included in the latter category.

Obtained promises. Like Abraham, Joshua, and Daniel.

Stopped the mouths of lions. Like Samson, David, and Daniel.

34. Quenched ... fire. Like the three Hebrew worthies in Babylon.

Escaped ... the sword. Like the two spies at Jericho, and like David before Saul.

Out of weakness. Like kings Hezekiah and Jehoshaphat.

Waxed valiant. Like Samson.

Turned to flight. Like Joshua, Deborah and Barak, and Gideon.

35. Received their dead. Like the Shunammite woman and the widow of Sarepta.

Tortured. Like the prophet Jeremiah.

Not accepting deliverance. That is, to escape torture at the price of being disloyal to principle.

That they might obtain. To a man, these worthies of old proved courageous and faithful in the face of difficulty and danger, because of the faith in their hearts that God would fulfill all of His promises. They believed the future inheritance of the just to be worth every sacrifice and every suffering they might meet or pass through in this present life.

36. Mockings and scourgings. These, together with “bonds and imprisonment,” were the experience of such men as Joseph, Jeremiah, and Paul.

37. Stoned. Like Naboth of Jezreel, and Stephen.

Sawn asunder. According to tradition this was the fate of Isaiah.

Tempted. Or, “tested.” A lengthy list of noble men and women might be drawn up who passed the great tests of their lives successfully.

Slain with the sword. Like Gedaliah, the priests of Nob, and James the brother of John.

Wandered about. Like Elijah and David.

38. World was not worthy. The world did not realize how much it owed to these worthy men, who were in reality “the salt of the earth” (see on Matt. 5:13). Today the world does not appreciate the contributions made to the welfare of mankind by men who have sought to apply Christian principles to a solution of its problems.

Wandered. See on v. 37.

39. Obtained a good report. Or, “though well attested” (RSV). See on vs. 1, 4.

Through faith. See on vs. 1, 3.

Received not the promise. Their faithfulness at moments of crisis often brought signal aid or deliverance, but they did not enter upon the inheritance promised to Abraham and the fathers. For comment see on v. 13.

40. Provided. Gr. *problepō*, “to foresee.” The English word “provide” also literally means “to foresee,” being from the Latin *pro*, “before,” and *videre*, “to see.” God foresaw the end from the beginning. He knew that in future ages there would be other multitudes of faithful men, women, youth, and children. In His infinite wisdom He ordained that the faithful of all ages should enter upon the eternal inheritance together (see on 1 Cor. 15:51, 52; 1 Thess. 4:16, 17; 2 Tim. 4:7, 8). As to the great gift of eternal life, none would have advantage, or priority, over another.

Some better thing. Not something better than He proposed to award the faithful of ages past, but rather that, from our point of view, it has been better that God has granted us an opportunity to join their ranks.

Without us. In the providence of God we have been accorded time in which to develop character and to prepare for admission to the eternal inheritance of the saints. The opportunity is ours as it was theirs. In the opening verses of ch. 12 the writer draws his conclusion: “Let *us* lay aside every weight, ... let *us* run with patience ...”

Made perfect. Gr. *teleioō*, here in the passive, “to be completed,” “to be brought to perfection.” For comment on the related adjective *teleios* see on Matt. 5:48. Here, to be “made perfect” is to enter upon the eternal inheritance promised to Abraham and the fathers (see on Heb. 10:35–38).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

- 1 FE 341; GW 260; MM 227; MYP 106; PP 126; SR 129; 4T 28; 5T 69; 6T 473; 7T 41; 9T 273
1–407T 40
3 Ed 134; MH 414; 8T 259
4 PP 72
5 GW 54; SR 59; 8T 331
5, 6 PP 88
6 COL 59; DA 126; Ev 287; EW 115; GC 74, 436; ML 8, 96; MYP 102, 261; PK 157; SC 96; TM 149; 1T 310, 645; 3T 415; 5T 437, 651
7 PP 95; 7T 36
8 COL 36; DA 60; FE 505; GW 26, 112; MH 478; 4T 523
8, 9 PP 126
9, 10 PP 170
10 CT 63, 455; Ev 559; PK 274; TM 131; 8T 125
13 CS 38; EW 113; PK 699; PP 81, 170; TM 131; 6T 452; 7T 19; 8T 215
13–16FE 328; 2T 194; 5T 188
14–16GC 675; SR 431
15, 16 ML 354
16 PP 81, 170; 4T 484; 5T 152, 465; 7T 19
19 PP 152
23 MH 372; PP 243
24–26Ed 62; PP 246; 1T 656; 3T 89, 406; 4T 345
25 PP 472; 1T 78
25, 26 2T 101
26 COL 398; Ed 68; Ev 220, 244; GC 460; MM 51; 4T 345
26, 27 5T 651
27 A 363; CT 103; CW 19; DA 237; Ed 63; FE 346; MB 32; MH 136, 504; 5T 651, 652; 8T 45, 188
29 PP 290; 4T 27
30 PP 493
31 COL 290; PK 369
32–40Ed 158
33, 34 COL 172; PK 157; PP 513
34 ChS 97; Ev 297; MB 62
35 GC 41
35, 36 MB 32
36 SR 321
36, 37 1T 657
36–38AA 597; GC 40; PK 382
39 4T 15

CHAPTER 12

1 *An exhortation to constant faith, patience, and godliness.* 22 *A commendation of the new testament above the old.*

1. Wherefore. Chapter 12:1, 2 constitutes the writer's conclusion to ch. 11. A chapter division, if any, would preferably occur between vs. 2 and 3 of ch. 12.

Compassed. Or, “surrounded.” Wherever we turn in sacred history we find “witnesses” to the principle that faith and faithfulness triumph over every obstacle.

Cloud of witnesses. Or, “host of witnesses.” The metaphor of v. 1 imagines the Christian to be an athlete making final preparations to run a race in an ancient stadium, with the spectators seated on benches rising tier above tier on all sides. The athlete, intent upon winning the race, glances momentarily at the mass of faces that surrounds him like a cloud. Here, the “witnesses” are the uncounted worthies of faith mentioned in ch. 11, each of whom, despite handicaps and hindrances of every kind, finished his course with joy. Their faithfulness and endurance brought them victory in the race of life. Conscious that the eyes of the faithful of all ages are now intently fixed upon him, as it were, the Christian athlete experiences an urgent impulse to put forth every effort to win the race that has been marked out for him.

Greek athletic contests had long been popular throughout the Mediterranean world, and the illustration of ch. 12:1 would be familiar to every reader. The writer of Hebrews often makes figurative use of the race to represent his career as missionary to the Gentiles (Gal. 2:2; Phil. 2:16; 2 Tim. 4:7) or, as here, to represent the life experience of the Christian (see 1 Cor. 9:24–27).

Weight. Gr. *ogkos*, “weight,” “burden,” “impediment,” here in the latter sense. In the metaphor of v. 1 *ogkos* refers to the weight of anything superfluous, such as clothing, which might tend to hinder, or handicap, the runner. Men who are motivated by faith will not hesitate to dispose of anything and everything that might keep them from achieving their goal.

The writer leaves it to each reader to discover what may be hampering his progress as a Christian runner. In this race every entrant may win, for he is not competing with others, but with himself. He is not required to excel his competitors or to surpass a mark made by some previous contestant. Self is his only competitor, and the only requirement is that he exercise faithfulness and patience in his contest with self, and, by the grace of Christ, overcome every “weight”—every tendency to evil.

The sin. Every man has some besetting sin, some tendency to evil that seeks to impede him as he runs the race. When he gains the victory over that particular evil propensity, another takes its place and presses for the mastery. Thus the pathway of salvation is beset by one battle after another. But it is every Christian’s privilege to achieve victory each step of the way. Whatever may be the sin that so easily besets us, we are to lay it aside like an ancient runner laying aside his flowing robes and girding himself for the race.

Easily beset. Or, “easily distract.” Some suggest that “close clinging” may have been the original reading. However close a sin may cling and however painful the process of separation may be, it must be laid aside if victory in the race of life is to be attained.

Patience. Gr. *hupomonē*, “patience,” “endurance,” “fortitude,” “steadfastness,” “perseverance.” Because the Christian race is a lifelong experience, it calls for patience and perseverance—perseverance in the face of successive difficulties and disappointments and patience to await the reward at the end of the course. Admonitions to patient endurance occur again and again in the book of Hebrews (see chs. 3:6; 4:14; 6:1, 11, 12; 10:23, 36–39; etc.).

The race. That is, the Christian race, the experiences by means of which character is developed.

2. Looking unto Jesus. That is, for grace and strength to overcome every difficulty and to endure unto the end. As Peter found when he essayed to walk on the wind-tossed waves of Galilee (see Matt. 14:24–32), it is dangerous to turn one’s eyes away from the Saviour, even for a moment. To keep the eye of faith fixed upon Jesus is to maintain uninterrupted contact with Him who is the source of power, Him who can strengthen us to endure and to overcome.

Author. Gr. *archēgos*, “leader,” “originator,” “founder,” “pioneer” (RSV). *Archēgos* is rendered “Prince” in Acts 3:15; 5:31 and “captain” in Heb. 2:10, in each instance with reference to Christ, as here. Christ is the center of the plan of salvation and the source of every Christian grace. It is He who calls fallen men out of the dismal darkness of sin and into the glorious light of the gospel. It is He who cleanses them from their previous life of sin and qualifies them to become sons and daughters of God. It is He who justifies them by His grace, by virtue of His atonement on Calvary. It is He who plants their feet on the pathway to heaven.

Finisher. Gr. *telēiotēs*, “perfecter.” The work of justification is only the beginning of the Christian experience. We are not only to lay the “foundation of repentance from dead works” but are to “go on unto perfection” (see on ch. 6:1). We are to “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18). We are to gain victory after victory over our besetting sins (see on Heb. 12:1) and to “grow up into him [Christ] in all things” (Eph. 4:15). Our characters are to be “transformed” by the renewing of our minds (Rom. 12:2). This is the work of the indwelling Christ (Gal. 2:20) as the “perfecter” of faith. This is the work of sanctification. See on Matt. 5:48.

Our faith. That is, faith as an active principle in our lives.

For. Gr. *anti*, “instead of,” “in return for,” “in consideration of.” Christ endured the cross in return for the joyous prospect of a universe free from sin.

Joy. If the meaning “in consideration of” be adopted for *anti* (see above under “for”), the passage may be understood as follows: Looking at the cross from a human point of view, we might say that it was faith in the future results of His suffering and death that gave Christ strength to endure the shame and ignominy of the cross. He knew that He would live to see the results “of the travail of his soul,” and was “satisfied” (Isa. 53:11). To share eternity with the ransomed of all ages and the unfallen beings of other worlds was a prospect that brought utter joy to our Lord as He suffered in Gethsemane and on the cross of Calvary. See on Matt. 5:12; James 1:2.

If the meaning “instead of” be adopted for *anti* (see above under “for”), the passage teaches that instead of the joy that was within His grasp, either the joy of His pre-incarnate existence or that of His incarnate existence apart from the cross, Christ chose to endure the cross.

Endured the cross. Christ “endured the cross” in order that we might have strength to endure in our individual conflicts with the powers of darkness. He endured the cross that He might win the crown. The Captain of our salvation was made “perfect through sufferings” (ch. 2:10), and as we learn to endure the cross we are called upon to bear we too may expect to be found perfect in Him at His coming. As a future joy inspired Christ

to endure the cross, so in the difficult and trying experiences of life it is our privilege to look forward to the joy of eternity.

Despising the shame. Or, “disregarding the shame,” “caring nothing for the shame.” “The sufferings of this present time” are nothing in comparison with “the glory which shall be revealed” (Rom. 8:18), and are therefore to be disregarded. We may “greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be,” we “are in heaviness through manifold temptations” (1 Peter 1:6). Like Paul, we can count all earthly things but loss for the exquisite joy of knowing Christ Jesus as Lord (see Phil. 3:8).

Is set down. Textual evidence attests the reading “has sat down.” The form of the Greek verb of the preferred reading implies that Christ not only seated Himself at the right hand of the Father but that He has retained that position of honor ever since.

At the right hand. See on ch. 1:3.

3. Consider him. Verses 3–11 deal with the nature, purpose, and results of divine discipline. No Christian is called to undergo a more strict course of discipline than Christ was. By considering the way in which He met trials and temptations we can avoid growing weary or fainthearted. Christ endured, and by His grace we too may endure.

Endured. See on v. 1.

Contradiction. Or, “hostility.” The hostility of priests and rulers, scribes and Pharisees, dogged the footsteps of Christ throughout His earthly ministry. Eventually, the tide of popularity turned against Him, and His own people demanded His life blood. The cumulative hostility of a race of sinners was turned with the full force of diabolical ingenuity on the Prince of sufferers.

Lest ye be wearied. A glance at the burden Christ bore will make our burdens seem light by comparison (see Matt. 11:28–30). If we will only look unto Jesus and consider what He endured, every difficulty and disappointment we meet will be easier to bear.

4. Resisted unto blood. That is, unto death. Here the metaphor of vs. 1 and 2 changes slightly. The Christian is still in the arena with the figurative “cloud of witnesses” gazing intently at him, but now he is confronted by an antagonist waiting to engage him in mortal combat. The Christian has not yet experienced all that the evil one can bring against him, nor should he think that he is suffering more in his struggle with sin than God can rightfully expect of him (see 1 Cor. 10:13). Nevertheless, in disentangling himself from his besetting sin he is called upon to resist temptation with all the resolute firmness that he would employ in meeting an antagonist in mortal combat.

Christ once engaged in such combat with the powers of darkness, a combat that reached its climax in Gethsemane and on the cross. The martyrs likewise “resisted unto blood.” But those to whom the book of Hebrews was written had not as yet been called upon to meet what Christ and the martyrs had met.

5. Ye have forgotten. The Greek may be taken either as a question or as a statement. A question would seem to be more forceful and at the same time less severe. A child undergoing discipline may realize that his chastisement is just and that he deserves it, but he may not realize that it is administered in love. Too often Christians are prone to overlook the disciplinary value of difficult experiences, and this carelessness deprives them of precious lessons they might otherwise learn. Too often they resent the fact that God permits such experiences to come upon them and complain about their lot.

Exhortation. Gr. *paraklēsis*, “encouragement,” “exhortation,” “consolation.” For comment on *paraklēsis* and related words see on Matt. 5:4; John 14:16.

Which speaketh. The quotation in vs. 5, 6 is from Prov. 3:11, 12.

Children. Literally, “sons.” The line of instruction contained in vs. 5–11 centers in the father-son relationship and comes to a focus on the desire of the father that his son shall learn certain lessons necessary to his success in life.

My son. A form of address common in the book of Proverbs, whence the quotation is taken. It implies the solicitude of a loving father.

Despise. Gr. *oligōreō*, “to think lightly of,” “to make light of [something],” that is, to fail to take it seriously. The purpose of discipline is to make an impression. Discipline that makes little or no impression has served no useful purpose.

Chastening. Gr. *paideia*, “upbringing,” “training,” “instruction,” “discipline,” “correction” (see on Eph. 6:4), from *paidion*, “child.” Discipline is training that corrects, molds, strengthens, and perfects character. Too often the word is restricted to the narrower meaning of punishment or chastisement. Discipline has been defined as the fine art of making disciples, inasmuch as a disciple is one who submits himself to a particular pattern of discipline, or training. The Greek word *paideia* may include, but does not specifically denote, remedial discipline, as implied in the words punishment or chastening. *Paideia* refers to the entire process by which children are prepared for the responsibilities of adult life.

Of the Lord. The experiences of life are all “of the Lord” in the sense that nothing can happen to us except by His permission. God is never the author of suffering and sorrow, though He may, at times, permit us to experience them. See on 2 Chron. 18:18; Job 42:5; Ps. 38:3; 39:9.

Faint. Gr. *ekluō*, “to become weary,” “to give out,” “to lose courage.” A faint disciple will never graduate from the school of experience. He who loses courage and feels like giving up is invited to turn his eyes unto Jesus and “consider him” (see on vs. 2, 3). Above all else, he should remember that God is not angry with him, but loves him like a devoted father and is attempting to help him learn a much-needed lesson. Often it is not the discipline itself, but one’s attitude toward it, that makes life difficult.

Rebuked. Gr. *elegchō*, “to reprove,” “to correct,” “to punish,” “to discipline.” It is never pleasant to be reproved or corrected, much less to undergo punishment. The natural reaction is to despise it. The easy way of escape is to faint before it. The wise attitude is to profit from it.

6. Whom the Lord loveth. Patient, persistent discipline is an expression of solicitous affection. Experiences designed to ennoble and perfect character constitute the best evidence that the Lord loves us. Whether it be a child, or an adult Christian, discipline is essential to character.

Scourgeth. God administers whatever discipline may be required for the formation of character, or permits experiences that will accomplish this objective (see on v. 5). However, the statement is not to be pressed too literally, as if God personally or directly authorized or ordered the suffering and sorrow that attend some of the disciplinary experiences of life. See on v. 5.

Every son. For our relationship to God as sons of a heavenly Father see on Matt. 6:9; 1 John 3:1.

Whom he receiveth. That is, every one whom He receives as a son. Every son of God from this earth has become such by adoption into the heavenly family.

7. If ye endure chastening. See on vs. 3, 5. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 10) the reading “endure unto chastening.” According to this reading these words constitute an imperative sentence, an admonition based on the principle stated in v. 6. Too often we pray for victory over particular sins, only to find that God answers our prayers by permitting circumstances that will develop strength at the very points where we are weak. Let us recognize God’s answer to our prayers, and not falter. Let us courageously and submissively “endure unto chastening.”

As with sons. Parents are usually reluctant to administer discipline to children not their own, but a wise parent does not hesitate to discipline his own children when they need it. Discipline is the prerogative, duty, and responsibility of parents. Thus, in a sense, the administration of discipline is evidence of parenthood.

What son? No child is born with a mature character, and every child therefore needs discipline in order that he may fill a useful place in the world and be a credit to the family.

8. Without chastisement. Children who do not receive discipline are being cheated of the very preparation they need for the duties and responsibilities of life. Parents who withhold needed discipline will one day have a fearful account to render to God. It would not be either fair or just for our heavenly Father to fail to discipline us, or to protect us from circumstances and situations that have disciplinary value.

Bastards. Or, “illegitimate children.”

9. Furthermore. There is a further point of comparison between earthly parental discipline and that of our heavenly Father.

Fathers of our flesh. That is, earthly fathers.

Gave them reverence. Or, “respected them.” This is the opposite of despising them (see on v. 5). Respect for duly constituted authority, whether it be that of the home, of society, or of God, is basic to peace, harmony, and security.

Be in subjection. Or, “submit.” Should we not recognize, appreciate, and benefit by the discipline of the Lord? Should we be less receptive to the discipline of our heavenly Parent than children should be to their earthly parents?

Spirits. Gr. *pneumata*, “living beings,” or, possibly, “life” (see on Luke 8:55). “Father of spirits” refers to God as the source of all life and being. This expression stands in contrast with “fathers of our flesh,” as Heb. 12:10 makes evident. The argument is from the lesser to the greater: if we respect the discipline of an earthly father, to whom we owe our bodily existence, how much more should we “be in subjection” to—or “reverence”—the correction of our heavenly Father, to whom we owe life itself?

The word “spirits” stands in contrast with the word “flesh.” Both refer to living human beings, as the context and the Greek construction make clear. The entire context deals with the way in which God, as our heavenly Father, chastens His earthborn children. The Greek reads literally, “*the* spirits,” which in idiomatic Greek is equivalent to “our spirits.”

10. For a few days. That is, during childhood and youth. Our heavenly Father’s chastening continues throughout life.

Chastened. Or, “disciplined” or, “corrected” (see on v. 5).

After their own pleasure. Or, “as seemed [good] to them,” that is, as they deemed best.

For our profit. That is, for our good. Our earthly parents may have erred in discipline because of defective judgment or selfish emotions, yet “we gave them reverence.” How much the more should we heed and appreciate the discipline of our heavenly Father, whose wisdom and love ordain only what is for our good?

Partakers of his holiness. The objective of all divine discipline is character transformation. Perfection is its goal (see on Matt. 5:48).

11. No chastening. Or, “no discipline” (see on v. 5).

For the present. The perspective of time and experience is usually necessary to a full appreciation of discipline received. Only after children and youth reach maturity are they likely to realize all that parents, teachers, and friends have contributed toward their development of character. In fact, such appreciation is one sure mark of maturity. The mature Christian appreciates the disciplinary value of the various experiences of his life while he is passing through them. He realizes that resentment at divine discipline is a mark of childishness and immaturity.

Joyous. Or, “pleasant” (RSV).

Grievous. Not in the sense of being severe, intense, or oppressive, but of causing grief, suffering, or pain.

Afterward. Generally speaking, the brute creation lives only in the present and for the present. It is one of the distinguishing characteristics of intelligent beings to be able to project themselves into the past or into the future, by means of memory and imagination. It is thus possible for them to form an estimate of their present situation in the perspective of time and experience, and to decide and act intelligently. The degree to which a person is able to view the present in terms of the past and the future, and does so, is a remarkably accurate measure of his progress from childhood to maturity. The same is true of Christian maturity, particularly with respect to the disciplinary experiences of life. Happy are those Christians who have learned to weigh the things of time in the light of eternity.

It yieldeth. Discipline bears “the peaceable fruit” always if it is accepted, seldom if it is resented, never if it is rejected.

Fruit of righteousness. Discipline becomes necessary when a conflict arises between the natural tendencies and desires on the one hand, and right principle on the other hand. The purpose of discipline is to resolve that conflict by bringing the natural tendencies and desires into harmony with principle. In so doing, discipline brings peace. The person undergoing discipline finds himself at peace with God, with himself, and with his fellow men.

Exercised. Or, “trained.” Those who accept the training provided by the disciplinary experiences of life are privileged to enjoy “the peaceable fruit of righteousness” that grows on the tree of obedience to the revealed will of God.

12. Wherefore. That is, in view of the fact that the disciplinary experiences of life have been ordained by a wise and loving heavenly Father for the purpose of bringing “the peaceable fruit of righteousness” to maturity in our lives.

Lift up. Drooping hands and weak knees typify discouragement and inactivity. They represent the antithesis of endurance (see on v. 2). The mature Christian will not become “wearied and faint” in his mind (v. 3) when passing through discipline; his hands will not droop and his knees will not falter. Understanding something of the nature and purpose of

the discipline and having confidence in the wisdom and goodness of his heavenly Father, he will banish resentment, discouragement, and inaction. He will go about his tasks with courage and confidence.

Too many Christians have “feeble knees” and hands that “hang down.” Instead of accepting Heaven’s discipline they begin to blame others for the unfavorable circumstances in which they find themselves. They refuse the opportunity for character development provided by their heavenly Father. Soon their lives begin to bear the contentious fruit of bitterness (see on vs. 13, 15) instead of “the peaceable fruit of righteousness” (v. 11). Compare Isa. 35:3.

The hands. Here, idiomatic Greek meaning “your hands.” Compare “your feet” in v. 13.

Hang down. That is, in disappointment and discouragement.

Feeble knees. Weak knees are not an asset in the Christian race (see on vs. 1, 2).

13. Straight paths. Reluctance to accept the discipline of life often leads a person into devious paths. The mature Christian will press forward in a straight path, courageously and confidently accepting the disciplinary experiences that are necessary to the formation of a symmetrical Christian character, without hesitation and without regret. He will not seek some bypath to avoid discipline, but will keep to the highway of life and take full advantage of the opportunities it offers.

That which is lame. Reference is still to the persons with limp hands, weak knees, and feet in need of “straight paths” (vs. 12, 13). Being “lame,” they find it difficult to walk through the unpleasant disciplinary experiences along the highway of life.

Be turned out of the way. Gr. *ektrepō*, “to turn,” “to turn away.” The sense in which *ektrepō* is here used is not altogether clear. Either of two interpretations is possible: (1) Lame feet will be “turned out of the way”; that is, they will stray from “straight” into crooked “paths,” where lame persons would be more likely to stumble and fall. (2) *Ektrepō* is to be understood in its technical medical sense, “to be dislocated,” “to be put out of joint.” Lameness would make walking difficult; dislocation would make it impossible. Understood thus, the warning would be that unless “straight paths” are provided for lame feet there is danger that dislocation of the joints will result. The second sense, “be dislocated,” or “be put out of joint,” accords more closely with the context. There is more likelihood that “that which is lame” will get out of joint than that it will stray. Furthermore, the admonition “let it rather be healed” forms a more appropriate alternative to getting out of joint than it does to going astray.

Let it rather be healed. Reluctance to accept discipline will get him into even greater difficulty. But instead of permitting this, the wise Christian will set about applying the appropriate remedy. When physical ailments are not given the attention they need they often tend to become worse rather than better. Conditions of mind and heart, such as reluctance to accept discipline, or resentment because of it, are sure to become aggravated unless intelligent effort is put forth to diagnose the situation and to apply the appropriate remedy.

14. Follow peace. Or, “strive for peace” (RSV). Leaving the personal problems of the individual Christian, the writer now turns to the Christian’s relationship with his fellow men. For comment on the admonition to “follow peace” see on Rom. 12:18; 1 Peter 3:11; see Ps. 34:14.

Holiness. Only the pure in heart can expect to see God (see on Matt. 5:8).

See the Lord. That is, in peace.

15. Looking diligently. No one will drift into heaven. “We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22; see on Matt. 7:21–27; 10:23). We must “strive” to enter in (Luke 13:24). No halfhearted effort will procure the heavenly treasure (see Matt. 13:44–46).

Fail. Gr. *hustereō*, “to be lacking in,” “to come short of,” “to fail to reach,” “to be excluded from.” The form of the verb in Greek implies a continuing failure, not a single defection. For comment on falling from grace see on Gal. 5:4.

Root of bitterness. The statement is based on the LXX of Deut. 29:18. In its original setting this was a warning against idolatry (see comment on Deut. 29:18). Here, it seems to be a warning against any querulous person in the church who deliberately sets out to foment ill will and contention among brethren. It is usually a “root of bitterness” growing in the darkness of some shriveled-up soul that blossoms into open and malicious criticism of the appointed leaders of God’s work on earth and that sets brethren at variance with brethren.

Many be defiled. Those whose own souls are bitter always seek to involve as many others as possible in their disaffection and rebellion.

16. Fornicator. Or, “immoral person.”

Profane. Gr. *bebēlos*, “worldly,” “godless,” “irreligious.” In the NT *bebēlos* describes a person who has no appreciation of, or desire for, sacred things, one whose desires and ambitions rise no higher than the things of this earth.

Esau. For comment on the character of Esau and on the incident here referred to see on Gen. 25:27–34.

One morsel. Or, “one meal.”

Birthright. For comment on the significance of the birthright see on Gen. 25:31.

17. Would have. That is, “desired to.”

Rejected. Gr. *apodokimazō*, “to reject [after testing, because of failure to measure up to required standards].” For the record of the incident here referred to see Gen. 27:1–40.

No place of repentance. Long years of living for earthly pursuits had deprived Esau of the capacity to bear the more serious responsibilities of life. By his own choice his mind and character had become fixed. The writer of Hebrews does not imply that Esau actually desired to repent of his worldly ways, but simply that he repented of having sold his birthright. He wished he had it back again, but realized that his decision was irrevocable. He had lost it forever. No arbitrary act of God kept Esau from receiving the inheritance that would normally have been his. His own character disqualified him for its privileges and responsibilities.

With tears. When Esau realized what he had lost “he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry” (Gen. 27:34).

18. Ye are not come. For the incident referred to in vs. 18–21 see Ex. 19:9–25. As ancient Israel came to Mount Sinai and heard the voice of God (Heb. 12:18–21), so Christians have “come unto mount Sion” (vs. 22, 23) and are to heed the voice of Christ (vs. 24–27).

That might be touched. That is, not to some literal mountain here on earth.

That burned with fire. For the descriptive phrases of vs. 18, 19 see Ex. 19:16.

19. Voice of words. That is, the voice of God.

Intreated. See Ex. 20:19; Deut. 5:5.

21. So terrible. Emphasis is on the impressiveness of what was seen and heard, particularly the sound of God's voice. As the people stood face to face with the Lawgiver and Judge of all the earth they experienced something of "the terror of the Lord" (2 Cor. 5:11). The giving of the law at Sinai was attended with a most impressive exhibition of the power and majesty of God. Never before or since has the world witnessed anything so awe inspiring.

22. But ye are come. The writer now turns from the experience of ancient Israel to that of Christians. The writer here speaks figuratively of living Christians as being assembled about the throne of God in heaven, a great gathering of the church invisible.

Mount Sion. The name of one of the mountains on which ancient Jerusalem was situated (see on Ps. 48:2). This became a favorite poetical name for the city of Jerusalem. Here reference is to "the heavenly Jerusalem."

Living God. See on chs. 3:12; 9:14; 10:31.

Heavenly Jerusalem. For the application of the name Jerusalem, or New Jerusalem, to "the city of the living God" see on Rev. 3:12; 21:2.

Innumerable company. Literally, "myriads." See on Rev. 5:11.

23. General assembly. Literally, "festal gathering." Here the term appears to be synonymous with "church."

Church of the firstborn. That is, church of first-born ones, here referring to born-again Christians. Reference here is to the church invisible.

Written in heaven. Or, "recorded in heaven," that is, in the Lamb's book of life (see on Phil. 4:3; Rev. 3:5).

God the Judge. God was the lawgiver at Mt. Sinai; on Mt. Zion He appears as "the Judge of all" men, to judge them by the law He proclaimed from Sinai. It will be no less awe inspiring to stand before God when He judges all men according to the standard of the law.

Spirits. Gr. *pneumata* (see on v. 9). The idea that the word *pneuma* (pl., *pneumata*) denotes some supposedly conscious entity of man capable of existence apart from the body is not inherent in the word itself nor can such a meaning be derived objectively from its usage in the NT. Such a concept is based exclusively on the preconceived opinions of those who believe that a conscious entity survives the body at death and who read this preconceived opinion into such words as "spirit" and "soul." For comment on *ruach*, the Hebrew equivalent of the Gr. *pneuma*, see on Eccl. 12:7.

Just men made perfect. These are mature Christians (see on Matt. 5:48). The words "ye are come" in Heb. 12:22 are addressed to living Christians, as the context makes evident. The writer is not addressing the righteous dead of ages past, as if they were actually assembled before "the Judge of all" men on "mount Sion" in "the heavenly Jerusalem" (vs. 22, 23). All will agree that it is only in a figurative sense that living Christians can assemble before the throne of God as pictured in vs. 22–24. It is in this same sense that in ch. 4:16 he invites them to "come boldly unto the throne of grace." In this same figurative sense living Christians find "the spirits" of all other "just men made perfect" assembled there *in spirit*, not in an imaginary disembodied state. To make "the spirits of just men made perfect" refer to supposedly disembodied "spirits" would be to set the writer of Hebrews at variance with the clear statements of the Holy Scriptures

concerning the state of man in death (see on Eccl. 3:21; 12:7; John 11:11; cf. on Gen. 2:7).

24. Mediator. For comment on Christ as mediator of the new covenant see on chs. 8:6; 9:15.

New covenant. See on ch. 8:8–10.

Blood of sprinkling. See on Ex. 24:6, 8; Heb. 9:19, 21; 10:22. Here reference is to the atoning blood of Christ, by which the new covenant was ratified and by means of which sin is pardoned.

Speaketh. See on Gen. 4:10; cf. on Heb. 11:4.

Better things. The blood of Abel cried forth for vengeance. The blood of Christ speaks eloquently of divine mercy and forgiveness.

25. See that ye refuse not. In vs. 25–29 the writer draws his conclusion from the line of argument presented in vs. 18–24. Ancient Israel was terrified by the voice of God, who spoke from Mt. Sinai (vs. 18–21). Entering by faith into the presence of “God the Judge of all” and of “Jesus the mediator of the new covenant” (vs. 23, 24), Christians will be no less profoundly impressed. However, Israel refused to listen to the voice of God (Ex. 20:18, 19), and this refusal prefigured persistent disobedience (see Vol. IV, pp. 32, 33). Christians are to beware of making the same mistake that ancient Israel made (see on 1 Cor. 10:1–12; Heb. 3:11; 4:1).

Him that speaketh. In ch. 1:1, 2 God the Father is presented as speaking to us through His Son. Whether the speaker here is the Father or the Son is not evident.

If they escaped not. For comment see on chs. 2:2, 3; 4:1.

Him that spake on earth. That is, from Mt. Sinai.

Much more. See on ch. 2:3.

From heaven. That is, to Christians on earth, today.

26. Whose voice then shook. Compare Ex. 19:18.

Yet once more. The quotation is adapted from the LXX of Haggai 2:6, 7 (see comment there). In its original setting the prophecy applied to the Temple as restored following the Babylonian captivity and to the first advent of Christ. Here it applies to the second advent (see Rev. 16:17, 18).

27. Signifieth the removing. The phrase “yet once more” implies that the second shaking is to be final. No further shaking will be required. Accordingly, whatever can be shaken will be removed at the time of the second shaking.

That are shaken. That is, that can be shaken. Sin and all its works will be “shaken.” This present world and all that is in it will pass away.

As of things that are made. The relationship of this clause to the line of thought is not readily apparent. The Greek is brief and cryptic. The writer may be alluding to the fact that as God spoke the heavens and the earth into being at the beginning (see on Gen. 1:3; Heb. 11:3; cf. Ps. 33:6, 9), so He will speak again to remove all that can be shaken.

Things which cannot be shaken. That is, the “kingdom which cannot be moved” (v. 28), including all “just men made perfect” (v. 23).

May remain. When God’s voice again shakes heaven and earth only that which is right and pure and true will remain.

28. A kingdom. The writer pictures the people of God on earth as if they were already in possession of their eternal inheritance (see on ch. 11:1).

Let us have grace. Probably, “let us be thankful,” or “let us be grateful.” Elsewhere in the NT (see Luke 17:9; 1 Tim. 1:12; 2 Tim. 1:3) the same Greek idiom is used in this sense, though in 3 John 4, in the sense of experiencing joy.

Serve God acceptably. Nothing can be more acceptable to God than gratitude for the gracious provisions of the plan of salvation, for gratitude inevitably leads to loyal service.

Reverence and godly fear. Or, “reverence and awe.” See on Ps. 19:9; Heb. 5:7. The reverential awe human beings feel in the presence of God is stressed in ch. 12:18–21, 26, 27.

29. A consuming fire. This fact was demonstrated at Mt. Sinai (see Ex. 24:17). The fires of the last day will destroy all that is tainted with sin (see on Mal. 4:1; cf. 2 Peter 3:7, 10–12; Rev. 20:9, 15).

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- 1 CT 449; FE 134; 2T 517; 3T 43; 5T 83; 9T 136
- 1, 2 AA 312; FE 402; 2T 358; 4T 35
- 2 CH 299, 320; CM 114; CS 213; CSW 17; DA 523, 659; Ev 645; FE 383; GW 28; MH 504; ML 99, 105, 176; MM 21, 41, 99; MYP 104; PK 172; RC 58; SC 69, 77; SL 56; 2T 115, 491, 686; 3T 397, 432; 4T 54, 147, 366, 375, 461, 583, 615; 5T 199, 385, 744; 6T 335, 449, 472; 7T 94; 8T 209, 210; 9T 59; WM 49
- 2, 3 AA 467; EW 114
- 2–42T 709
- 3 PK 701; 3T 434
- 3, 4 5T 597
- 4 5T 222
- 5 MB 11
- 8 1T 632
- 8–115T 683
- 10 MB 10; ML 292; 5T 742
- 11 EW 119; ML 93; PP 238; 3T 416
- 12 TM 496; 4T 131
- 12, 13 TM 184
- 12–158T 79
- 13 CH 575; CM 150; CS 256; CSW 13; CW 174; Ev 366, 404, 590; FE 222; LS 327; MYP 32; TM 219, 229, 406, 468; 3T 441; 4T 400; 5T 348, 518; 7T 130, 238; 8T 196, 212; 9T 266
- 13–157T 184
- 14 CT 429; FE 136, 385; GC 541; MM 52; SC 35; TM 447; 1T 23; 2T 401; 4T 332; 5T 743
- 15 AA 207; COL 85; Ev 543; PK 86; 1T 480; 3T 440, 452; 4T 229, 610; 5T 241
- 16 CH 110; CS 139; 2T 38
- 16, 17 PP 181
- 17 2T 39
- 21 PP 304; 4T 342
- 22 GC 512
- 24 DA 166; PP 371
- 25 COL 236
- 26 DA 780; PP 340; 1T 184

27 CM 9, 12; Ev 363; MYP 30; 1T 355; 6T 332; 7T 219; 9T 15, 62
29 DA 107, 600; GC 673; SC 18; SR 429

5

CHAPTER 13

1 *Divers admonitions, as to charity, 4 to honest life, 5 to avoid covetousness, 7 to regard God's preachers, 9 to take heed of strange doctrines, 10 to confess Christ, 16 to give alms, 17 to obey governors, 18 to pray for the apostle. 20 The conclusion.*

1. Brotherly love. See on Rom. 12:10. The closing chapter of the book of Hebrews consists of a series of general admonitions on various subjects (vs. 1–17) and a personal salutation (vs. 18–25).

2. Forgetful. Apparently many tended to become absorbed in their own affairs to the extent that they were not taking the personal interest in their fellow believers that they should have. As the church grows in numbers there is increasing danger that the same condition will prevail today. Our neighbor is anyone in need of friendship and hospitality.

Entertain strangers. Inns were not common, and strangers were often considered with suspicion. Unless individuals took an interest in wayfaring men they might often have no place in which to lodge. In ancient times hospitality required that provision be made for strangers. The same need may no longer exist in the same degree today, inasmuch as facilities for the accommodation of travelers are generally ample. Nevertheless the principle remains, and Christians are to seek ways and means of expressing hospitality, in keeping with the needs of modern times.

Entertained angels. Such was the privilege of Abraham (Gen. 18:1–8), of Lot (Gen. 19:1–3), of Gideon (Judges 6:11–20), and of Manoah (Judges 13:2–4, 9–21). Faithfulness in ministering to the needs of strangers will come up for consideration in the final judgment (see Matt. 25:35).

Unawares. That is, at first, when the strangers were invited in.

3. In bonds, as bound. Ministry to men in prison is another activity of sufficient importance to come up for consideration in the final judgment (see Matt. 25:36). As elsewhere in Scripture (see 1 Cor. 9:22), the principle is here set forth that the Christian should endeavor to think of himself as being in the same circumstances as any person he finds in need and minister to him accordingly, in harmony with the golden rule (see on Matt. 7:12).

Suffer adversity. Literally, “are being illtreated.”

Yourselves also in the body. Think how you would feel if you were in the same situation as those who have met with illtreatment; then minister to their needs accordingly. The principle set forth in the golden rule is again applied to a practical situation. The Christian is not to inquire as to whether those suffering adversity may or may not deserve help. It is enough for him to know that they are in need of help.

4. Marriage. For comment on Christian ideals with respect to the responsibilities and privileges of the marriage relationship see on 1 Cor. 7; cf. on Matt. 5:28–32; 19:5–10.

Honourable in all. The first part of the verse may be translated, “Marriage is to be held in honor by all,” or “Let all respect marriage.” The marriage institution was ordained

⁵Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Heb 11:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

by a wise Creator to be a great blessing to human beings, and when the purpose of the Creator is carried out in family life, immeasurable good results. Only when marriage is perverted to serve unworthy purposes does marriage lose the quality of being “honourable.”

Bed undefiled. This part of the verse may be translated, “let the bed be undefiled” (cf. above under “honourable in all”). It is possible for the bed to be defiled, hence the apostle counsels his readers to keep it pure and honorable and not to degrade it into an instrument for the gratification of base lust. On the other hand, the idea held by some that the intimacies of married life are dishonorable or that they necessarily detract from nobility of character is an artifice of the devil that dishonors one of the arrangements the Creator ordained and pronounced good. See on 1 Cor. 7:3–5.

Whoremongers. Or, “immoral persons.” See on Matt. 5:32.

Adulterers. See on Ex. 20:14; Matt. 5:32.

God will judge. That is, along with all others who have persistently lived in violation of the principles set forth in His holy law, at the last day (see on Rev. 21:8).

5. Conversation. Gr. *tropos*, “way of life,” “turn of mind,” “conduct,” “character.” In Old English “conversation” had essentially these meanings.

Covetousness. See on Luke 12:13–34.

Content. See on Phil. 4:11; 1 Tim. 6:6.

Such things as ye have. If men could only learn to be content with what they have, and not covet what others have, most of the problems that torment the human race would automatically be solved. For comment on the Christian attitude toward the material things of life see on Matt. 6:19–34.

He. That is, God. The quotation is from the LXX of Deut. 31:6, 8.

Never leave thee. Concerning God’s beneficent provision for our needs see on Matt. 6:26–34.

6. Boldly. Or, “confidently.” The quotation is from the LXX of Ps. 118:6 (see comment there).

7. Them which have the rule. Literally, “guides,” “leaders,” here meaning church leaders. For comment on loyalty to the leadership of the church see on 1 Thess. 5:12, 13.

Have spoken. Literally, “spoke,” implying that former leaders, perhaps now resting in Jesus, are here referred to.

Whose faith. The heroes of faith referred to in ch. 11 had all lived in the long ago. But there had also been faithful men in more recent times whose example might safely be followed.

Follow. Or, “imitate.”

End. The phrase reads literally, “result of their conduct.” The writer doubtless has certain particular persons in mind, though he does not name them.

Conversation. Gr. *anastrophē*, “manner of life,” “conduct,” “behavior” (see on Eph. 4:22).

8. Jesus Christ. For the significance of the two names used together see on Matt. 1:1.

The same. The comment of v. 8 was apparently intended to prepare the way for the warning of v. 9. In view of the fact that Christ never changes, the message about Him can never change. Teachings that differ from the pure gospel already proclaimed may be dismissed without further examination. See on Gal. 1:6–8.

9. Be not carried about. Some are easily influenced by any new or strange teaching. Lacking spiritual discrimination, they are unable to differentiate between truth and error by comparing the new teaching with Scripture. For comment see on Eph. 4:14; Col. 2:4, 8.

Divers. Or, “diverse,” that is, differing from the pure gospel message already received.

Established with grace. That is, so as not to be “carried about” with fads in religion and in theology. The stabilizing power of the grace of Christ is the Christian’s best protection against errant teachings. For comment on “grace” see on Rom. 1:7; 3:24.

Not with meats. That is, “not with foods.” Apparently some, at least, of the religious faddists went beyond the plain teachings of Scripture with respect to diet, and made their dietary scruples a test of faith. For comment on the relationship of diet to religion, and for a warning against fads in diet disguised as religious obligations, see on Rom. 14:17; 1 Tim. 4:3.

Not profited. Even those who so vehemently lauded the value of the dietary fads they advocated had received no practical benefit therefrom. Doubtless, reference is to one or more of the Judaizing factions that troubled the early Christian church, such as the Ebionites and the Nazarenes (see Vol. VI, pp. 53, 54).

10. We have an altar. The writer here alludes to the fact that the priests and the Levites were assigned certain portions of some of the sacrificial animals brought to the ancient sanctuary or to the Temple (see Lev. 6:16–18; 7:15, 16, 31–34; Num. 18:8–10; Deut. 18:1, 2; cf. 1 Cor. 9:13). Perhaps the false doctrines referred to in Heb. 13:9 had stressed the importance of requiring Christians to practice the ancient rites and ceremonies of Judaism, which dealt with meats and drinks, as if a superior state of holiness could thereby be attained. But Christians have an altar, the cross of Calvary, and a sacrifice far surpassing the ancient animal sacrifices in value and efficacy (see on chs. 9:14, 24–28; 10:10, 12, 14). This was none other than “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). Furthermore, Christ calls upon those who believe in Him to eat of His flesh (see John 6:33–58).

They ... which serve. That is, the priests and the Levites.

No right to eat. Within the orbit of the Jewish religious system the priests and Levites enjoyed an honored position and special privileges. But, having rejected Jesus, they were unworthy, in spite of their exalted position, to partake of that to which all true Christians have a right. Paul may also have been thinking of the bread and the wine of the Lord’s table. Under any circumstances, the vaunted merits of the system of religion referred to as “divers and strange doctrines” in v. 9 were infinitely inferior to the way of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

11. Those beasts. When the blood of the sin offering was carried into the sanctuary, as in the case of the anointed priest or the whole congregation, the priest was not to eat of the flesh but to burn it without the camp (Lev. 6:30). Similarly, Jesus “suffered without the gate” (Heb. 13:12; cf. John 19:17), after which He ministered His own blood in the heavenly sanctuary (Heb. 9:12). Under the old sacrificial system the priests would have had no right to eat their usual portion of such a sacrifice (ch. 13:10), but Christ said, “Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you” (1 Cor. 11:24).

12. That he might sanctify. In order that Christ might minister His own blood on behalf of repentant sinners, in the heavenly sanctuary, He appropriately “suffered without the gate” of Jerusalem.

13. Let us go forth. Jewish Christians would no longer seek salvation in the rites and ceremonies of the Jewish religion. They were still Israelites, and as such, figuratively speaking, inhabitants of the city of Jerusalem. But if they followed the Messiah, they must go with Him beyond the bounds of Judaism. In the setting of the book of Hebrews this situation constitutes an appeal to Jewish Christians to turn their eyes from the rites and ceremonies of Judaism and to fix them upon Jesus Christ and His ministry as our great High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary (see p. 389).

Bearing his reproach. Those who manifested sympathy for Jesus when He went forth to Golgotha as a condemned criminal suffered “reproach” with Him. For Jewish Christians to espouse Christianity was to incur the hatred of their fellow Jews, and for them to turn their backs on the Jewish sacrificial system as a means of salvation would be to incur the charge of apostasy and treason.

14. No continuing city. The Jews looked upon Jerusalem as a “continuing city.” that is, they considered that the divine plan was inextricably bound up with the city and that it was, therefore, destined to stand forever. They felt security within the arms of Judaism. But Christians have no such “continuing city.” Their hopes and aspirations are not associated with any earthly city or religious system. How significant for Hebrew Christians who in a short time were to witness the destruction of Jerusalem!

Seek one to come. That is, the New Jerusalem (cf. ch. 12:22). Compare the experience of the patriarch Abraham (ch. 11:10).

15. By him. That is, by Christ, or by virtue of the sacrifice that He has already made for us “without the gate” of Jerusalem.

Sacrifice of praise. Instead of bringing a thank offering to the Temple, as prescribed by the Mosaic law (see Lev. 7:12–14), we are to offer up a continual “sacrifice of praise” to the Lord.

16. Do good. That is, to minister to the needs of others. God is not pleased with the blood of bulls and goats (see on ch. 10:5–8). It serves no useful purpose. But He is pleased with the spirit of sacrificial service for others (see on Matt. 25:24–40). The practice of “pure religion and undefiled” (James 1:27) is ever acceptable in His sight.

Communicate. Or, “share.”

Forget not. Perhaps some had grown careless in this respect.

God is well pleased. Formal rites and ceremonies have no meaning to God. He seeks men to worship Him in “spirit and in truth” (John 4:23), that is, by reflecting His character and by demonstrating their love and devotion to Him in a life of service for others.

17. Obey. See on v. 7.

Submit yourselves. God has appointed leaders to shepherd His flock, and He calls upon His sheep to submit to those appointed over them, the while these leaders themselves obey the Master. Here reference is to present leaders, not to former leaders as in v. 7.

They watch. The leaders God has appointed over the church are responsible to Him for the welfare of His people, and He will require a strict account of their stewardship.

For your souls. That is, “for you” (cf. on ch. 12:9, 23).

Must give account. A steward is accountable to his master for any goods entrusted to his care, and knows that he must answer for his stewardship. By cooperating with their appointed leaders church members make it much easier for them to render a faithful account of their stewardship.

With joy. That is, in the knowledge that they have faithfully discharged their responsibility. Compare the experience of the faithful servants who were summoned to enter into the joy of their Lord (see Matt. 25:21).

Not with grief. Literally, “not with groaning.” Compare the experience of the unfaithful servant (Matt. 25:28–30).

Unprofitable. Church members gain no advantage by making it difficult for their appointed leaders to render a good account of their stewardship. Both will share together the “joy” or the “grief” of the accounting day.

18. Pray for us. Or, “keep praying for us,” or “make it a habit to pray for us.” Compare Eph. 6:19; Col. 4:12. Although he was a man of wide experience and great spiritual stature, Paul appreciated and sought the prayers of his brethren in Christ. Every true leader deeply appreciates the interest and prayers of those for whom he labors.

Trust. Gr. *peithō*, in the form here used meaning “to be convinced,” “to be certain.”

A good conscience. That is, a clear conscience. Compare Paul’s repeated affirmations of possessing a clear conscience (see Acts 23:1; 24:16; Rom. 9:1; 2 Cor. 1:12; 2 Tim. 1:3).

Willing. Literally, “desiring.” It is the writer’s purpose to reflect the principles of the gospel fully in his own life (cf. 1 Cor. 9:27).

Live honestly. That is, conduct yourself honorably.

19. I beseech. The earnestness with which the writer appeals to his readers to pray for his release from circumstances that prevented fellowship with them is touching indeed and reflects his personal faith in the power of prayer.

The rather. Or, “the more earnestly” (RSV).

Restored to you. Verse 23 suggests that Timothy was in prison at the time and seems to imply that the writer of Hebrews was at liberty. Other circumstances such as illness or the pressure of missionary duties may have prevented Paul’s return to his readers.

20. Now. Verses 20, 21 constitute the apostolic benediction pronounced by the writer upon the intended readers of the book of Hebrews. He commends them to the peace of God.

God of peace. See on Rom. 15:33.

Brought again from the dead. See on Rom. 4:24. As so often in the epistles of the NT, the resurrection of Christ is made the heart and center of the Christian’s hope and faith.

Shepherd of the sheep. See on Ps. 23; John 10:10, 11; cf. 1 Peter 2:25.

The blood. The ratifying and effective agent of the everlasting covenant. See on ch. 9:18–28.

Everlasting covenant. See on ch. 8:8–12.

21. Make you perfect. Gr. *katartizō* (see on 1 Peter 5:10; cf. on Matt. 5:48).

Good work. Textual evidence is divided (cf. p. 10) between omitting and retaining the word “work.” Accordingly, the “good” describes what Paul wishes his readers to have and to be, rather than what he wishes them to do. The purpose of this “good,” however, is that they may the more effectively “do his will.”

Working in you. See on Phil. 2:13.

Through Jesus Christ. See on Gal. 2:20.

To whom be glory. See on Gal. 1:5.

For ever and ever. See on Matt. 25:41; Rev. 1:6.

Amen. See on Matt. 5:18; Rom. 15:33.

22. Suffer. Or, “endure,” “bear.”

Word of exhortation. That is, the message contained in the book of Hebrews (see p. 389).

In few words. There was much more that he would like to have said on the subject, but space did not permit.

23. Timothy. See on Acts 16:1.

Set at liberty. The imprisonment here alluded to is otherwise unknown.

If he come. Nothing further is known of the visit here proposed.

24. Salute. Or, “greet.”

Them that have the rule. That is, the leaders of the church (see on v. 7).

They of Italy. Rather, “they from Italy,” that is, Christian believers. Whether these believers were in Italy at the time, and the epistle thus sent from Italy, or whether they had come from Italy and were with the writer in some other place, cannot be determined from this expression.

25. Grace be with you all. See on Titus 3:15.

Amen. See on Matt. 5:18; Rom. 15:33.

The postscript following v. 25 was not part of the original epistle. It appears first in a 6th-century manuscript.

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1, 2 1T 679

2 AH 445; PK 132; PP 138, 158; 2T 26, 28; 6T 342

4 AH 26, 55; PP 46

5 AA 29; AH 343; GW 152; MM 184; 2T 623; 3T 293; 4T 447, 618; 5T 283; 6T 157; 7T 274

6 CT 411; FE 348; TM 148; 2T 271

8 AA 209; ML 300; MM 92; PP 630; TM 81; 5T 62

9 1T 438

11, 12 CS 54

12 DA 741

13 CT 508; 1T 692; 3T 49, 423; 5T 461; 6T 332, 412; 8T 53, 71

16 MM 184

17 AA 371; AH 528; ChS 169; CSW 44, 50, 80; CT 47, 65, 102; Ev 326, 339; EW 61; FE 55, 264; GW 189; MH 173; TM 122, 150; 1T 138, 153, 471; 2T 467, 706; 3T 242; 4T 343; 5T 11, 237, 684; 6T 62, 70, 75, 86, 92, 248, 302, 434; 7T 13, 68, 117; 9T 45, 58

20, 21 MH 167; ML 217

21 4T 543

⁶Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Heb 13:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

