

STUDIES IN HEBREWS

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Introduction

Studies in Hebrews is designed for individual and class studies, and to help teachers of the gospel who want to present a series of lessons on *Hebrews*. Too often people view *Hebrews* as of significance only to Jewish Christians in the first century who were in danger of misunderstanding the nature, the purposes, and the duration of the law of Moses. *Hebrews* was relevant to their needs but it is also relevant today. It helps us to understand how the Old Covenant prepared for, pointed to, and prophesied the New Covenant. It demonstrates that one of the aspects of the harmony between the Testaments is that the New is the substance of which the Old was the shadow. The relationship between the two is one of the proofs of the divine origin of the Bible. Furthermore, it emphasizes the sinfulness of sin, that it was not easy for sins to be forgiven, and that we ought to be very grateful that God has made provision for our redemption. In a world which is losing its sense of sin, the message of *Hebrews* is needed. Sin separates man and God and this alienation and separation can only be overcome through the blood of Christ and our acceptance of it by the faith which obeys.

Hebrews is also of great value to us in warning us against apostatizing from the faith. Although we are not tempted to go back to the law of Moses itself, many of the appeals which come to us today are an effort to involve us in ceremonialism and carnal ordinances such as were found in the Old Testament. There are those who place a human priesthood between us and Christ. There are those who tire of the simplicity which is in Christ and who hanker for a ritualistic religion.

The author hopes that these lessons will help some Christians to better understand that they are Christ's house, but that they must be faithful unto the end.

There are questions at the end of each study. In some cases, but few questions are asked. However, these cover a great deal of territory for they call on the class to discuss the numerous points which are made. Therefore, the teacher of the class will not end the discussion when one point is made. Instead, he will ask for additional points and scriptures to be discussed. In some cases it may take more than one class period to cover an outline, and in other cases two outlines may be covered in the same period.

In order to save space we have given the author and the page number. The complete bibliographical information can be found at the back of the book. When we have not given a page reference, it will be on the page which comments on the verse under consideration.

Old Testament and New Testament

(HEBREWS 1:1-2)

Although the Bible possesses unity, it presents three basic dispensations. (1) The Patriarchal. (2) The Mosaic. (3) The Gospel age. It is important that we realize that we are under the gospel dispensation. Therefore, we must not only observe to whom God is speaking, but under what dispensation.

I. CHRIST'S MISSION WITH REFERENCE TO THE OLD TESTAMENT (Matt. 5:17-18)

- (1) The promise. (Gen. 22:17-18; Gal. 3:7-19)
- (2) Prophecies. (Lk. 24:25-27, 44; Isa. 53; I Pet. 1:10-12)
- (3) Types. (Col. 2:14-17; Heb. 8:5-6; 9:8, 23; 10:1)

(4) The period of the personal ministry was the period of intense preparation for the kingdom. (Lk. 16:16). The kingdom was preached as at hand. (Matt. 3:2) However, the law of Moses was in force because none was to pass until all passed. (Matt. 5:17-18; Note fulfill; not perpetuate. Col. 2:14-17; Eph. 2:13-17; Heb. 1:3, 13; Lk. 24:25-27; I Tim. 3:16; Acts 2:34-36) Some of the things taught in the personal ministry pertained to the law. (Matt. 8:4; 23:1-4. For a discussion of Matt. 23 see James D. Bales, *Woe Unto You?*) However, much of what Jesus taught pertained to the kingdom.

II. WHEN THE NEW COVENANT WAS ESTABLISHED

This question is important for it pertains to how we enter the kingdom, and live and worship therein.

- (1) Christ crowned king after His ascension. (Lk. 24:25-27; I Tim. 3:16; Matt. 20:21; Mk. 10:37; Heb. 1:3, 13; Acts 2:34-36)
- (2) Covenants.
 - (a) Two not in force at same time. (Rom. 7:1-7; Heb. 10:9)
 - (b) O.T. in force in His personal ministry. (Matt. 23:1-3; Col. 2:14)
 - (c) New in force after His death, after making the offering for sin, and ascending to the throne. (Heb. 9:15-17; 1:3, 13)

(3) Apostles did not believe in the gospel of the death, burial, and resurrection during His personal ministry. (Matt. 16:21-23; Lk. 24:6, 11; 25-26; John 20:24-29) The good news they preached was that the kingdom was at hand. (Matt. 3:2; 4:17, 23; 9:35; 10:7; Mk. 1:14-15) When they did believe it, they were not authorized to preach it until the Spirit came. (Lk. 24:44-49; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4, etc.) If the church existed in the personal ministry, they certainly were members of it. However, they could not have been members of the New Testament church without believing the gospel. (I Cor. 15:1-5; Gal. 1:6-9) They were a part of the little flock who was to receive the kingdom. (Lk. 12:32)

(4) Christ became head of the church after His ascension. (Eph. 1:19-22) Church could not have functioned without its head.

(5) Church made possible through the cross. (Eph. 2:11-17; Col. 2:14-17)

(6) Christ not corner stone until after His rejection. (Eph. 2:20; Matt. 21:42; Acts 4:10-11) We are built into this growing temple. (Eph. 2:19-22; I Pet. 2:5, 9)

(7) Kingdom was at hand during the personal ministry, but came in their lifetime. (Matt. 3:2; Mk. 1:14-15; 9:1; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4, 34-36)

(8) While they were under the law, it was before the faith came. (Gal. 3:23-29)

(9) Christ could not be high priest while on earth, for the law of Moses was then in force. (Psa. 110:1-4; Heb. 7:11-25; 8:1-4)

III. THE NEW COVENANT THE FINAL COVENANT

(1) It does not promise, prophesy, or foreshadow another reign on earth.

(2) Reigns until all enemies are conquered. (Acts 2:34-36; I Cor. 15:24-28; Rev. 20:11; 21:5)

(3) The everlasting covenant. (Heb. 12:24-28; 13:20)

(4) No more offering for sin, so no coming covenant could be sanctified by blood. (Heb. 9:8-26; 10:1-21)

(5) The everlasting kingdom. (Dan. 2:44-45; Heb. 12:18-28; 13:20)

(6) The total truth. (John 14:26; 16:12-15; Col. 2:3-7)

(7) The faith once for all delivered. (Jude 3)

(8) The last days dispensation. (Acts 2:16-17; Heb. 1:1-2) Acts 2:16-17 makes it clear that the dispensation of the Messiah is the last age or dispensation of God's dealings with man on earth. Robert Milligan said that the best authorities translated Heb. 1:2 as "at the end of these days." He said there are three views of its meaning. "It is alleged (1) that they refer simply to the closing period of the Jewish age (Moll); (2) that they refer exclusively to the Christian age (Stuart); and (3) that they refer to the closing period of the prophetic era, embracing both the ministry of Christ and of his Apostles (Luther). The first of these hypotheses is favored (a) by the use of the aorist tense of the verb . . . HE SPOKE, not he has spoken; (b) by the fact that during the last three

and a half years of the Jewish age, God did actually speak to the people in the person of his own Son; and (c) by the current use of this phrase among the Jews. They were wont to divide all time into two ages, viz., 'the present age' . . . and 'the coming age' . . . By the former they meant the age then existing before the coming of Christ; and by the latter they meant the age subsequent to his coming (Matt. 12:32). And hence it was, that in the Hebrew dialect 'these days' came to signify the Jewish age; and 'the last days,' the coming age. The dividing line of these two ages was never drawn very distinctly by the Jews. But as Christ put an end to the Law, nailing it to his cross (Col. 2:14), his death, of course, serves to define this boundary, fixing definitely the end of the Jewish age, as well as the beginning of the Christian age. So that the days of Christ's personal ministry on earth, previous to his death, were according to the Hebrew 'usus loquendi,' the end of 'these days.' The second hypothesis is favored by the reading of the 'Textus Receptus,' and also by several of the ancient versions which have 'in these last days'. That 'the last days' is a phrase in Hebrew literature, equivalent to the 'coming age,' is plain from sundry passages in both the Old and the New Testament. See, for example, Isa. 2:2; Jer. 13:20; Micah 4:1; and Acts 2:17. The third hypothesis is supposed to receive some support from the fact conceded in ch. 2:3; viz., that the things 'which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord' himself, were afterward confirmed unto us by his Apostles and Prophets, during the opening period of the Christian age. The FACT here stated, no one of course denies who believes the Bible to be the word of God; but whether it has any bearing on the question before us, may be doubted. On the whole, it seems most probable that the Apostle is speaking here simply of Christ's personal ministry on Earth; and that he refers only, as the tense of the verb indicates, to the last days of the Jewish age."

Henry Alford also thought that it referred to the closing days of the Jewish age, for this was when Christ was manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. (Heb. 9:26) (II, 598)

I disagree with this position. It is true that Christ died at the end of the Jewish age; in fact, His death made possible its abolition. (Col. 2:14-17; Heb. 1:3, 13) However, Hebrews 1:1-2 is contrasting the time when the authoritative message of God was through the prophets to the fathers, and the time when it is through the Son to us. During the personal ministry the law of Moses, and the teaching of the prophets, were still in force. (Matt. 8:4; 23:1-4) Christ expressly said that He came to fulfill the law and the prophets, but that none of it would pass until all of it had passed. (Matt. 5:17-18) All had not passed during His personal ministry, so none of it had passed. Much of what He taught in His personal ministry pertained to the kingdom, but the kingdom or New Covenant did not start until after His death, burial, resurrection, making purification for our sins and sitting down at God's right hand. (Acts 2:34-36; Heb. 1:3, 13) Hebrews 1:1-2 is contrasting the time when the prophets were authoritative and the time when Christ is the authority.

Christ is the authority in the New Covenant, which is the final dispensation; the last days, or the days of the reign of the Messiah.

John Owen said: "In opposition to this gradual revelation of the mind of God under the Old Testament, the apostle intimates, that now by Jesus the Messiah, the Lord hath at once begun and finished the whole revelation of his will, according to their own hopes and expectation. So, Jude 3, the faith 'was once delivered unto the saints:' . . . Nothing shall be added unto, nor altered in the worship of God any more. God will not do it; men that attempt it, do it on the price of their soul." (III, 29)

Johannese Schneider put it this way: "The old time and the end time are differentiated by the value and the quality of the bearer of revelation. For ancient time the prophet was adequate. The Word which God had to speak he could speak through the mouth of men he had graced, men who were obedient to His will. But they could not be the bearers of the final revelational Word and will of God. That only the Son Himself could be. He alone was worthy to receive into Himself the fulness of salvation and to bring the conclusive revelation of God to fullest expression. He alone was able to create the new people of God for whom the new revelation was intended. A jubilant tone lies in the words: 'At the end of these days He has spoken to *us* through the Son.' The New Testament society of the redeemed is that blessed host to whom the revelation of God through the Son is addressed. That the Son speaks in lieu of the prophets differentiates the Old from the New Covenant people. In any case God is He who speaks, but it is of decisive significance through whom God speaks. The contents and ultimate goal of redemptive history is recognized in the bearer of the divine Word and revelation. The church of the end time is concerned with the Son. The Son unveils the whole truth and the full salvation." (10-11)

"Now is the last time. Christ, therefore, not only inaugurated the *new* time, but with Him, too, the *last* time has come, the time which brings the fulfillment of all things. Thus Christ, if viewed from an eschatological perspective, is likewise the final Word of God to men, the conclusive revelation of His being. In him and through Him God has said everything to men which he had to say to them." (10)

IV. IF WE GO BACK TO THE OLD TESTAMENT IT SENDS US BACK TO THE NEW

(1) Abraham sends you to his seed, Christ. (Gen. 22:17-18; Gal. 3:8; 15-19)

(2) Moses sends you to the prophet like unto him. (Deut. 18:15-18; Acts 3:22-23)

(3) The Old Kingdom sends you to the new. (Dan. 2:44; Heb. 12:28)

(4) Old Covenant sends you to the New. (Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:5-13; 9:15; 12:24; 13:20)

(5) Shadows send you to the substance. (Col. 2:14-17; Heb. 10:1-4)

- (6) Old high priest sends you to Christ. (Psa. 110:1-4; Heb. 8:1-4)
- (7) The bondwoman sends you to the free woman. (Gal. 4:21-31; II Cor. 3)
- (8) The law sends you to Christ who can justify. (Gal. 3:10-14, 23-24)
- (9) The Old Zion sends you to the New Zion. (Heb. 12:18-24; Psa. 2:1-6)
- (10) Melchizedek sends us to Christ. (Heb. 5:6; 7:11; 8:4)

V. HEAR YE HIM

- (1) Christ is the authority to whom we must listen. (Matt. 17:4-8; Heb. 1:2)
- (2) Since we shall be judged by Him and His word we should trust and obey Him. (John 12:48; Acts 17:30-31)

QUESTIONS

1. What three dispensations are found in the Bible?
2. What was Christ's mission with reference to the Old Testament? (Matt. 5:17-18) What all did this involve?
3. How do we know the New Covenant was not established during the personal ministry?
4. What are some of the scriptures which show when the church was established?
5. Discuss some of the scriptures which show that the New Covenant is the final covenant.
6. If we try to go back to the Old Testament today, it sends us back to the New. What scriptures prove this?
7. Who is the authority today?

The Prophets: God's Inspired Spokesmen

(HEBREWS 1:1)

Hebrews 1:1 makes clear that the prophets were inspired spokesmen for God. One cannot deny that God spoke through the prophets without denying the New Testament, for the New Testament makes it clear that God not only has spoken in both Testaments but that the Old pointed to the New. (Heb. 1:1-2; Matt. 5:17-18; John 5:45-47)

I. THE INSPIRATION OF THE PROPHETS

(1) Old Testament references. Moses. (Ex. 4:12) Ezekiel. (3:10, 11) Jeremiah. (1:7-9) Nehemiah. (9:10) Amos. (1:1, 3, 6) Isaiah. (1:10, 20) David. (2 Sam. 23:1-2)

(2) New Testament references. (Matt. 22:31-32; Lk. 24:25-27, 44-45; John 5:46-47; 10:33-36; 2 Tim. 3:16-17. This would not be limited to the Old Testament. Rom. 3:2; 1 Pet. 1:10-12; 2 Pet. 1:19-21; Acts 7:51-53)

(3) Their written word was authoritative as surely as was their spoken word. (Isa. 8:20; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Lk. 16:27-31; Matt. 22:31-32; Heb. 10:15)

II. THE FUNCTION OF THE PROPHETS

As those who spoke God's word, they performed several functions. Although when God so willed they foretold the future, they did more than foretell. They also told God's will to their own generation.

(1) They told kings and the people of their sins. (1 Kings 22:13-14; 21:20; Jer. 1:18)

(2) They called for a restoration of true religion when the people went into idolatry. (1 Sam. 7:3; 1 Kings 18:21)

(3) They foretold "God's judgments beforehand, that believers might be prepared the better to bear them; that impenitent might be made the more inexcusable; and that the severity of God's judgment might be the more justified, Jer. 5:13; Ezek. 5:8." (Isa. 13)

(4) They made known "God's mercies in the midst of judgments, and God's mind of doing good to them, after they had been scourged for their sins; thereby to provoke them to return to the Lord, Isa. 4:2; Hosea 6:1, 2."

(5) They sometimes read what was incomprehensible to others (Dan. 5:17), discovered secret counsels (2 Kings 6:12), recalled to men's minds what they had forgotten (Dan. 2:24), and interpreted dreams (Dan. 2:24-44; Gen. 40:14; 41:38)

(6) They did mighty works; this was especially true of Moses. (Exodus 34:10-12; Acts 7:22)

(7) They wrote sacred scriptures. (2 Pet. 1:19)

(8) They prophesied the coming and the kingdom of the Messiah. (Deut. 18:15-18; Acts 3:22-23; Matt. 5:17-18; Lk. 24:44-47; John 5:47-48; 1 Pet. 1:10-12)

(9) For a discussion of some of these works of the prophets see William Gouge, *Hebrews*, Vol. I, pp. 10-11.

III. A MODERNISTIC BIAS CONCERNING PROPHECY

Christopher R. North, in *The Suffering Servant in Deutero-Isaiah* (Oxford University Press, 1948), maintained that Isaiah 53 had reference to Christ in some sense, although he thinks that it originally referred to someone else also. (pp. 218-219). In discussing the matter he states a principle by which some modernists trim down or eliminate the predictive element in Scripture. "Until the close of the eighteenth century Christian writers — with almost the sole exception of Grotius, who thought of Jeremiah — were unanimous that Isa. liii was Messianic prophecy. This was natural enough, since no one then doubted that the passage, even if its exilic background had been perceived, was written by a prophet who lived some two centuries before the exile. *The principle that a prophecy must be relevant to the immediate circumstances of those to whom it was addressed was not yet recognized*, and the fulfilment of the prophecy could therefore equally well be seven centuries distant as two." (pp. 1-2) We shall give some brief comments on only one point in this quotation.

First, why does a prophecy have to be relevant to the immediate circumstances of those to whom it was addressed? Who said that it had to? No Scripture says so. In fact, the Scriptures definitely teach that the prophets did speak of things beyond their day as well as within their day. (1 Pet. 1:10-12)

When Jeremiah (31:31-34) prophesied that the time would come when God would make a new covenant, did that mean that its fulfilment had to take place within the lifetime of the people to whom Jeremiah spoke? Certainly not. And, as a matter of fact, no new covenant was made during Jeremiah's lifetime or the lifetime of his generation. It was not made until centuries later. (Heb. 8:6-10:18)

Second, these modernists have *confused relevancy with immediacy*. It could still be relevant in some way to the people of the prophet's day, although its fulfilment was centuries later. For example, since the Messiah was to come of Israel a prophecy of His coming which was uttered during dark days in Israel's history would furnish them with the assurance that their nation would not perish during those dark days because she would have to continue to exist in order for the Messiah to be born of her number. Heaven does not have to be in our lifetime in order for the promise of heaven to be relevant to our needs.

Third, these modernists have overlooked the fact that God also designed the prophecies concerning the Messiah to be relevant to the needs of the people who would live during the time of the coming of the Messiah and also afterwards. These prophecies, uttered long before, would enable the people to know the Messiah when He came, and thus keep them from being deceived by false prophets — if they adhered to the picture of the Messiah which was painted by the prophets.

Fourth, taking the arbitrary position that they do concerning prophecy it is no wonder that the modernist is committed to the elimination of supernatural prediction from the Bible. All of them may not be consistent and eliminate it all. Instead, some of them may be held back by faith in Christ which leads them to fail to follow their "relevancy" bias to its logical conclusions.

Fifth, North's statement is an admission that the fundamental reason that modernists' interpretations differ from the long-held Messianic interpretation is that they have grasped the relevancy principle today while the older interpreters did not. In other words, it is a bias, and not the passage itself which leads them to their conclusion which is contrary to the conclusion of centuries of believing scholars.

Nothing except the modernistic bias says that the prophecy could not be a prediction of some far off event, but that it must be addressed to the immediate circumstances of the prophet's generation. And this bias, which underlies their relevancy bias, is in most cases the bias against the miraculous. For actual predictions of Jesus Christ by the Old Testament prophets would be proof of superhuman knowledge and thus of the miraculous.

There is no reason that one should accept this relevancy bias, and there is reason to reject it. So we reject it because it is contrary to the express teaching of the New Testament, and to the fact that there are actual literal predictions concerning Christ in the Old Testament.

IV. THE VALUE OF THE PROPHETS TO THE CHRISTIAN

Christians are not under the law and the prophets, for we live in the stage of the fulfilment rather than of the promise. (Matt. 5:17-18) Hebrews 1:1-2 makes it clear that we are under Christ, and that the prophets spoke to the fathers. This passage can be quoted every time someone fails to find justification for his teaching in the New Testament and goes to the Old Testament to justify his religious faith and practices. To them we can say: You have found it in what God spoke to the fathers by the prophets, but what you must do is find it in what God speaks to us today through His Son and those sent by Him. (Heb. 1:1-2; Heb. 2:3-4; John 14:26; 16:12-15; 17:8, 17, 20-21)

However, this does not mean the Old Testament is without value to the Christian. What are some of its uses for the Christian?

(1) Historical background without which we would have little information concerning certain individuals and events mentioned in the New Testament.

(2) Credentials of Christ. (Matt. 5:17-18; John 5:40-47; Lk. 24:25-27; 44-46; Rom. 1:2-3; 3:21; Acts 17:2-3, 11-12)

(3) Preparation for the New Covenant. (Heb. 9:9-10; 10:1-4; Col. 2:17; Gal. 3:8-29)

(4) The nature of God. Any truth revealed about His nature is still true, although we have in Christ and His covenant the full revelation of God to man on earth, (John 14:8-9; Heb. 13:20)

(5) God has always called on men to obey Him. The Old Testament contains warning examples. (1 Cor. 9:27; 10:1-12) This does not mean that we shall experience the same type of punishment, but it does warn us that sin brings God's wrath.

(6) Examples which encourage and comfort us by showing that God is faithful to His promises. (Rom. 15:4; Heb. 2:1-2)

(7) The nature of faith. Although we have commandments which often differ from ones found in the Old Testament — and even the ones which are the same (the moral principles) must be obeyed in the light of the New Testament contexts which reveal them in their greatest height, their deepest depth, and their widest breadth — the nature of faith is the same in both Testaments, i.e. trust in and obedience to God. This is the reason that Hebrews 11 illustrates to Christians, by Old Testament examples, what it means when something is said to be accomplished "by faith." (Heb. 10:39; 11:1ff)

(8) Anything the Old Testament reveals about the nature of man is still true. For example, Jesus showed people of His day that the Old Testament taught that man survives death. (Matt. 22:31-32)

(9) Sin's basic nature has not changed. For example, in the fall of man we see man's pride, man's desire to be a law unto himself, man's desire to be what by nature he is not (God), and man's tendency to blame others for his actions. (Gen. 3)

(10) Although we do not go to the Old Testament to learn how to become and remain Christians, we must accept the fact that the Old Testament is inspired. Those who deny its inspiration will deny, when they are consistent (and if they are not consistent, the generation they teach will likely be consistent), the inspiration of the New. For example, if Jesus was wrong in saying that Moses wrote of Him, how can we trust Him when He promised that apostles would be guided into all the truth? (John 5:45-47; 16:12-15)

(11) God spoke to the fathers by the prophets, but today He speaks to us through His Son. Will you not hear Him and accept His great salvation? (Heb. 1:2; 2:1-4)

QUESTIONS

1. What does Heb. 1:1 show about the function of the prophets?
2. What are some of the passages which show that their word was inspired and authoritative. Was their written word, or only their spoken word, inspired?
3. What were some of the functions of the prophets? Did they just predict?
4. What bias concerning prophecy does North follow?
5. How would this eliminate prediction from the Bible?
6. What are some of the objections to this bias?
7. Although we are not under the Old Testament, what are some of the values of the Old Testament to the Christian?

The Interpretation of Prophecy

(HEBREWS 1:1)

The prophets were inspired spokesmen for God. (Neh. 9:30; 2 Pet. 1:21; Heb. 1:1; James 5:10; Acts 7:51-53) They did more than predict, but when God so willed, they foretold coming events. How shall we interpret their predictions?

I. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SUBJECT

(1) The naturalists deny the possibility of the supernatural.

(2) Modernists may differ in the extent to which they reject prophecy, for some are more consistent in their naturalism than are others. However, most of them insist that the prophet must speak to his day and that his word always have an immediate application.

(a) Men, not the Bible, said this. (Lk. 24:27, 44; John 5:45-47; 1 Pet. 1:10-12; 2 Pet. 1:16-21)

(b) Relevancy must not be confused with immediacy. The second coming, for example, does not have to be in our day to be relevant. It was relevant for Israel to know the Messiah would come, regardless of how dark the days might seem at the time.

(c) God designed the predictions about Christ to be relevant to the needs of the people when He came, and for us today as credentials of Christ.

(3) Unbelievers scoff because the N. T. shows some prophecies were not literal. (Matt. 2:15; Hosea 11:1) Some believers have been puzzled by these passages.

(4) Kingdom question. Premillennialism involves a system of the interpretation of the O. T. and the N. T. It is not just a discussion about Rev. 20. Among other things at stake is whether the O. T. prepared for the N. T. They maintain, at least many of them do, the church age was not prophesied.

(5) Either-or approach wrong: That is, all figurative or all literal. (Heb. 1:1)

(6) Zionism. Premillennialists are committed to the idea of the restoration of Jewish state as involved in the fulfilment of prophecy and the establishment of the kingdom.

(7) Study prophecy to increase our faith. (2 Pet. 1:16-19)

(8) It takes study. All is not easy.

(9) Exercise care that we do not let our desires shape our interpretation of prophecy. This is what Jews and the disciples of Christ did during His personal ministry. (Isa. 53 versus Peter in Matt. 16:21-23) How much more would Luke 24:25-27 apply to those who have both the light of the O. T. *and* the N. T.?

II. IT IS FUNDAMENTAL TO REALIZE THAT THE PROPHETS SPOKE IN DIVERS MANNERS (Heb. 1:1)

(1) If all were spoken in one manner, all would have to be interpreted in one manner.

(2) We do not insist that other books speak only literally, or only figuratively, etc. Truth is truth regardless of the manner in which it is spoken.

(3) We should let a book speak for itself if we are to understand it. We must not decide beforehand that it must speak only in one manner.

(4) The Bible says that the prophets spoke in divers manners. (Heb. 1:1)

(5) This means that all prophecy cannot be interpreted in one manner, for all was not spoken in one manner.

(6) This meets the objection of those who say, when someone points out that a certain thing is not literal, that if God did not mean what He said why didn't He say what He meant? He did, but it may not have been in a literal manner. (Matt. 26:26-29; 1 Cor. 11:20, 26, 27, 28)

(7) The ones who insist that all prophecy must be literal descriptions of things to come will not stay with this position. (Ezek. 37:24-26) They do not believe David will dethrone Christ.

(8) The New Testament is a clearer revelation than is the Old. It is the fulfilment of the prophecies, types, and promises concerning Christ and His kingdom. (Matt. 5:17-18; Lk. 24:25-27; Col. 2:17; Heb. 10:1; Gal. 3:16-29; Eph. 3:3-7) Christians must not study prophecy as if the N. T. did not exist.

III. IN WHAT MANNERS DID THE PROPHETS SPEAK?

(1) Literal—although a series of literal descriptions might be woven in with some symbolism. (Isa. 13) To give a figurative interpretation to a literal prophecy is to misinterpret it. Of course, literal is not contrasted with the truth or the real, but with the figurative.

(2) Figures and symbols. (Lk. 3:3-6; Matt. 3:2) To give a literal interpretation to a figurative prophecy is to misinterpret it.

(3) Types were fact or deed-prophecies. Types were individuals, institutions, or events in the O. T. which pointed to, prefigured, or bore some resemblance to something in connection with the N. T. (Col. 2:17; Heb. 9:11-12, 23; 10:1) A type itself was a prophecy and was fulfilled in its antitype. The type was the shadow, while the antitype is the substance. (Heb. 10:1; Col. 2:17)

(4) Type-language prophecies. In some cases, the language which described the O. T. type is used when the New Testament reality is meant. (Ezek. 37:24-26) This is realized by Jewish authors who maintain that David was a type of the Messiah, and that sometimes David is used when the Messiah is meant. (Joseph Klausner, *The Messianic Idea in Israel*, N. Y.: The Macmillan Co., 1955, p. 125. A. Cohen, *The Soncino Chumash*, 1947, p. 295) Premillennialists also realize this, with reference to Ezekiel 37:24-26, or otherwise Christ will be dethroned and David reign in His place.

(5) Prophecy by principle? (Jer. 6:17-18; Gal. 6:7-9; Prov. 14:34) Any fulfilment of the principle may be said to have been prophesied by the principle. McGarvey thinks that Acts 1:16, 20, and the references to Psa. 69:25 and 109:8, mean that since the habitation of such enemies of God in general should be made desolate, and filled by others, it was pre-eminently true in the case of Judas. This may be the heading under which to put John T. Willis' explanation of 2 Sam. 7:14; Heb. 1:5. Some view it as a type.

(6) I do not think there is a double sense in prophecy. (Milton S. Terry, 383-384) I do believe there is type and antitype.

(7) Some ask: Once you start spiritualizing prophecies, where can you stop? *First*, we must accept the fact that the prophets spoke in divers manners. (Heb. 1:1) *Second*, we ask them: When you start literalizing, where do you stop? Obviously all is not literal and all is not figurative, etc.

(8) Determining the manner. *First*, O. T. prophecy harmonizes with itself. Therefore, Christ, not David, was to reign. (Psa. 110:1-4; Ezek. 37:24-26) Christ must suffer and then enter into His glory. (Isa. 53; Lk. 24:25-27; 1 Pet. 1:10-12) *Second*, Christ is the authority in all things for the Christian, so we must accept His interpretation of prophecy. This includes the entire N. T. (Deut. 18:15-18; Acts 3:22-23; John 14:26-36; 16:12-13) If someone says this is unfair to the Jews, we point out that we do not use the figurative prophecies in arguing that Jesus is the Christ. We use the literal ones and other credentials of Christ. But once His authority is established, we must accept what He says on prophecy as well as other matters. *Third*, prophecies not interpreted in the N. T., but which refer to the Messiah and His kingdom, must be interpreted so as to harmonize with — and therefore not to contradict — the N. T.

IV. VISION AND THE INTERPRETATION OF PROPHECY

(1) Prophets sometimes used the past or the present tense to describe future events. (Isa. 9:6-7; 53:1-3) How can this be explained if the events were future?

(2) Sometimes God revealed the future to the prophet in visions. In some way on the "screen" of his mind the future was shown. (Isa. 1:1; 13:1) Vision means "to see" or "to envision." (Num. 24:2-4; 24:17; 2 Sam. 7:17; Ezekiel 1:1) Film illustration. One describes a scene as he sees it on film regardless of when the film was taken.

(3) The prophet described events as he saw them. If he saw them as completed, he described them in the past tense. If he saw them as taking place before his eyes, he described them in the present tense. In some cases it was revealed as something future.

(a) "Your country *is* desolate." (Isa. 1:7-8) However, the desolation was still future. (1:19, 24; 1:11-14; 6:1, 8-13)

(b) Ezek. 8:1-6; compare 3:12, 14, 23.

(c) Ezek. 40:2-4.

(d) Jeremiah 4:23-28.

(e) Isa. 9:6-7; Isa. 53 — some of it represents future events but they are seen as present in the vision.

(4) Isa. 7:10-17. The margin has "is with child, and beareth a son . . ." Edward J. Young comments: "It is of course difficult to set forth the thought in modern language. It is as though the prophet had said, 'Behold! there is the virgin now with child' or 'I see the virgin with child.' Of course, with the physical eyes it would have been impossible for Ahaz to have seen the mother. It was only in vision that the Prophet saw her and commended her to the attention of his hearers." (*Studies*, 163) The measure of time is taken from the life of the child, who, in the vision, will soon be born. Though it referred to the birth of Christ, the time measure sets the limits within which the land will be cleared of the kings Ahaz abhorred.

(5) Oswald T. Allis spoke of it as the "prophetic perfect" tense. Perfect meant something completed or perfected in the past. However, it is sometimes used in prophecy of future events and describes them as if they had already taken place. (*The Unity of Isaiah*, 29)

V. THE CROSS AND THE CROWN

(1) Man's pressing need is for the eternal home. (Heb. 11:10, 13-16) This is related to the central theme of the Bible which is redemption. The sacrificial system spoke of redemption, and pointed to Christ, the Lamb of God. We should expect the kingdom of Christ to be related to the question of redemption, and man's need to be reconciled to God. (2 Cor. 5:18-21)

(2) Christ's mission was not to destroy, not to perpetuate, but to fulfil the law and the prophets. (Matt. 5:17-18) This included doing

whatever was necessary for our redemption, and this involved His death. (Heb. 10:1-20; 1 Pet. 2:24-25)

- (a) Redemption set forth in the types. (Heb. 9:7-26; 10:1-4)
- (b)** Redemption prophesied. (Acts 8:30-35; Isa. 53)
- (c) Announced by an angel. (Matt. 1:21)
- (d) Purpose of His coming. (Heb. 9:26)
- (e) Announced by John the Baptist. (John 1:29, 36)
- (f) John 3:16
- (g) Matt. 16:21-23; 20:28; 26:26-29.
- (h) Fulfilment of God's eternal purpose. (Eph. 1:3-12; 2:13-16)
- (i) Foreshadowed. (Col. 2:11-17)
- (j) Jeremiah prophesied the New Covenant, and remission of sins; but Christ had to die to make the New Covenant operative. (Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:5-13; 9:15-17)
- (k) Sufferings and the glories that followed were prophesied. (1 Pet. 10-12)
- (1) Christ's rejection by Israel foretold. (Isa. 53:1-3; Acts 2:22-32; 3:17-18)
- (3) Christ's first coming had to do with the cross, as the above make clear. (Lk. 24:18-21, 25-27)
- (4) The first coming also had to do with the kingdom, for it was at hand. (Matt. 3:2; 4:17, 23; 9:35; 10:7; Mk. 1:14-15)
- (5) Christ could not come to do contradictory things; therefore, the cross and the kingdom (the crown) cannot exclude one another. They must be related.
- (6) The premillennial view of the kingdom.
 - (a) National acceptance of Christ by Israel. Triumphant reception.
 - (b) Israel's restoration to national sovereignty in Palestine.
 - (c) Catastrophic and complete overthrow of Gentile world powers.
 - (d) Gentiles blessed through and in subservience to restored Israel.
 - (e) Theocracy. Combination of church and state.
 - (f) Christ to rule on David's throne in Jerusalem. (R. H. Boll, *The Kingdom of God*, pp. 19-22, 60-62, 73, 79, 90, 92, 112-115, 120, 145, 162)
- (7) I believe the Biblical teaching concerning the kingdom is that the one which was prophesied was the one which was established. (Acts 2:34-36; Col. 1:13)
 - (a) Reign from heaven. (Psa. 110:1-4; Acts 2:34-36; Col. 1:13)
 - (b) The kingdom was created as a result of the cross. (Matt. 1:21; John 1:29; Matt. 20:28; 26:26-29; Lk. 24:25-27; Acts 2:22-36)

(c) Spiritual kingdom and therefore Jew and Gentile had to be born again in order to enter it. (John 3:1-5; Matt. 3:7-12; Acts 15:7-11; Eph. 2:8-17)

(d) Kingdom accepted by faith. (Gal. 3:8-29)

(e) God enthroned His Son in spite of Israel's rebellion. (Psa. 2:1-7; Lk. 24:25-27; Acts 2:23-36; 4:25-28)

(f) Equality of Jew and Gentile. (Eph. 3:1-6; Gal. 3:25-29)

(g) It does not combine church and state. The sword is left in the hands of civil government, to which Christians can appeal. (Rom. 13:1-7; Acts 25:11) Its weapons are spiritual. (Eph. 6:10-21; 2 Cor. 10:3-5)

(h) To put it another way, it is made up of God's New Covenant people. (Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:5-13; 9:9-10, 15-17; 8:6; 9:15; 12:24; 13:20)

(8) Which of these two concepts of the kingdom harmonizes with the fact that both the cross and the kingdom were at hand? (Lk. 24:25-27; Matt. 20:21; Mk. 10:37; 1 Tim. 3:16; Heb. 1:3, 13; Acts 2:34-36; 2:22-36; Eph. 1:19-23)

(9) This means that the premillennial view of the kingdom, and its interpretation of prophecy, are wrong.

QUESTIONS

1. What proof is there that the prophets were inspired spokesmen for God?
2. Discuss those things which show the importance of the study of prophecy.
3. How do we know that the prophets spoke in divers manners?
4. Why is it very important to realize this?
5. In what different manners did the prophets speak?
6. What are the principles in the light of which to determine in what manner a particular prophecy, or a portion of it, was spoken?
7. What are some illustrations of the fact that God sometimes revealed the future to the prophet through a vision?
8. What relationship does this have to the interpretation of prophecy? How does it show that the past tense may be used of a future event?
9. What scriptures show that Christ's first coming had to do with the cross, i.e. with His death for our sins?
10. What scriptures show that his first coming had to do with the kingdom?
11. According to premillennialism, what are the characteristics of the kingdom?
12. What relationship does the cross have to the nature of the kingdom and the interpretation of prophecy?
13. How do we know that the kingdom which the Old Testament prophesied is the kingdom in which Christ now reigns.
14. What do the premillennialists think happened to the kingdom?

Christ's Superiority as a Prophet

(HEBREWS 1:1-3)

Although we must never overlook the fact that God spoke in times past to the fathers by the Old Testament prophets, we must recognize that the present New Testament dispensation is vastly superior to the Old Testament dispensation. It is superior because Christ, the spokesman, the prophet, of the New Covenant is vastly superior to all the prophets who went before Him. (Deut. 18:15-18, Acts 3:22-23)

I. THE SUPERIORITY OF THE SON AS SHOWN BY HIS PERSON

(1) He is the Son of God. (1:2, 4, 5; 1 Tim. 3:16; John 1:14; Lk. 1:35, Isa. 9; 6). He is the only begotten son. (John 3:16)

(2) He is the appointed heir. (1:2) He was appointed in that He was sent into the world (Phil. 2:7-9); raised from the dead (Rom. 1:4); and made Lord and Christ. (Acts 2:36) As heir He is Lord of all. (Gal. 4:1) Dignity and dominion are indicated for "an heir is a successor to his father in all that the father hath."

(3) He is the brightness of the Father's glory. (1:3) God to some extent manifested His glory in Old Testament times (Ex. 16:10; 24:16-17; Lev. 9:23), but it was not manifested then as it has been manifested in Christ. (John 1:14, 18; Col. 1:15; 2 Cor. 4:6)

(4) He is the express image of His person. (1:3) "The word rendered 'express image' means a graving tool, a character, an expression, a stamp, a sign, an image, an effigy, an exact likeness; and the word rendered person may be understood to mean essence or substance. The phrase, 'express image of his person', teaches that Christ is the manifest delineation of the essence of the Father, that he gives to us proper views of the Divine perfections." (D. B. Cameron, I, 15) (John 14:9; 1:18; Col. 1:15; 2 Cor. 4:4; Phil. 2:6) "Man's finite language fails to give (complete) expression to these divine realities. Yet, scanty as our best thoughts must ever be, it is well to think of and ponder in our hearts the brilliancy of the glory of Jesus, as he *expresses* to us the Father." (Anonymous, 10-11)

As M. Scott Fletcher put it: "The substance ... of the Godhead, of

which Christ is the 'express image' . . . is the Divine 'essence' or 'nature.' 'Substance' (Lat. *substantia*) etymologically is 'that which stands under' (as a foundation or pedestal). Then it came to mean that in a thing which makes it what it is (its 'essence'), the substratum beneath all its qualities. In its more modern philosophical meaning 'substance' is the reality which exists behind all phenomena. The theological and metaphysical associations of the word, as a technical term, cause most recent commentators to prefer the translation 'essence' or 'nature' in this passage as best interpreting the view of the writer as to Christ and His relation to the Godhead. He is the perfect expression in human life and history of the essential nature of God. In harmony with the teaching of the Fourth Gospel Christ is the Divine Logos, and He alone can assert, 'He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.' (Jn 14)." (James Hastings, Editor, II, 533)

II. THE SUPERIORITY OF THE SON AS SHOWN BY HIS WORKS AND POSITION

- (1) His work in creation. (1:2; John 1:3; Col. 1:16, 17; Rev. 4:11)
- (2) His work in providence, His work as sustainer of all things. (1:3)
- (3) His work in redemption. (1:3; Rev. 1:5, 6; Rom. 6:2-5) His greatest work "is that of redemption; for creation and providence required only the word of his power to perform them, whereas the work of redemption involved him in toilsome obedience unto death. . . ." (Cameron, 1:17).
- (4) He is king. (Heb. 1:3, 13)

III. THE SUPERIORITY OF THE SON IS SHOWN BY HIS AUTHORITY

- (1) Although the Old Testament prophets were inspired, they pointed to and have been superseded by Jesus Christ. (Deut. 18:15-18; Acts 3:22-23) As was made clear in a previous lesson, if we go back to the Old Testament it sends us back to Christ.
- (2) Christ's word is God's inspired word and therefore authoritative. (John 17:8; 12:48-50; Heb. 1:2; 2:1-4)
- (3) Christ inspired the apostles through the Holy Spirit, and they were guided into all the truth. In John 13:1-18:1 Jesus is speaking with apostles. (Compare John 13:1-14; Matt. 26:17-30) They were to be inspired by the Spirit to recall what He had taught in His personal ministry, and guided into the total truth. (John 13:20; 14:26; 16:12-15; 17:8; 20-21; see also Matt. 10:19-20; Mk. 3:14)
- (4) Paul was inspired. (Acts 22:14-15; 26:15-18; I Cor. 15:8; 14:37; 2 Cor. 11:5; 1:11; Gal. 1:1, 11-12, 16; 2 Tim. 2:2; 3:14; I Thess. 2:13; 4:8, 15; 2 Thess. 2:14; 3:12, 14, 15; 2 Pet. 3:15-16)
- (5) Christ also inspired prophets. (I Cor. 12:14)
- (6) The written word is just as authoritative as was the spoken

word. It is God's voice (Matt. 22:31-32), the prophet's voice (Lk. 16:27-31; Acts 13:27; 15:21), and the Spirit's testimony and voice. (Heb. 10:15; Rev. 2:1, 7) It is the standard for the Bible is the only word of God which we have.

(7) The written word has power to produce faith (John 20:30-31), understanding (Eph. 3:4), certainty (Lk. 1:3-4), convey commandments (I Cor. 14:37), regulate our conduct (I Tim. 3:14-15), warn us (I Cor. 4:14), keep us from being deceived (2 Tim. 3:10-16), make us wise unto salvation (2 Tim. 3:15), stir us (2 Pet. 1:12-13), exhort us (I Pet. 5:12), and make our joy full. (I John 1:4) Notice the things said in 2 Tim. 3:16.

(8) Since Christ has all authority, and reigns as king and priest, we ought to become Christians and continue in His word. (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 2:30-42) Since people were held accountable for obeying the Old Testament prophets, how much more so must we obey Christ? (Heb. 2:1-4; 12:25; Deut. 18:15-18; Acts 3:22-23)

QUESTIONS

1. Was Christ a prophet? (Acts 3:22-23)
2. What truths about Christ show that in His person He is superior to all the other prophets? What is the meaning of each of these statements about His nature?
3. How is His superiority shown by His works and His position?
4. How is His superiority shown by His authority?
5. Why was the word of the apostles and prophets, whom Christ sent, authoritative?
6. Can we reject their word and still respect Christ's authority? (John 13:20; 1 Cor. 14:37)
7. How do we know that the written word is as authoritative as was the spoken word of a prophet?
8. What are some of the things which show what the written word can do?
9. Are there any religious people who view the written word as a dead letter?
10. In what way, by their actions, do some Christians show a lack of faith in the power of the word of God?

Christ's Superiority to the Angels

(HEBREWS 1:4-13)

Some of the children of Israel thought that because the law of Moses had been given through the ministration of angels it was superior to everything else. The book of Hebrews showed that the New Covenant is superior to the Old Covenant, since Christ the spokesman of the New Covenant is superior to the angels who introduced the Old Covenant. That word was spoken through angels, but the great salvation first began to be spoken by the Word Jesus Christ. (Heb. 2:2-4) Although Christ, in his human nature was made a little lower than the angels (2:9), yet as Mediator and Son He was vastly superior to them.

I. CHRIST HAS A BETTER NAME THAN THE ANGELS

(1) The angels were not called the Son of God, but Christ was. (Heb. 1:4-5)

(2) It should be noticed that in proving this the apostle Paul appealed to the Old Testament Scriptures, which the children of Israel and Christians held to be of divine origin.

"It is recorded in these Scriptures that God said to the Messiah: 'Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee.' It is worthy of notice that this argument is based upon the silence of Scripture. As it is nowhere recorded that God said to the angels what he said to Christ, the name given to Christ is not conferred on them. The negative testimony of the Word of God is of great practical value with regard to many things. The Jews had traditions concerning the dignity of angels, but the apostle says to them, Ye nowhere in the Word read that God ever said to any of them, as he did to Christ: 'Thou art my son.' Seeing, therefore, that they are inferior to him, such honors as so many have been disposed to do, should not be paid to them. This mode of argument applies to all matters relating to faith and worship. With regard to these the Bible is the only authoritative directory, so that whatever is not taught there, either expressly or inferentially, we are not entitled to accept, practice or teach. This is generally acknowledged to be a sound principal, though those who are disposed to believe false theories or to

follow unscriptural practices fail to apply it. Most of the Reformers in the sixteenth century acted according to this safe rule, and therefore retained nothing in doctrine or worship which they did not find sanctioned by the word of God. They declared whatever was not sanctioned by precept or apostolic example to be unlawful in the service of the sanctuary, or to be accepted as articles of faith. Whenever the churches of Christ will intelligently act according to this rule, the divisions of Zion shall be healed. Those who therefore faithfully adhere to this principle are contributing much to the coming of the glory of the latter days.

"With regard to this title conferred on Christ, it is to be observed that, though his essential sonship rendered him a fit person to receive a more excellent name than the angels, yet it is not his natural, but Mediatorial Sonship, that the apostle has here in view. As Paul well knew the sentiments of the Jews, he reasons with them in the manner best fitted to instruct them in the truth; he shows the superiority of the new dispensation by various arguments throughout this epistle; but commences by proving the greater excellence of Christ, by whom it was introduced to us, than that of angels by whose ministry the Mosaic dispensation was given. He confirms his argument on this point by quotations from the Old Testament. The first of these quotations is from the second Psalm: 'thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.' (Psa. 2:7) That this passage refers to the Messiah is to Christians beyond dispute, because it is applied to him by the apostles, not only here, but in various other places. The disciples in an address to God said: 'Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ.' (Acts 4:25-26) 'God hath fulfilled the promise unto us ... in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second Psalm, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee.' (Acts 13:33) As the Jews always regarded this and various other Psalms and prophecies as Messianic, the apostle quoted such scriptures as themselves so acknowledged.

"It may be objected that, seeing angels and believers are called sons of God, the same name cannot prove Christ's preeminence. To this it is replied that angels are called sons of God on account of their creation by him, and because they loyally obey him; and that believers are so called because, that by being born again of him, they are adopted into his family through Christ; but neither angels nor men are called sons of God on their own account. God has at no time said to any of them, neither for a particular purpose, nor as a peculiar honour, 'Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee.' This distinction belongs exclusively to the Lord Jesus Christ; for it is evident that God intended by the declaration to point out his dignity. The reason why he alone obtained this name by inheritance is that he was the eternal Son of God; for it would be impossible to give it to him if this were not so. The occasion

of giving it to him was not his incarnation, nor his baptism, but his resurrection." (D. B. Cameron, I, 30-33)

II. CHRIST IS WORSHIPPED BY THE ANGELS (1:6)

(1) "The title 'first begotten' implies that God has younger sons; but there is only one first born, called also the only begotten Son, whereas all the others are sons by adoption. The sonship of the rest of God's family agrees with that of the first begotten in some respects, but differs from it in other respects. God is his and their father, and they are heirs of God through him; he is however the essential Son of God, whereas they are sons by adoption only; he has a Divine as well as a human nature, but they have a human nature only. The title 'only begotten son' belongs to him exclusively, for no one else is from eternity begotten of God as he is, and therefore possessing all the attributes of Deity. In that respect it seems to us to be impossible that there should be another Son. Being called the first born with reference to the rest of God's children, his title expressed his superior station among them. He is 'the first born among many brethren.' (Rom. 8:29) He is also 'the first born of every creature.' (Col. 1:15) That means that he is the Head of all creation, of angels as well as men. He is 'the first begotten of the dead.' (Rev. 1:5) He rules in the regions of death as well as among the living. The dead shall obey his command, and shall awake to life in obedience to his word. He is the Head over all things in heaven and earth, visible or invisible, living or dead." (D. B. Cameron, I, 39-40)

(2) "When he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, and let all the angels of God worship him." (1:6) At the time of His humiliation, when He was "made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death" (2:9), God charged the angels to *worship* Him even then. This they did. (Lk. 2:10-14)

(3) "Observe that neither angels nor any other creatures are objects of religious worship. If Jesus Christ were not a Divine Person, it would be idolatry to render to Him the homage due to God, but being the second person of the Trinity, we worship the God-man. To render to a mere creature religious honours, which involves Divine attributes, is idolatry. On that account it is a grievous sin to pray to angels or departed saints; for the act supposes them to be omniscient. (Col. 2:13)." (D. B. Cameron, I, 48)

(4) Stephen commended his spirit to Christ, and asked Him not to lay this sin to their charge. (Acts 7:59-60)

III. CHRIST'S OFFICIAL POSITION HIGHER THAN THAT OF ANGELS (1:7-14)

(1) They are messengers and servants of the heirs of salvation. (1:14) We do not know how they perform this service, but we have God's word that they do in some way render service to the saints. We accept it as a matter of faith, and are content to leave with God how

and what they do for us. Faith must not only be willing to accept what God says, but to stop where God's word stops.

(2) What is the meaning of 1:7? I am not sure. Among other things Cameron thought that "God sends the angels forth as winds and flames of fire to execute his purposes with irresistible rapidity." "We therefore observe: (a) That our views of them should be so regulated by the word of God as to restrain us from being wise above what is written, but to think of them with sobriety. Divine revelation is the rule whereby our thoughts should be guided in all supernatural things. 'The secret things belong to the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever.' (Deut. 29:29) Men's corrupt pride disposes them to unwarranted speculations, and if not restrained, it leads to idolatry and infidelity. Mischievous notions have always prevailed among men concerning supernatural beings, until in modern days they have developed into the monstrosity of spiritualism." (Cameron, 51-52)

(3) Christ is King on His throne at God's right hand. (1:8-13)

IV. HAVE YOU SUBMITTED TO THE SON?

(1) Christ's present reign to continue until His last enemy, death, is conquered. (Heb. 1:3, 13; Acts 2:30-36; I Cor. 15:24-28)

(2) Will you become His loyal subject, or will you have to be destroyed from His presence as an enemy? When the kingship of Jesus was proclaimed in Acts 2, many men were willing to accept it. Will you accept Him as they did? (Acts 2:37-41)

QUESTIONS

1. Who first began to speak the great salvation?
2. Was it prophesied by the prophets? (1 Pet. 1:10-12)
3. How is it that Christ has a better name than the angels?
4. What argument from silence is used?
5. Was Christ worshipped by the angels? Did Stephen pray to Christ? (Acts 7:59-60)
6. How does John 3:16 show that Christ's sonship is unique?
7. In what sense are we sons of God? How do we become sons? (Gal. 3:26-27)
8. Are we to worship angels?
9. How is Christ's official position higher than that of the angels?
10. Do angels serve the saints? (Heb. 1:14) Do we know how?
11. What do you think Heb. 1:7 means?
12. When did Christ begin His reign? (Heb. 1:3, 13)

The Great Confirmation of the Great Salvation

(HEBREWS 2:3-4)

God does not want us to be gullible and to accept just anything which comes along. (Eph. 4:14; I Thess. 5:21) Since the great salvation is from God, we should expect that when He revealed it He gave it a great confirmation. Although we shall deal mainly with the type of confirmation mentioned in Hebrews 2:3-4, it is well to remember that Christ's credentials are numerous.

I. CREDENTIALS OF CHRIST

(1) His miracles which were acknowledged by His enemies. (Matt. 12:22-24; Acts 2:22)

(2) The fulfillment of prophecies. (Matt. 5:17-18; Lk. 24:25-27, 44-46)

(3) His sinless life. Even unbelievers, in spite of their charges, cannot prove that He sinned.

(4) His moral and spiritual teaching which have never been surpassed. It is the truth in all of its parts. (John 16:12-15; Col. 2:3-7)

(5) His resurrection. (Acts 2:32)

(6) The impact of His life and teaching, i.e. by his fruit you can know Him. He is indeed the world's light, and to the extent men turn from Him and His teaching to that extent they walk in darkness. (John 8:12)

(7) The experimental confirmation, as far as it can be confirmed by experience, of the results which follow in life when He is truly loved and obeyed. In the long run, His way is the only way which really works. There are reasons to eat the pudding and there is proof of the pudding in the eating thereof.

(8) If we turn from Him, there is no one to whom we can go. (John 6:60-69) No teacher matches Him, no way of life matches His way of life. We are not saying there are no difficulties involved in our faith, but far greater difficulties are involved in unbelief. Every man believes

something, and every man stakes his all on what he believes. If it is not possible to go right, we cannot be any more wrong by following Christ. If it is possible to go right, we cannot go wrong by giving our life to Him, who is the Highest man has known.

(9) On the day of Pentecost the apostles called for faith on the basis of the fulfilment of prophecy (Acts 2:17-21, 25-28, 34-35), the miracles of Jesus (2:22), the resurrection (2:32), and the miracles on Pentecost wherein something was heard (2:1), seen (2:3), and done. (2:4, 6, 8, 11, 33) The conclusion from these lines of evidence was that Jesus is both Lord and Christ. (Acts 2:36) However, Hebrews 2:3-4 deals with the miraculous confirmation, so let us examine it briefly. This confirmation is recorded in documents which are the best attested documents of ancient times. For example, see F. F. Bruce, *Are the New Testament Documents Reliable?* Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans.

II. THE WIDE VARIETY OF THE MIRACLES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

(1) On Pentecost something was seen, heard, and done. (2:1-4, 6, 33) The tongues were languages. (2:6, 8, 11)

(2) Prison deliverance. (Acts 5:18-19; 12:6-11)

(3) Shaking of meeting place. (Acts 4:31)

(4) Apostles conferred miraculous gifts. (Acts 8:15-19; 19:6)

(5) Miraculously transported. (Acts 8:39-40)

(6) Dead raised: (John 11:39-44; Acts 9:36-42)

(7) Demons cast out. (Acts 16:18)

(8) Bands loosed by earthquake but all prisoners remained. (Acts 16:26)

(9) Healing through handkerchiefs. (Acts 19:11-12)

(10) Deliverance from storm and shipwreck. (Acts 27:23-25)

(11) Walking on water. (Matt. 14:25-33)

(12) No harm from viper bite. (Acts 28:3-6)

(13) Not harmed if drank poison. (Mk. 16:17-20)

(14) Apostles and other inspired men. (I Cor. 12:28-29; Eph. 4:8, 11) The apostles of Christ had seen the Lord, were inspired, continued Christ's work, were witnesses to the resurrection, had authority in all the churches, and confirmed their work with a wide variety of miracles; including the power to confer miraculous power.

(15) If we have any of the gifts today, we should have all of the above, and the others mentioned in I Cor. 12. No argument can be given to perpetuate some without perpetuating all.

III. THE WIDE VARIETY OF HEALING MIRACLES

They did not work a few so-called wonders which could be done by psychologists or pagan healers, but a wide variety of healing miracles.

- (1) Blind. (Matt. 9:27-31; Mk. 7:22-26)
- (2) Dumb. (Matt. 9:27-31; Mk. 7:31-37)
- (3) Dropsy. (Lk. 14:1-6)
- (4) Leper. (Lk. 17:11-19)
- (5) Ear Restored. (Lk. 22:50-61)
- (6) Fever. (Matt. 8:14; John 4:46-54)
- (7) Palsied. (Matt. 8:5-7, 9:2)
- (8) Withered hand. (Matt. 12:10)
- (9) Bleeding. (Matt. 9:20)
- (10) Every sickness and disease. (Matt. 9:35)
- (11) Halt and maimed. (Matt. 15:30; Lk. 22:50-51)
- (12) Dead raised. (John 11:39-44; Acts 9:37, 40-42)
- (13) Lame. (Acts 3:1-10; 4:13-16, 22; Acts 8:6-7, 13)
- (14) Not hurt by viper. (Acts 28:3-6)
- (15) Dysentery, fever, etc. (Acts 28:8-9)
- (16) All who were brought to them. (Acts 5:12-16)

IV. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE HEALING MIRACLES

- (1) Instantaneous. (Matt. 8:3, 15; 9:27-30; 12:13, 22; Acts 3:7-9; 9:34; 13:11) Exceptions? No. Study closely (Mark 8:23-25; Luke 17:12-14; John 4:50-52).
- (2) Faith not always required on part of one on whom the miracles were worked. (John 11:39; Acts 13:11-12; 16:18)
- (3) All, not just a few. (Matt. 4:24; 8:16; 9:35; 14:34-36; Luke 4:40, 9:11)
- (4) Organic diseases, not merely functional disorders. (Matt. 15:30; Mark 14:47; Luke 17:11-19; Acts 3)
- (5) Public. (Matt. 12:9; 13-14; Acts 3:16; 4:21; 9:35)
- (6) Complete, whole, perfect. (Matt. 12:13; Acts 3:16; 4:9)
- (7) Acknowledged by enemies of Christ. (Matt. 12:13-14, 24; Acts 4:16; 16:18-19)
- (8) Not used to make money. (Matt. 10:8-10; Acts 3:6)
- (9) God-glorifying. (Acts 3:2-13)
- (10) Used to support truth, not error. (Heb. 2:3-4) Not used to establish or perpetuate denominations.
- (11) Persons healed did not have to be present. (Matt. 8:5-13)
- (12) Some miracles wrought over the protest of the individual. (Matt. 8:28; Mark 5:1-17; Luke 4:33)
- (13) Because of faith of others. (Matt. 8:8, 10, 13; John 4:50-53)
- (14) Jesus did not claim that it is God's will to heal all who believe, and then went about with a physical ailment Himself.
- (15) No preliminary investigations to weed out hard cases.

(16) Jesus did not try and fail, and then insult them by saying that they did not have enough faith. The only case of failure, and this was before the baptism of the Spirit, was blamed on the ones who tried and failed. (Matt. 17:19-21) There was no such case after Pentecost. (Acts 1:8; 2:1-4)

(17) Jesus did not say that He could not work miracles because unbelievers were present.

(18) Jesus did not try and fail and then blame God by saying, I just pray, but cannot know whether God will work the miracle. (Compare Acts 1:8) Miracles proved the power of God. (Matt. 9:6; Mark 2:10; Luke 15:24) God did not refuse to work miracles through Christ and the apostles just because unbelievers were present!

(19) Christ announced no special healing service.

(20) His healings did not require a special "atmosphere".

(21) God, when He saw fit, protected them miraculously. (Mark 16:17-18; Acts 12:7-11. Contrast Acts 12:2; Acts 28:3-6)

V. FOR THE SAME BASIC PURPOSE —TO CONFIRM THE WORD THEY WERE REVEALING (Heb. 2:3-4)

(1) Revelation and confirmation went hand in hand. If we have the gifts today, we should have them to confirm the word *we* are delivering. Paul did not work miracles to prove that Moses spoke from God, but to prove that Paul had a message from God. These men taught and wrote the word by inspiration. If we have confirmers today, we must have revealers today. These new revelations would be as binding as those in the Bible. Where are their new scriptures?

(2) All truth was revealed in the first century, or Jesus' promise failed. (John 16:13-15) But it did not fail and the faith was once for all delivered. (Jude 3)

VI. MODERN "MIRACLE" WORKERS DO NOT MEASURE UP

(1) They do not have all of the gifts, and only a few, such as the Latter-day Saints, even claim to have apostles of Christ. Theirs are not Christ's apostles. See James D. Bales, *Apostles or Apostates?*

(2) They do not match the wide variety of miracles in the Bible.

(3) They do not match the wide variety, and characteristics, of the healing miracles.

(4) They sooner or later contradict the Bible.

(5) Groups teaching contrary doctrines perform the same type of "wonders". When Moses and the magicians of Egypt got into a wonder working contest, even Pharaoh knew who was on God's side by the time it was over. God cannot back contradictory doctrines, and if God is giving one group miraculous power they will: (a) clearly outdo the others, and (b) teach what the Bible teaches; instead of contradicting it.

(6) Let us accept the faith which has been once for all delivered to

the saints. The revelation and confirmation have already been made. (John 20:30-31; Heb. 2:3-4; Jude 3) For an additional discussion see the author's *Miracles or Mirages?*, *The Christian and the Holy Spirit*, and *Pat Boone and the Gift of Tongues*. Also Jimmy Jividen, *Glossolalia From God or Man?* (Fort Worth, Texas 76118. Star Bible Publications, P. O. Box 13125).

QUESTIONS

1. How do we know that we are not to accept just anything that comes along? (1 Thess. 5:21)
2. What are some of the credentials of Christ?
3. If we turn from Christ, is there anyone else worth turning to?
4. On what four grounds did the apostles base their conclusion on Pentecost that Jesus is both Lord and Christ. (Acts 2:36)
5. What wide variety of miracles do we find in the New Testament? How do these contrast with what is done by self-proclaimed "miracle" workers today?
6. What wide variety of healing miracles do we find in the Bible. How do they contrast with what people do today?
7. What are the characteristics of the healing miracles? How do they contrast with what people do today?
8. What was the basic purpose of the miracles in the Bible? If we have miraculous power today, would we not also have the power to speak and write by inspiration? If one argues for one of the gifts, should he not argue for all of them — including inspiration and the apostleship?
9. Must we test the so-called "miracle" workers today both by what they do and what they teach? Would inspired men contradict the Bible?
10. If one group today is working miracles by God's power would they not clearly outshine others? Do different groups, teaching contradictory doctrines, do the same type of "miracles".

Humanity's Triumph in Christ

(HEBREWS 2:5-18)

"Having proved the New superior to the Old and Christ (is superior) to angels, he now moves forward to argue that the sovereignty promised to man is at last fulfilled in Christ through his death. He has broken the line of argument by his sharp appeal. He takes up the thread where he dropped it. First chapter — superiority of Jesus to angels. Second chapter— fellowship of Christ and man." (R. C. Foster)

I. THE WORLD TO COME (2:5)

What is "the world to come" (margin: The inhabited earth to come) whereof the writer here speaks?

(1) Premillennialism maintains that it is the so-called millennial reign of Christ in person on earth. R. H. Boll writes: " 'The inhabited earth to come' (Hebrews 2:5, mg.) is not to be under the rule of angels, but is to be governed as God had originally planned (Genesis 1:26), and, as, despite man's fall, God afterward promised and prophesied (Psalm 8), by *man* — in guarantee of which we behold Him who once suffered death, now exalted and crowned with glory and honor, the Man, Christ Jesus." (127)

(2) Does it refer to the present age of the Messiah's age of His reign at God's right hand. Some who view Psalm 8 as a direct prophecy of the Messiah so argue. Some think it was the world to come from the Old Testament viewpoint.

"The world to come, *whereof we speak*" (Heb. 2:5), is not some distant age, but is the present age. The writer has been showing the superiority of Christ over even the angels, and thus the Jews could know that the new covenant was not inferior to the old, just because the old came by angels, and the new did not. (Heb. 2:2) For Christ is God's Son and superior to the angels. (1:3-14) Furthermore, the subjection of the "world to come" was not to the angels (2:5), but unto the son of man as God had promised. (Heb. 2:6)

"The world to come", *of which the writer spoke*, is the present Messianic age.

(a) As the prophecy and promise in Psa. 8:5 said, Christ was "made a little lower than the angels". (Heb. 2:7, 9)

(b) "Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him." (Heb. 2:8) This is in fulfillment of Psa. 8:6, "Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet." All things, except God, are now put under Christ. "For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him." (I Cor. 15:27)

(c) "But now we see not yet all things put under him." (Heb. 2:8) In other words, although all authority has been given unto Him (Matt. 28:18), and He has been placed over all (Eph. 1:19-21), yet all have not acknowledged His supremacy. This is in harmony with the teaching of Hebrews that Christ is now at God's right hand reigning, but that enemies still existed. For God said: "Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool". (Heb. 1:13) Christ is now at God's right hand, and will reign until all His foes are conquered. The last foe is death. "For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." (I Cor. 15:25-20). What happens then, at the end of this present reign at God's right hand? Does he come to earth to reign? Is it then that all things will be subject unto Him, or even unto man? No, it is then that He surrenders the kingdom to the Father. "And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all." (I Cor. 15:28) The present reign of Christ at God's right hand extends not unto some millennial rule on earth, but until the last day when the dead shall be raised and judged. (John 12:48; Rev. 20:11-21:5) It is not followed by a reign on earth, but by the surrender of the kingdom to the Father.

(d) The Jews sometimes referred to the Messianic age as the world or age to come, for it was the age to come after the Old Covenant dispensation.

(e) If this interpretation is wrong it does not really strengthen the premillennial position, since it must be maintained, in order to stay in harmony with Scripture, that the only habitable age to come is that of the new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. This, and not a millennial reign on this earth, is the habitable world to come for which we today look. This comes after the destruction and passing of the present heaven and earth, and after the time of judgment. (2 Pet. 3:5-14; Rev. 20:11-21)

(f) The book of Hebrews shows that Christ's second coming will bring eternal salvation, and not a reign on earth. (Heb. 9:27-28; 1 Pet. 1:4-9) This salvation or inheritance is in heaven, not on earth, and it will be revealed at the last time. The last time is the time of salvation, or of the receiving the inheritance. And Hebrews states that that will

take place at the second coming. If premillennialism is right the second coming will not bring salvation, but a reign on earth. *In such a case*, the last time, the time of the reception of the inheritance, will be at a third coming of Christ — after the little season of rebellion which follows the so-called millennial rule on earth. (Rev. 20:3, 7-9; 21:5) So the second coming will not be the last time, or the time of salvation. Since such conclusions flow from premillennialism it is evident that premillennialism is false.

(g) As just pointed out, the second coming brings salvation. (I Pet. 1:4-5; Heb. 9:27-28) However, if premillennialism is right, the second coming will not bring salvation for there will be sin in the millennial reign (R. H. Boll, 162-163), and the millennial reign will be followed by a world-wide rebellion against Christ and the saints. (147-148) Certainly such a condition cannot be said to be salvation in contrast with what we now have on earth. But the second coming brings salvation, thus it must bring the end of the world and the eternal reward.

(h) Those who argue that it is the present Messianic age, may set forth the idea that the dominion of the world which God intended for man was lost through sin. Christ identified Himself with humanity, being made flesh. He attains to rulership of the world, and in this rulership He conquers all of His enemies. In His present reign He conquers all enemies, the last one being death. (Acts 2:34-35; I Cor. 15:24-28; Heb. 1:3, 13) Those who do not accept Him as Savior shall have to submit to Him as Judge. (Acts 17:30-32) Thus although we do not see all in submission to him as yet, we know that God has given Christ the authority over all, and that sooner or later every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess Christ as Lord. (Phil. 2:5-9) With some this confession shall be unto their salvation, with others unto their condemnation since they will not acknowledge it out of a willing, trusting heart, but only because they are confronted with Him in Judgment, and cannot longer deny His Lordship.

(3) Is the world to come eternity? Is this also the world of Heb. 6:5? Is it the city of Heb. 13:14? Is it in the new heavens and new earth of 2 Pet. 3:13?

"From the Old Testament point of view 'the world to come' meant the world under Messianic rule, but in this Epistle the Messianic Kingdom is viewed as not yet fully realized. The world to come is therefore the eternal order of human affairs already introduced and rendering obsolete the temporary and symbolic dispensation. ... It is the present world of men regenerated, death and all that is inimical to human progress abolished; a condition in which all things are subjected to man." (*Expositor's Greek Testament*, Vol. IV. p. 261)

By "already introduced," the author may have in mind the idea that the present reign of Christ is consummated in the eternal salvation in the new heavens and earth. (Heb. 1:3, 13)

"The contrast of man with angelic existence enables him to set forth

Christ's identification with the former, and the necessity for His assumption of humanity. He proceeds to apply man and the son of man to Christ by means of an intermediate thought beginning with 'But now we see not yet,' contrasting the present apparent failure of the universal subjection to man with the sight of the crown on Jesus, who wears it in virtue of His sufferings, and who as the God-man realizes man's kingship over all, fulfilling in His person the predestined goal of the race." (Edmund J. Wolf, 269)

What man lost through sin he can regain through Christ on a higher level. He gains more in Christ than he lost in Adam. Because of Christ's identification with humanity, because of His death, resurrection and reign, we today find salvation. If we are faithful unto Him we shall some day enter into the eternal reward in the new heavens and earth which will be under man's dominion, not under angels. Of course, man must be under God and Christ.

II. PSALM 8 AND CHRIST

(1) Was this a direct prophecy of Jesus Christ? "By many interpreters this whole Psalm is considered as a direct prophecy, descriptive of the humiliation and dominion of the Messiah; and they have supported their opinion with no contemptible reasons. Not, however, being convinced of this, and wishing always to incline to the side of caution, I do not adduce it under this view. As cited in the Epistle to the Hebrews, it appears to me to convey this sentiment: that the honours here declared to have been conferred upon the human race by the Creator, had never, either generally or in a single instance, been completely verified, till the man Christ Jesus was exalted 'above all principality and authority, and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come;' and had 'all things put under his feet.' (Eph. 1:21, 22) Thus, if it be not a prophecy, it is a description and a testimony of Christ. If the earthly creation, taken generally, is, by the divine goodness, made the property of the human race, and subordinated to the utility, and, in a great measure, to the command of man; a subjection which increases with the advancement of civilization and art: how much more, then, is the fact in relation to Him who is the Head of the human race, the new Adam, the Restorer and Saviour of the world? The progress of science and skill, increasing the dominion of man over the inferior orders of creatures and the various powers of nature, has borne a visible relation to the diffusion of that religion which consists in honouring Him. It is a manifest fact that the increase of human enjoyment, consequent upon the arts and improvements of life, has been most rapid and abundant in the countries which exercise the Christian religion in its most scriptural liberty and purity; and that, where it is unknown, corrupted, or rejected, as in the Heathen, Mohammedan, and Popish countries, in the very same proportion deterioration of all useful knowledge and increase of personal and social misery have been effected." (John Pye Smith, I. 200-201)

Although under the influence of Christ, and in His religion which continues until all enemies are conquered (and this includes even the last one, death, I Cor. 15:24-28), man may increasingly subdue nature, yet it is my opinion that the dominion of which it speaks for man over the inhabited world to come is the new heavens and the new earth.

(2) Psa. 8 and Heb. 2:6, shows that Christ has identified Himself with humanity and makes possible for us what sin made impossible. He accomplished this through His incarnation, death, resurrection, ascension, reign and work as high priest. (2:9-18)

"Because of the suffering of death. Unquestionably Jesus was made lower than the angels in order to suffer death, and this clause may express the object of His humiliation, but it is clearly connected with crowned, exaltation after completed redemption—a view confirmed by the final clause, by 10, and throughout the New Testament. (Phil. 2:9; cf. xii. 2). His humiliation was not confined to His death (14), but culminated in it. *That by the grace . . .* The tasting of death did not occur after the crowning, but the result and purpose of the crowning was to make it available for each and every one. The latter depended in some way on the former. His enthronement over all, resulting from His voluntary death, His vicarious acquisition of universal dominion, made His vicarious death effectual for each and every one. His death and the crowning to which it led were so closely united as to make His suffering of death in its juridical bearing avail in behalf of *every man*. The atonement completed by the session at the right hand brings about the consummation of God's eternal purpose as expressed in the Psalms, man's universal dominion. The final cause which, through His exaltation, made the bitter humiliation of Jesus operative for every man, was *the grace of God*, the primal spring of salvation. (Rom. 5:8; 11:33; John 3:16) Christ's death was determined by God's love, not by His wrath. *For every man*. Jesus died not in His own behalf, nor for mankind in the mass, but for the sake of every member of the human family. What an inspiration for the preaching of the Gospel!" (Edmund J. Wolf, p. 271)

Some have thought that it meant that Jesus was made lower than the angels in that He was subject to death, and they were not. Others, that He was made lower than the angels in order to be subject to death, others that He was crowned with glory and honor at the transfiguration to prepare Him for His death. I think He was crowned because of His suffering.

(3) Another proof that He shared in our common humanity is presented from Psa. 22:22.

(a) h's great name or revelation which centers in the Messiah, in his suffering and his exaltation for our salvation." (Lenski, 86) He announces to us God's name in that He brings to us the full revelation of God. "His deity and also his exaltation might lead us to think that he

would be ashamed to call us his 'brothers'; but we are this." (Lenski, 86)

(b) "In the midst of the assembly will I hymn thee"; "i.e. sing praiseful hymns to thee, Yahweh, as one among this assembly of my brethren." (Lenski, 86)

(4) When did Christ sing praiseful hymns to Jehovah *in fulfilment of this prophecy*? There are those who maintain that this passage proves that the church was established during the personal ministry of Christ, for it was only during the personal ministry that Christ sang with any human beings. They say that it was fulfilled in Matt. 26:30, therefore the church must have been established by that time at least.

(a) The term church does not necessarily mean the New Testament church. It was used by Stephen to refer to the called out body of Israelites, i.e. who had been called out of Egypt. (Acts 7:38) It was used to designate a mob who were called together by the confusion, faith in Diana and opposition to Jews and Christianity. Thus it was called an assembly (Acts 19:32), and the town clerk is said to have dismissed the assembly. (19:41) It was used to designate a regular assembly in which various matters were settled by the city. (19:39) "regular assembly,' i.e. 'the ordinary city courts'" (George Carter, *Acts of the Apostles*. London: Relfe Brothers, Ltd., p. 105) Thus the term assembly in Heb. 2:12 does not by itself prove that it was a New Testament assembly, i.e. of the church of Christ. And it could not refer to such if Heb. 2:12 refers to what Christ did in Matt. 26:30, for the church was not then established. Christ was not crowned king until after His ascension. (Heb. 1:3, 13; Acts 2:34-35) If Heb. 2:12 does refer to something Christ did during His person ministry, it had reference to either or both of the following:

(1) In the temple and synagogue. "So Jesus went to the temple in Jerusalem and sang the psalms of worship among his brother worshippers." (Lenski, 86)

(2) The disciples and apostles were a called out and separated group during Christ's personal ministry. But they had not been called out by the gospel of Christ's death for our sins, His burial and His resurrection; for they did not believe this gospel during His personal ministry. (Matt. 16:21-23; Lk. 24:1-11) But they were called out from the rest of Israel by Christ to be with Him and to preach that the kingdom was at hand. (Matt. 9:35; 10:7). In an assembly with them, as in Matt. 26:30, Christ sang during His personal ministry. But that was not an assembly of the New Testament church, for it could not have functioned without -its Head, Christ, and He did not become Head of the church until after His ascension. (Eph. 1:19-23)

(b) Does not the context indicate that the proclaiming of Jehovah's name, and the hymning of praise to Jehovah, came after His suffering and death, and after His resurrection and ascension? In verse 10 we are told that Christ, the pioneer of our salvation, was made perfect through suffering. And this certainly included the suffering on the cross. In verse 11 He is spoken of as the one who sanctifies us, and we are spoken of

as those who are sanctified. It tells us that both the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified have, as some translations give it, one origin. We are one. And *"That is why he is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying I will proclaim thy name to my brethren, in the midst of the congregation I will praise thee."* (R.S.V.) Does this not indicate that it is after His suffering, and after He has sanctified some people, that the prophets said he would call them brethren?

(5) How does He now declare God's name to His Brethren, and hymn praises to God? If the prophet had reference to these things as taking place after Christ's suffering and ascension, how can He be said to do these things when He is not even with us today.

(a) Christ has promised to be with us—spiritually—when we gather in His name. (Matt. 18:20) However, is this the sense in which He in our midst proclaims God's name? I doubt it. The following point shows how He speaks to us and also hymns God's praise.

(b) Christ is said to do what He does through others. (1) He baptized, not personally but in that His disciples baptized by His authority. (John 4:1-2) (2) He preached to the Gentiles (Eph. 2:17, **11-13**), **but not** personally for His personal ministry was to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. (Matt. 15:24; 10:5-6) How did He preach to them? Through those apostles and prophets whom He sent and inspired by the Spirit. Thus He is said to do what they did under His direction and inspiration. Christ speaks to us today in our weekly assembly, or whenever we hear or think of His word. To listen to the written word under the Old Testament was to listen to the voice of God (Matt. 22:31), to listen to the word of the prophet was to hear the voice of the prophet (Lk. 16:29, 31), to hear the written word was to hear the voice of the prophet who wrote it (Acts 13:27), and to read the word of the Spirit was to hear the voice of the Spirit. (Rev. 2:1, 7, 8, 11, 12, 17) Thus through His word, Christ in **our** midst today proclaims God's name.

(c) The psalmist also said that Christ would praise God among the Gentiles and sing to God. (Psa. 18:49, the nations refers to Gentiles) This certainly was not fulfilled during Christ's personal ministry which was to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. (Matt. 10:5-6; 15:24) Certainly there were no Gentiles in Matt. 26:30. It could not have been fulfilled until after the establishment of the church (Acts 2) and the calling of the Gentiles. (Acts 15:14-18; Acts 10; 11:1, 19) Thus the praising by Christ prophesied in Psa. 18:49 was not done personally, but after the Gentiles were called. (Rom. 15:9) Therefore, it is evident that it must have been done as described in point (b) above. Even those who think that Heb. 2:12 must refer to something done in Christ's personal ministry, must explain the singing among the Gentiles as we have explained it. And, since the evidence shows that the church was not established during Christ's personal ministry, they ought to realize that either Heb. 2:12 does not refer to an assembly of Christians, or that Christ does Heb. 2:12 through His word in our midst.

III. IN GRATITUDE AND LOVE ACCEPT HIM WHO HAS DONE SO MUCH FOR US

(1) You can enter into the heavenly reward, not because of your merit, but because you are saved and kept by Him when you in faith submit to His will. (1 Pet. 1:3-9)

(2) Accept Him today. (Gal. 3:26-27)

QUESTIONS

1. What does Foster think are the themes of Hebrews chapters One and Two?
2. Do you agree with him?
3. What is the premillennial interpretation of "the world to come". (Heb. 2:5)
4. What are some of the arguments which are made to show that "the world to come" is speaking—from the standpoint of the Old Testament—of the gospel dispensation?
5. Will the second coming bring eternal salvation or a thousand year reign on earth? (Heb. 9:27-28; 1 Pet. 1:4-5)
6. What arguments are made to show that "the world to come" is eternity?
7. How do we know that premillennialism is wrong regardless of whether it refers to the present reign of Christ or to eternity?
8. Do you think Psalm 8 was a direct prophecy of Christ?
9. In what way or ways did Christ identify Himself with humanity?
10. How do we know that the church was not established in Matt. 26:30?
11. How does Christ praise God and declare God's name to His brethren in our midst today?

The Purposes of Christ's Incarnation

(HEBREWS 2:5-18)

These verses briefly set before us the purposes of Christ's coming into the world, and what His coming accomplishes. That this refers to His incarnation, to His being made flesh, is plain from 2:9 ("made a little lower than the angels". See also John 1:14; Gal. 4:4; Heb. 2:14). What was the purpose of this? What has He accomplished?

I. HE CAME TO DIE FOR MAN

(1) As the One who existed in the beginning with God, He could not die.

(2) As the Incarnate Son, He could and did die for man. (2:9; 9:25-28; Lk. 24:45-47)

II. TO BRING MANY SONS UNTO GLORY (2:10)

(1) What a wonderful thought. Christ wants to bring people unto glory. We should be eager to be led to glory. Why will people neglect and let slip the salvation which brings glory?

(2) He is able to do this because of His suffering for us. "It is as the author of salvation that He is made perfect through sufferings. Three aspects of this truth are presented in the Epistle. By His suffering unto death He 'bore the sins of man' (verse 9, chap. 9:28); He offered the sacrifice of a perfect obedience (chap. v:8); He was enabled to be a perfect representative of man." (Ellicott, III, 290)

III. TO DESTROY THE DEVIL

(1) "That through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil". (2:14) "He does this (A) By the abolition of Satan's power over death. Satan may be said to have the power of death, inasmuch as (a) Death, as we know it, is the result of sin, and he introduced sin into our world, and is actively engaged in propagating it. 'The sting of death is sin.' But for sin, it might have been 'a gentle wafting to immortal life.' (b) He kindles the passions which lead on to death; e.g. anger and revenge, which often result in murder; lust of

territory, which often causes war, etc. (c) He inspires the mind with terror in the anticipation of death. Our Lord died to render this power of Satan ineffective, and in this respect to bring him to nought. How his death effects this we will inquire shortly. (B) By the emancipation of man from the thralldom of the dread of death." (H.D.M. Spence, 63)

"Sin debarred man from divine sonship, bringing him under Satan's empire, and leading him unto death. (Jas. i. 15; Rom. v. 12; vi., 21, 23) Satan sustains a causal relation to sin and death. The end of the incarnation, now, was to conquer this prince of death and to release his subjects through death made possible by the assumption of human nature, to get possession of the keys of death (Rev. i. 18), and set those free who were held in captivity through fear of death. By entering into death Jesus has made death itself 'the means of annihilating the ruler of death.' He has not destroyed death absolutely, but by the taking away of sin. (i. 3) He has removed its power, extracted its sting (I Cor. xv. 55f), and rendered the devil impotent. (I Cor. 15:24, 26; 2 Tim. 1:10) The fear of death, induced by an accusing conscience, is Satan's most powerful instrument for holding souls in helpless slavery. Remove the latter and the former vanishes. The chain of bondage is broken, and the freedom (Rom. vii. 15) of God's children is realized, the moment the consciousness of guilt is effaced." (Edited by Henry Eyster Jacobs, *The Lutheran Commentary*, New York: The Christian Literature Co., Vol. X, p. 275)

(2) This evidently did not mean the devil's annihilation at the time of Christ's death. (Rev. 20:10)

(3) The reality of the devil is affirmed in this passage. He is not a figment of the imagination.

IV. TO DELIVER MAN FROM THE BONDAGE OF THE FEAR OF DEATH (3:15)

(1) Jung, a world famous psychologist, stated that in every man's life there is the fear of death sooner or later. Its shadow hangs over all mankind. If we face it without hope, it makes life futile.

(2) Christ removes the bondage of fear through: (a) Bringing life to light. (2 Tim. 1:10) (b) Forgiveness of sins. (1 Cor. 15:54-56)

V. TO KNOW THROUGH EXPERIENCE OUR TEMPTATIONS

(1) We can know that He knows and understands. (3:18) "In his having been tempted lies His special ability to help the tempted, by His sympathy, by His knowledge of the help that is needed, by the position of High Priest which He has gained through suffering." (Ellicott, III, 292)

(2) This assures us of His mercy. (3:17) James MacKnight thought that "the Son of God, who made men, no doubt had such a knowledge of their infirmity as might have rendered him a merciful intercessor, though he had not been made flesh. Yet, considering the greatness of

his nature, it might have been difficult for men to have understood this. And therefore, to impress us the more strongly with the belief that He is most affectionately disposed, from sympathy, to succour us when tempted; and, in judging us at the last day, to make every reasonable allowance for the infirmity of our nature, he was pleased to be made like us in all things, and even to suffer by temptations."

VI. OUR NEED FOR CHRIST AND OUR GRATITUDE FOR HIS WORK SHOULD LEAD US TO ACCEPT HIM

(1) Why remain in the service of the devil whose wages for his servants are death and eternal separation from God? (Rom. 6:23)

(2) Break the bondage to the devil and sin through obeying the gospel. (Rom. 6:17-18, 2-5)

(3) Christ was not ashamed to be made in the likeness of man in order to save us (Heb. 2:9-10, 17), and we ought to be grateful to be identified with Him by becoming sons of God in Him. (Gal. 3:26-27)

QUESTIONS

1. What is meant by "incarnation"?
2. What is meant by Christ's dying for man?
3. Was His death prophesied? (Isa. 53)
4. Which came first, His glorification or His suffering? (Lk. 24:25-27)
5. What does it mean to be brought to glory? (Heb. 2:10)
6. How does He accomplish this?
7. What did Christ come to do with reference to the devil? How did He do it?
8. In what sense did the devil have the power of death?
9. In what sense is man in bondage to the fear of death? How does Christ release us from this bondage?
10. How do we know that Christ understands us and our temptations? How does this encourage us to come to Him?
11. What should our response be to Christ and what He has done for us?

The Failure of Israel: A Lesson From Old Testament History

(HEBREWS 3:6-19)

Although Christians are not under the Old Testament as their standard of faith (Heb. 1:1-2; 2:1-4), this does not mean that the Old Testament is without value to Christians. Already in the book of Hebrews its value for the Christian has been shown in the fact that prophecies from the Old Testament are quoted and applied to Jesus Christ. Old Testament prophecies constitute one of the proofs that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. Another value of the Old Testament for the Christian is found in Heb. 3:7-19. It furnishes us with examples which warn us of the disaster which comes to the unfaithful (I Cor. 10:1-11), as well as with examples of the reward which comes to the faithful. (Heb. 11:1; Rom. 15:4) Although Christians are under a different dispensation than that of the Old Testament, yet God's attitude toward obedience and disobedience is constant, although commandments under different dispensations may differ.

Christians were told to hold fast in Heb. 3:6, and then were given an example from the Old Testament where some failed to hold fast and thus fell in the wilderness. To be made partakers of Christ we must hold steadfast unto the end. (3:6, 14) All who came out of Egypt did not rebel against God (3:16), but some did. What a warning!

I. THE REBELLION OF ISRAEL

(1) It was due to: (a) Hardening of the heart. (3:18, 15) (b) Evil heart of unbelief. (3:12) (c) Hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. (3:13)

(2) It was not an isolated act, but a manner of life. They continually rebelled against God. (3:10; Numbers 14:22, "ten times")

(3) Observe: (a) Self-hardening. (3:8) (b) Sin-hardening. (3:13)

(4) In spite of the great demonstrations of God's power, (both before, during and after deliverance from Egypt) they doubted that He could bring them into the land. (Num. 14:22. Show what some of these miracles were)

(5) Instead of believing that He could bring them into the land they murmured against Moses; and wished that they had died in Egypt or the wilderness (Num. 14:2); they thought that they and their children would be a prey (14:3); they wanted to select a leader of their own and return to Egypt (14:4); and in spite of the exhortation of some of their leaders they would not go on, but wanted to stone the exhorters. (14:6-10)

II. THE PUNISHMENT OF ISRAEL

(1) They finally decided to go, but God was not with them and they were smitten by their enemies. (Num. 14:40-45) This was one punishment.

(2) God first said that He would disinherit Israel and make of Moses a great nation (Num. 14:12), but Moses plead with Him and God forgave them. (Num. 14:13-20)

(3) God, however, kept the rebellious ones out of the promised land, and He told them they would indeed fall in the wilderness, but their children would not fall but enter into the land. (Num. 14:23-35) The spies who brought back an evil report perished by a plague. (Num. 14:36-38)

(4) This does not say that God kept all of them out of heaven. This did not say that if they repented, He would not receive them unto Himself. But it does teach that as a punishment for their sins they were not allowed to enter in because of their unbelief. (Heb. 3:16-19)

III. DO NOT LET UNBELIEF KEEP YOU OUT OF THE PROMISED LAND

(1) The house of God over which Moses was placed was God's Old Testament house. (Heb. 3:2; 1:1-2; 2:1-4) It pointed to Christ's house. (3:4-5)

(2) Christians are Christ's house, and He and His house are vastly superior to that of Moses. (3:3) His is the substance of which Moses' was the shadow. (10:1)

(3) If we fail to hold fast we cease to be a part of His faithful house. (3:6)

(4) We should not be discouraged because we sin from time to time, for we have the merciful High Priest who intercedes for us. (2:17; 3:1)

(5) Have you become a part of Christ's house? (Gal. 3:26-27) If not, why not do so now? If you have become a part of His house, are you holding fast? If not, re-new your efforts for your eternal destiny is at stake. Do so now, for procrastination can harden the heart, and no one knows when his day of life will be over. So today hear his voice. (3:7, 14)

QUESTIONS

1. What value of the Old Testament to the Christian is brought out in Hebrews 3?
2. Does Paul draw a similar lesson? (1 Cor. 10:1-11)
3. What exhortation is the example of Israel used to enforce? (Heb. 3:6)
4. Did everyone who came out of Egypt rebel? (Heb. 3:16)
5. To what two things was their rebellion attributed?
6. Did these things occur overnight?
7. Were they isolated acts or a manner of life?
8. What shows that they were responsible for their condition? (3:8)
9. What miracles had God wrought in delivering them from Egypt?
10. What did they think would happen to them? (Num. 14:2-3)
11. How was Israel punished?
12. Can a child of God be disinherited? (Num. 14:12)
13. What can keep us out of heaven?
14. How do we become a part of Christ's house?

Hearken or Perish

(HEBREWS 4:1-13)

Israel was kept out of the promised land by her unbelief. They were hardened by the deceitfulness of sin (3:8, 13); and had an evil heart of unbelief (3:12) which caused them to err. (3:10) Their unbelief was shown by their manner of life. They believed not (3:19); they sinned (3:17); they provoked (3:16); they tempted God. (3:8-9) The final test of our belief is not what we say but what we do. And Israel's example is used to warn us lest we fail to enter into the rest, which is promised to us, through unbelief.

Let no one deceive himself. Alien sinners must not only be led to Christ, but when they become Christians they must hold fast unto the end. (3:6)

I. ISRAEL'S EXAMPLE WARNS US

(1) We are to fear. (4:1) This does not mean: (a) A slavish fear of God which leads us to try to flee from God, like those in Gen. 3:8; Isa. 33:14; (b) Fear which shrinks from duty because of difficulties; (c) Fear which arises from distrust. (Matt. 8:25, 26)

(2) It is the fear of falling short. (4:1) "This fear is quite different from dispiriting terror; for instead of weakening, it excites us to activity . . ." (Prov. 14:16; 28:14; Rom. 11:20; Phil. 2:12; I Pet. 1:17; Heb. 11:7) (Cameron, I, 255-258) Fear because it is possible to fall short of that promised rest. Israel failed to enter into rest through her unbelief, and this is used as a warning to us. (4:2; 3:7-19)

(3) What gospel was preached to them? On verse 2 Robert Milligan commented: "This is a very inaccurate translation of the original, and conveys to the English reader quite an erroneous impression. Literally rendered the passage stands thus: For we are evangelized as well as they. That is, the promise of entering into rest, on given conditions, has been made to us Christians, as well as to the ancient Hebrews." (*Commentary on Hebrews*, p. 130) Ellicott's *Commentary* says that the better translation is "for we have had glad tidings preached unto us, even as they had." Gospel simply means good news. The preaching by John

and by Jesus that the kingdom was at hand is called the gospel of the kingdom. (Matt. 3:2; 4:17, 23; 9:35; 10:7)

During the personal ministry of the Lord the apostles did not yet understand and believe the gospel of Christ's death for our sins, His burial, and His resurrection. (Matt. 16:21-23; Lk. 24:1-11, 25, 26, 45, 46; John 20:24-29)

(4) The good news which overshadows all other good news. (I Cor. 15:1-5; Gal. 1:6-9)

II. THE REST WHICH IS BEFORE US

(1) It is not the keeping *of* the Sabbath, (a) Christians are not under the Sabbath which the Israelites observed (Deut. 5:15; Col. 2:16-17; Heb. 1:1-2); (b) The sabbath was in existence in Joshua's day and David's, but the rest of which the writer speaks was not (4:8); (c) One entered the Sabbath rest by cessation from labor, but this rest we must labor in order to enter into it. (4:11)

(2) It was not God's rest after His work of creation, for that had passed already. (4:4, 10) This rest is still ahead of us, we must strive to enter into it. (4:11)

(3) ". . . let it be noted, that there is a double rest mentioned in this and the former chapter; viz. 1. the rest promised to the Jews in the land of Canaan. (3:7-11) And this, saith the apostle, could not be the rest of God; for if Joshua had given them (such) rest, David could not have spoken of another day. (Psa. 95:7-11) Why not? . . . Because then, by entering into that, they would have already entered into the rest of God. 2. A rest, after the example of God ceasing from his labours, when he had finished the creation . . ." Our rest. (Rev. 14:13) "And that this the rest which the apostle now begins to speak of, is evident from these words, ver. 10." (Whitby, I, 899)

III. UNBELIEF CAN KEEP YOU OUT

(1) Not one act of unbelief, but unbelief continued in. (3:10, 19; 4:2, 11)

(2) We cannot hide anything from Him. (4:13)

(3) We must accept and be faithful to Christ. (Gal. 3:26-29; Heb. 3:6)

QUESTIONS

1. How was Israel's condition described?
2. In what sense are we to fear, and in what sense are we not to fear?
3. What does the word "gospel" mean? In what sense was a gospel preached to Israel? Was the gospel preached to them in promise, types and prophecy?
4. Did the apostles understand the gospel during the personal ministry?
5. Is the Sabbath rest the rest which is before us? Justify your answer.
6. What rest is it?
7. What can keep us out of this rest?

The Word of God

(HEBREWS 4:12)

After having urged Christians to labor to enter into the promised rest (Heb. 4:11), the writer warns us that we cannot escape for God knows our lives (4:13), and His word is not an idle word. Instead it is 4:12. It can also encourage us when we realize that it can be depended on; it is not dead.

The "word of God" here does not refer to the Christ, the Incarnate Word (John 1:14), but "that word of revelation which from the first verse of the Epistle has been in the writer's mind and which he has in chapters hi., iv., exhibited as a word of promise of entrance into God's rest." (*Expositor's Greek Testament*, IV, 281)

"To enforce the admonition to believe and obey the word of God, five epithets are added, which, says Westcott, 'mark with increasing clearness its power to deal with the individual soul. There is a passage step by step from that which is most general to that which is most personal.'" (281)

I. THE WORD OF GOD IS QUICK OR LIVING

(1) It is not a dead letter. (John 6:63)

(2) It has life, thus it is spoken of as the seed of the kingdom. (Lk. 8:11) "The meaning is that the word remains efficacious, valid and operative, as it was when it came from the will of God. 'It is living as being instinct with the life of its source.' (Delitzsch)." (281) It comes from Him who is the source of life, for it is the word of *God*. It begets life. (I Pet. 1:23-25) It saves. (Jas. 1:21) It leads us to eternal life. (John 6:68)

II. THE WORD OF GOD IS POWERFUL OR ACTIVE

(1) "It is also . . . active, effective, still doing the work it was intended to do, cf. Isa. 55:11". (*Expositor's Greek Testament*, IV, 281)

(2) It can expose and destroy false philosophies and imaginations. (2 Cor. 10:4-5)

(3) It is powerful enough to lead the unbeliever to faith in Christ (Rom. 10:17), and has done so when unbelievers will fairly consider it.

III. IT IS SHARPER THAN ANY TWO-EDGED SWORD

(1) Its sharpness is emphasized in the statement that it pierces "even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow." Sometimes the word soul is used for the entire person (I Pet. 3:21), sometimes for the spiritual part of man (Acts 2:27, 31), and sometimes for the principle of the life of the physical body which man shares with the animals in that they also have physical life. (Gen. 1:30. Life: Margin, a living soul; 2:27) The difference is that man is made in God's image (Gen. 1:27), and animals are not. But when the soul is distinguished from the spirit (for example, I Thess. 5:23), it is my conviction that spirit refers to the image of God in man, and the soul to the principle of the life of the physical body. The word can pierce even to the dividing of these.

(2) Its sharpness is emphasized by being able to divide the joints and marrow.

(3) This passage emphasizes the sharpness of the word, which is the sword of the Spirit. (Eph. 6:10-20)

(4) There are some who would disarm us and not let us use the sword against error. Of course, we should first let it pierce through error in our own life, but we must also use it against the error of others. Warren Lewis, who has preached for the church, wrote in *Mission* magazine (put out by members of the church) that the four Gospels have contradictions in them. Among other things he said: "The profitable outcome of this grasp of the scripture is this: that God's man is fully equipped and perfectly prepared for every good work. Such a man does not see the Bible as a 'blueprint' for building a church or a 'text book' for doctrine or a 'road map' from earth to heaven."

"The man who has learned to savor the clashes and jars of the Gospels as much as God the Holy Spirit enjoyed writing them should never again be able to use the Bible as a weapon against his neighbor. No one point—great or small—is so important that it cannot be questioned or gainsaid or weighed another way. Even truth about Jesus Christ in one Gospel can be turned around in another Gospel." (*Mission*, Jan. 1972, pp. 200-201)

This passage does several things: (a) It affirms that the Gospels contradict one another, (b) Warren Lewis assumes his own inspiration in that he claimed to know that the Spirit "enjoyed writing" these contradictory things, (c) It disarms us, and tells Paul that he did not know what he was talking about when he said we are to take the sword of the Spirit. Against what would we use it, if Warren Lewis is right? There are some who have so little faith in the faith, or are so confused, or are so ashamed, that they do not want anyone to contend for the faith and use the sword of the Spirit. (Eph. 6:16; Jude 3)

(5) We are not suggesting that this is the only function of the Bible, but it is one of its essential functions. We are also to comfort people with it, etc. (I Thess. 5:14-22)

IV. THE WORD OF GOD IS A DISCERNER

(1) It knows us better than we know ourselves; "judging the conceptions and ideas of the heart". (*Exp. Gr. T.*, IV, 282) "The word of God coming to men in the offer of good of the highest kind tests their real desires and inmost intentions. When fellowship with God is made possible through His gracious offer, the inmost heart of man is sifted; and it is infallibly discovered and determined whether he truly loves the good and seeks it, or shrinks from accepting it as his eternal heritage." (*Ibid.*, 282)

(2) Those who want to do the good, will "rejoice in the faithfulness of Christ in revealing their defects to them by his word, whereby they are instructed as they require . . . they greatly prize searching preaching whereby the sin which secretly works in their hearts is brought before their judgment. They have a pure instinct that desires to be holy as

God is holy . . . (others) detest the preaching which presents to their minds evidences of their mistakes in judging favorably of their state. They prefer to be at peace, though going down into the pit with a lie in their right hand." (Cameron, I, 295)

(3) The more we understand the Bible the better we understand ourselves. The better we understand ourselves, the more we realize that it understands us. This is one of the proofs of the truth of the Bible, i.e. He who made the Book made man. He knows what is right with him, what is wrong with him, what he needs, his origin, his duty, and his destiny.

(4) However, there are some who want to become the critic of the word of God, use a penknife on it, and cut it to pieces. They want to tell you that the Holy Spirit led the writers into error, or that the writers just thought that the Spirit spoke through them.

V. OUR LIVES AND HEARTS ARE NOT HIDDEN FROM GOD (Heb. 4:13)

(1) This is a comfort when we serve God faithfully. He knows what we are doing for Him, and He credits us, whether men do or not.

(2) It is a terrifying thought to those who want to live in evil.

(3) You can do something to be saved. You cannot merit salvation, but you must in obedient faith accept Christ and obey His gospel in order to become a child of God and inherit life eternal. (Gal. 3:26-29)

QUESTIONS

1. How do Heb. 4:12-13 relate to Heb. 4:11?
2. What shows that God's word is not a dead letter?
3. What parable shows something of its power? (Lk. 8:11)
4. Does the word have anything to do with the new birth? (1 Pet. 1:23-25)
5. In what sense does it save us? (Jas. 1:21)
6. To what does it lead us? (John 6:68)
7. How is its power or active nature shown? (Rom. 10:17; 2 Cor. 10:4-5)
8. How is its sharpness emphasized?
9. What is the difference between soul and spirit when the two are distinguished?
10. Whose sword is the word? (Eph. 6:17) Does this indicate that the life of the Christian involves spiritual warfare? Is this the only use of the word? (1 Thess. 5:14)
11. Do some try to disarm us? Did Warren Lewis try to use the Bible against us while saying that it should not be used against anyone?
12. What is meant by the word being a discerner? Can you give some examples of how it does this work?
13. What warning is there in the fact that our lives are not hidden from God?
14. What comfort is there in this fact?

"Let Us Hold Fast Our Confession"

(HEBREWS 4:14-16)

The danger of falling from grace and missing the promised rest should not discourage us so that we give up. Instead the warning should put us on our guard. God has not only motivated us to steadfastness through sounding the warning, but also through showing that He is willing and anxious to help us. (4:14-16)

I. THE NEED TO HOLD FAST OUR PROFESSION OR CONFESSION

(1) One is not faithful by accident. He must plan to be faithful, and then work at it. He must hold on.

(2) "We observe that the exhortation to 'hold fast our profession' implies that we are opposed by a mighty enemy that does his best to deprive us of it. We are in constant danger of being prevailed upon to part with it, for it cannot be taken from us without our consent." (Cameron, I, 299)

(3) Some fail to hold it fast. (3:6)

II. ENCOURAGEMENT TO HOLD FAST OUR CONFESSION

(1) We have a great high priest. (4:14) He makes intercession for us. (7:25)

(2) We have a high priest who understands. (4:15)

(3) We have a high priest who is sinless. (4:14)

(4) We have access to the throne of grace. "A man who does not himself go to the throne of grace can with propriety say go, but not come. The neglect of this duty renders professors unprofitable in the church, whereas the careful cultivation of the habit of prayer makes people useful. Persons who enjoy communion with God in religious ordinances cannot but desire that others should be equally blessed, so that such people will naturally advise their friends to pursue the same course." (Cameron, I, 310)

(5) "The word rendered 'boldly' literally means 'with all speaking',

that is, with ability to speak everything which a person wishes to say. Believers are recommended to speak to God with freedom." (*Ibid.*, 311) (Psa. 62:8; Matt. 7:7-11) If we thought just of our own lack of merit, we would fear to come before Him. We fear to come to people whom we think will not understand. When we think of our shortcomings we are timid about approaching Him. But when we think of His grace, and the blood of Jesus, we come boldly for Heb. 9:13-14.

(6) There is mercy for us, and this we need for we have sinned.

(7) Life's trials and temptations are many, and we need help in time of need. He offers us help. We may not understand just how he can extend the help but in faith we come to the throne of grace, and leave the "how" with Him.

(8) There is no human priest between you and God. This truth alone destroys the Roman Catholic priesthood and its hold on men; for they teach that they can forgive or retain sins.

III. HAVE YOU COME TO THE THRONE OF GRACE?

(1) If not, what additional encouragement could there be than that which He has given?

(2) If you reject the great High Priest, and the throne of grace, you will someday face Him as Judge. (Matt. 25:31-46; Acts 17:30-32; John 12:48; Rev. 20:11-15)

(3) If you do not accept Christ, you cannot approach Him as your High Priest. Accept Him as Lord and as High Priest, and obey his gospel. (Acts 2:34-41; Heb. 8:1-2)

QUESTIONS

1. Does the fact that God helps us mean that we do not have to do anything?
2. Are we faithful by accident?
3. Have we been warned that we must be faithful unto the end? (Heb. 3:6)
4. What are some of the things which encourage us to hold fast?
5. Some have said that man is so sinful and Christ is so holy that we ought not to go directly into His presence but approach Him through departed saints who are better than we are. What light does Heb. 4:14-16 shed on this?
6. What are some of the situations in life where we need this merciful high priest?
7. How does the alien sinner come to the throne of grace?
8. How does the Christian?
9. If we do not accept Him as Savior and high priest, how shall we face Him? (John 12:48)

Christ the Great High Priest

(HEBREWS 5:1-10)

Passages of scriptures are misapplied, and false doctrines spread, because people do not notice the context. They take a passage which is talking about one thing and apply it to an entirely different subject. There are some who have taken Heb. 5 to prove that a preacher of the gospel must receive some direct call from heaven. He must be called of God as was Aaron, they say. But a study of the chapter very clearly shows that the subject of the chapter is not preachers of the gospel but the high priesthood. Notice verse 1: "For every high priest". The "this honor" of verse four is the honor of the high priest's position. This is not only clear from the discussion in the first three verses, but also from verse five. Notice the points of similarity and the points of dissimilarity between the high priest under the Old Testament law and Christ our high priest. (This outline, in the main, is taken from Cameron, I, 326-336)

I. RESEMBLANCES

(1) Taken from among men. (5:1)

(2) Ordained for men, according to God's directions (5:1; Exodus 28 shows us how the Old Testament high priest was appointed). "As Aaron was 'taken from among men, and ordained for men in things pertaining to God,' so was Christ appointed by the same high authority to transact with God on behalf of men when he had taken their nature into personal union with himself, that he might be 'taken from among men.' " (Cameron, I, 328)

(3) Duties. (5:1) "Were there no sins there would be no priest. The fact that we are sinners, therefore, should not daunt us, or prevent, our using the intercession of the priest." (*Expositors Greek Testament*, IV, 285) "Gifts and sacrifices, the former is in itself perfectly general; but when thus contrasted with 'sacrifices' it denotes the 'unbloody offerings' of the law. On the day of Atonement (which, as we shall see, is almost always in the writer's thoughts as he refers to the functions of the high priest) the 'offerings' would consist of the incense and of the 'meat-offerings' connected with the burnt-sacrifices for the day. On that day all offerings, as well as all sacrifices, had relation to 'sins.'" Charles John Ellicott, III, 299)

(4) Personal qualifications. (5:2, 7-8; Isa. 53:3) "It was a necessary qualification that the high priest would have compassion, so as to be able to give the needed instruction to the ignorant with the requisite

forbearance, and that he would offer sacrifices for the sins of those who are 'out of the way'." (Cameron, I, 330)

(5) Divine call. (5:4) "The meaning is that no man ought to assume that office of the priesthood unless he is called thereto by God. Some did so in ancient days to their own injury." (*Ibid.*, 331. I Sam. 13:8-14; I Kings 12:25-13:5) There are people today who claim to be high priests, but they are not. Where and when did God call them to be high priests? If they claim to be a high priest, they not only show their ignorance of the Bible teaching on this subject, but they are also trying to usurp the position of the Lord Jesus Christ. There was but one high priest at a time under the Old Testament system. There is but one high priest today, and that high priest is Jesus Christ. (5:4-5) He is a priest forever (5:6), at God's right hand (8:4), and His priesthood does not pass to another since He ever liveth. (7:23-28) God has not called anyone else, under the New Testament dispensation, to be high priest. Any one who thinks that he has been thus called is either deceived or a deceiver. In either case, he is not really and truly a high priest. Christ is our only high priest, and our sufficient high priest.

II. DISSIMILARITIES

(1) Christ was more than man. (Heb. 1:3; John 1:3, 14; Phil. 2:6-7) God's son. (1:2)

(2) Christ had no sinful infirmities as did Aaron and his successors. (5:3; 4:15)

(3) Christ's high priesthood is like Melchizedek's in that He had no predecessor, and He has no successor. Also He is king and priest. (7:1; 8:1, 4)

(4) Author of eternal salvation. (5:9)

III. PRACTICAL EXHORTATIONS

(1) We ought to be grateful for this high priest.

(2) Since the O. T. high priest had to offer for his own sins, as well as for those of the people (5:3), surely we, too, need to recognize our own sin.

(3) Obedience necessary. (5:8-9)

(4) Therefore, we certainly ought to realize that we must be obedient to the gospel, and live the new life. (2 Thess. 1:8; I Pet. 4:17-18; Rom. 6:2-5, 17-18)

QUESTIONS

1. Why is it important to notice the context Of a passage?
2. Does Hebrews 5:1-4 speak of men being called to preach the gospel?
3. To what does it refer?
4. In what ways does Christ's high priesthood resemble that of the Old Testament high priest?
5. In what ways is it unlike the Old Testament high priest?
6. What practical exhortations are based on the fact that Christ is our High Priest?

Onward to Maturity

(HEBREWS 5:11-6:1)

The writer has dealt with their immaturity. We are pleased with a baby, who by reason of time cannot be other than a babe, but if the child does not grow we become distressed. What are some of the results of the failure to grow? Is growth essential to salvation?

I. RESULTS OF THE FAILURE TO GROW

(1) The ordinary growing child wants to learn. They ask many questions. They are curious. The person who remains in the stage of a babe, however, becomes increasingly difficult to teach. Therefore, the writer interrupted his discussion of Christ's high priesthood to deal with their dullness of hearing. (Heb. 5:11) They were not born dull of hearing, but had become dull of hearing due to a lack of growth. He who wants to stay with the milk diet gags on strong meat! (Compare I Cor. 3:2)

(2) The person who is not growing is not a part of the effective teaching force of the church — whether in personal work or in other capacities — but is one who needs to be re-taught. (5:12) Time and energy has to be used on him that could be used to convert others.

(3) The teaching work of the church suffers because he ought to be a teacher, but is not, (5:12) In an article by Johnny Ramsey in the *Firm Foundation*, July 28, 1959, he listed some of the reasons some were not teaching others.

- (a) No desire. (I Pet. 2:1-3) One must desire to grow and to know.
- (b) The lack of growth means that they cannot be effective and knowledgeable teachers. (I Pet. 3:15)
- (c) They do not study.
- (d) They may have had poor and uninspiring teachers.
- (e) They may not have been challenged to grow.
- (f) They may shrink from the responsibility. (Jas. 3:1)

(4) The failure to grow means we are increasingly unable to see the good or the bad in situations. (Heb. 5:14) One has to grow to discern increasingly between good and evil. Experience is important, and we are not getting real experience if we are not growing. Some people go on in sin, or fail to do the good, with the lame excuse that they do not see any harm in certain things or any good in other things. One who has no knowledge of poisons may not by looking through a clear liquid *see* any harm, but it is deadly. One falls into sins of weakness because he has not grown in character, and in sins of ignorance because he has not grown in knowledge.

(5) The failure to grow can lead to total and irrevocable apostasy; otherwise why is the exhortation to go on to maturity followed by a warning against total apostasy? (6:4-9) How can one who shows no signs of growth show that he has real spiritual life?

(6) However, he does not tell them that their case is hopeless, for he is exhorting them, and even expresses confidence in them. (Heb. 6:9) Sometimes we help contribute to a person's apostasy by never expressing any confidence. A child's personality can be warped because parents express no confidence in him, expect the worst of him, and leave on him the impression that he is just a bad boy of whom nothing good will come.

II. WHY PEOPLE FAIL TO GROW

(1) They are too lazy.

(2) They feel self-righteous, and feel they have arrived, if they stay with the rudiments. They have done these, others have not; so they are all right and others can be looked down upon!!

(3) Growth brings responsibility which they do not want. (Jas. 4:17)

(a) Responsibility in that increased knowledge means we must live on a higher level.

(b) Responsibility in that we must teach others.

III. HOW TO GROW

(1) Desire is necessary. Cultivate the desire to grow by seeing the life of Christ, and of good people, and this helps us to want to be more like Him. See the blessings of growth and the consequences of a failure to grow.

(2) Realize that there is room for growth. You have not achieved perfection in character or knowledge.

(3) Seek to cure the causes of a lack of growth, and do not just put salve on symptoms. To treat just the symptoms is not to cure the ill. There are sins in our lives which may be symptoms of deeper underlying evils. We shall not satisfactorily deal with the problem unless we get at the root of our trouble. Even if we get rid of a symptom we are still in trouble. The underlying ill continues to develop, even though we may think that we are all right now. Often we cannot get rid of the symptom unless we get rid of the underlying ill. In such cases we get discouraged and think that we shall never conquer these sins. Let us illustrate.

(a) A temper may be the symptom of a selfish, willful attitude which wants to dictate to others, and which becomes insulted when someone crosses its decisions. Not all tempers are symptoms of this. (Some people may be overworked and tired.) But when it is, one usually will not conquer the temper unless he deals with the underlying cause. Even if he did conquer temper the basic ailment will still be within.

(b) A failure to get anything out of the worship service of the church may indicate a misconception of what worship is; that it is mere emotional excitement, and thus one thinks he has not worshipped unless he gets excited; or it may be that the individual lives so far from God during the week that he is out of tune on Lord's day. The cure is a godly life during the week, in such a case.

(c) Failure to give may be a symptom of:

(1) Ignorance of the Bible on giving. In such a case, teach the individual, instead of rebuking him.

(2) Carelessness. We may give what we gave when we had a lot less than we have now.

(3) Lack of real interest in the kingdom because they have not really identified themselves in heart and soul with Christ. This individual needs Christ to be formed in him again, and not be given just a lesson on giving.

(4) It may be that no challenging program has been placed before the congregation. They may be kept in the dark as to how much is given, for what purposes it is used, and the progress of the work.

(d) Failure to be baptized may be a symptom of:

(1) Ignorance — if so, then teach.

(2) Procrastination — if so, then emphasize that one ought to obey a truth when he sees it and that no one has a lease on life.

(3) Failure to be impressed with the authority of Christ. (Compare Acts 2:36-41)

(4) Willful rebellion — how fearful to fall into the hands of the living God!

(4) Study the word of God. We cannot grow without spiritual food. We have time for three meals a day, and we have time for Bible study.

(5) Use what you learn. (Heb. 5:14)

(6) Do not be satisfied but go on. (Heb. 6:1-2; Phil. 3:12-14) Remember that you were raised from the waters of baptism to walk in newness of life. (Romans 6:2-5, 17-18)

IV. GROW TOWARD MATURITY

(1) The perfection toward which we are to grow does not mean that we shall be perfect in doctrine and in deed. All of us have more to learn, and all of us have fallen short. No one has done all God re-

quires all of the time. Perfection in Heb. 6:1 is full growth or maturity. The writer is saying that instead of remaining on the stage of babyhood, they ought to become mature or full grown men. (5:12-14) This does not mean that we shall know everything and never sin, but it does mean that we shall grow into spiritual manhood instead of remaining babes.

(2) We shall not all grow to the same height.

(a) Some people have been brought up in the homes of Christians, have early obeyed the gospel, and have lived in the new life in Christ for over fifty years. Obviously they know more, and have grown more, than an individual reared in paganism who obeyed the gospel at the age of seventy and died five years later. But within our time and opportunity, let us grow.

(b) Furthermore, we differ in talents, but we can be faithful in what we have. Faithfulness is required whether we have much or little. (Matt. 25:14-30)

(3) Are you growing in knowledge, in faith, in hope, and in love? Are you becoming more and more Christ-like?

(4) You cannot grow in Christ unless you have been born into His family. (John 3:1-5; Gal. 3:26-27; Jas. 1:18; I Pet. 1:23)

(5) Although you come into Christ as a spiritual babe, you are not to remain in this state, but grow. Do not become discouraged because of setbacks, shortcomings and failures. Instead renew your determination to grow by practicing those things which produce spiritual growth and by avoiding those things which thwart spiritual growth.

QUESTIONS

1. Is the stage of spiritual immaturity a necessary stage?
2. Is it the stage on which we are to remain?
3. Do you think we ever reach complete maturity in the faith? Is there always more room for growth?
4. What are some of the results of the failure to grow?
5. Why is it that some, who have had time to become teachers, are not teachers? Do you think this refers just to Bible class teachers in the regular program of the church?
6. Did the writer consider their case to be hopeless? (Heb. 6:9)
7. Why do people fail to grow?
8. What are some of the principles which are involved, and things we must do, if we are to grow?
9. What are some of the things which show the importance of curing the cause and not just placing salve on symptoms?
10. Why shall we not all grow to the same height?

Progress Beyond First Principles

(HEBREWS 6:1-3)

There are some whose preaching leaves the impression that the re-statement of the first principles, whether as discussed in this passage or applying to how we obey the gospel, is the only gospel preaching. As a result they do not promote growth in knowledge and character. Of some preachers in a denominational church, George Salmon said they felt that the one thing they "must not do is to bring his (their) hearers' intellect to action, for if the sermon gives exercise to the reasoning powers, it is held not to belong to the class of evangelistic preaching."

"If Christianity be of man, we can easily apply our measures to it, and can pick out in it those things which we judge to be really useful and important, throwing aside all that seems to us superfluous or not, or not well calculated to produce good results. If Christianity be a revelation from God, we may not thus deal with it. A message from God in its very conception tells us of something which our natural powers could not reveal to us. It is so absurd as to be inconceivable, that any man should in his heart believe that God had sent him a message, but at the same time judge that certain parts of that message were so unimportant as not be worth his attending to them." (George Salmon, 259-261)

To remain with the rudiments is to remain in babyhood, to become dull of hearing, to fail to discern between good and evil as one ought, to ignore God's command to grow and is to expose one's self to the danger of apostasy from which he may never return. (Heb. 6:G-8)

I. WHAT ARE THE RUDIMENTS OF THE FIRST PRINCIPLES OF GOD'S ORACLES?

(1) There are those who maintain that Hebrews has reference to the things concerning Christ, etc., which were taught, typified, and predicted in the Old Testament. The theme of the epistle is to keep Christians from returning to the law, to grow in the New Covenant and to recognize it is sufficient and final. G. H. Lang, *The Epistle to the*

Hebrews, Braden in the *Braden-Kelly Debate*, Davis H. Bays (317 if), Westcott, and G. C. Brewer thought that the oracles of Heb. 5:12 referred to the Old Testament predictions, types, etc. Some point out that the gospel of I Cor. 15:1-5 is not specifically mentioned here.

(2) There are others who maintain that Heb. 6:1 shows that the writer is not contrasting what was prophesied and taught in the Old Testament about Christ, but the elementary things which were taught and the further revelation made by Christ.

(3) Joseph Smith, Junior's so-called "Inspired Translation" of the New Testament said: "Therefore not leaving the doctrine of Christ. . . ."

(4) I am not dogmatic as to which of the first two positions is right. Smith is wrong. Therefore, we shall show that the basic lesson is that we must not remain with the first principles but grow toward maturity. My judgment is that it refers to the New Testament revelation, for he is dealing with Christians, even though some of them are wanting to hold on to the law. At least they knew Christ had come and they believed in Him not just in promise but in fulfillment.

III. LEAVING THE FIRST PRINCIPLES

(1) Joseph H. Thayer said: "*to leave, not to discuss now*, a topic, used of teachers, writers, speakers, etc.: Heb. 6:1 . . . take the word in Heb. . . . as expressive of the duty of the readers, rather than the purpose of the writer; and consequently refer the passage to 3 below." (A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, N. Y.: American Book Co., 1889 p. 89)

(2) What it cannot mean, (a) It cannot mean that these things are not to be taught to others who are ignorant of them, for these had been taught in times past to the Hebrews, (b) It does not mean that they are to abandon these things and not consider them as a part of the faith, for the writer shows they are. (5:12, 6:1) (c) It cannot mean that they never need to be reminded of these things. (Compare 2 Pet. 1:12-15)

(3) They are not to remain on this stage of knowledge but are to grow toward maturity. As the Lutheran Commentary put it: "leaving the word of the beginning not passing over, but proceeding from, as the mason advances from the foundation by building thereon, as the child is left behind in growth toward manhood, incorporated into that which makes the man."

IV. REPENTANCE FROM DEAD WORKS (Heb. 6:1)

(1) This does not mean that it is deadly to do anything in becoming and in remaining a Christian. We must do something to become Christians. (Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:2-5, 17-18; Gal. 3:26-27)

(2) These would include the works of the law which were dead insofar as being able to save men. (Rom. 7:4-6; Heb. 9:9-14)

(3) These would include any kind of works wherein one thought

that he thereby earned his salvation. No man can do this through works of merit for no man has done all God required all of the time. (Gal. 3:10)

(4) Repentance is that fundamental change of heart, mind and attitude, which is wrought by godly sorrow for sin — brought about by the goodness and the severity of God — and results in reformation of life. (Matt. 3:8; 21:29; Rom. 2:1-11; 2 Cor. 7:9-10) While it is necessary to repent concerning dead works, and concerning sins which we commit, we are not to remain on the level of repentance from dead works but to bring forth fruits and grow toward maturity.

V. OF FAITH TOWARD GOD (Heb. 6:1)

(1) The law required faith in God as Creator, as Ruler, as Judge, and as One who rewarded them who sought Him in Faith. (Heb. 11:3, 6)

(2) However, we must have faith in God as revealed in Jesus Christ. (John 14:1, 8-9)

(3) Faith in God requires that we submit to His will. (Rom. 4:20-21; Jas. 2:14-26; Heb. 11:6) It is not enough to acknowledge His existence, we must learn more about Him and His will and also grow in character.

VI. THE TEACHING OF BAPTISMS (6:2)

(1) The Old Testament had divers washings. (Heb. 9:9, 10) The Jews also, without divine authority as far as I know, baptized proselytes.

(2) The New Testament books speak of several different baptisms.

(a) The Jewish Christians would have heard about John's baptism, as John had gone about preparing the way for Christ. (Matt. 3:6-7; Acts 18:25)

(b) They would have heard about Christ being baptized. (Matt. 3:13-17; John 1:32-35)

(c) They would have known that the baptism of the Holy Spirit had empowered the apostles on Pentecost (Acts 1:5, 8; 2:1-4) and that the Spirit had also come on the household of Cornelius. (Acts 10:45-48; 15:8-9)

(d) They would have known of the baptism of suffering. (Mk. 10:38-40)

(e) They would have known of the baptism Christ commanded in the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19; Mk. 16:15-16), for they had been baptized into Christ. (Gal. 3:26-27)

(f) Only one baptism was bound on all. (Eph. 4:5) Which one? It was water baptism, not Holy Spirit baptism.

(1) Baptism of the great commission was age lasting. (Matt. 28:19-20)

(2) Baptism in the Holy Spirit was a promise, not a command (Acts 1:5-8), but water baptism was a command. A promise can be received by those to whom it is promised, but a promise cannot be obeyed. The baptism of the great commission can be obeyed. (3) The baptism of the Holy Spirit was administered by Christ, directly from heaven,

without human intervention. (Acts 2:1-4; 2:33; Acts 10:44-48; 11:15-18) The baptism of the great commission was administered by man. (Matt. 28:19) The baptism which was administered by the apostles under the great commission, the baptism which they required, was water baptism. (Acts 2:38; 8:37-39; 10:47-48; 22:16) Saul could have received the Holy Spirit baptism without arising. (Acts 22:16) (4) The baptism of the Holy Spirit was not into Christ, but water baptism is into Christ. (Gal. 3:26-27) (5) The baptism of the Holy Spirit was accompanied by the miraculous, but water baptism was not. (Acts 2:1-4, 6, 8, 11; Acts 10:44-48) For a discussion of Holy Spirit baptism and miraculous gifts see James D. Bales, *Pat Boone and the Gift of Tongues, Miracles or Mirages?* and *The Holy Spirit and the Christian*. (g) When we are baptized into Christ, we are not to sit on the banks of the waters of baptism, but are raised to the new life. (Rom. 6:2-5, 12-13, 17-18) At times we may need to be reminded of the meaning of our baptism, as Paul reminded Christians in Rom. 6, so that we may examine our lives to see whether we are remaining dead unto sin and alive unto righteousness.

VII. LAYING ON OF HANDS

(1) In the Old Testament hands were laid on Aaron to consecrate him to the high priesthood (Ex. 29:10), on the head of the burnt offering (Lev. 1:4; 3:8), and the scapegoat (Lev. 16:21), etc. See Bays' discussion, *op. cit.*, pp. 292-303.

(2) Jesus laid hands on some little children and blessed them. This was under the law and during his personal ministry. (Matt. 19:13-15)

(3) New Covenant.

(a) The apostles could confer miraculous gifts through the laying on of hands. (Acts 8:14-19, 19:1-6; Rom. 1:11) If nothing took place, how could Simon see that it was done through the apostles' hands and why did he want that *power*. Anyone could lay on hands and have nothing happen, so there must have been a conferral of power.

(b) Hands were laid on to appoint those who were to serve tables. (Acts 6:3, 6) It is my conviction that the apostles also conferred miraculous gifts, since before this only the apostles are mentioned as working miracles (Acts 2:43; 3:1-9; 4:33; 5:12), but afterwards Stephen and Phillip worked miracles. (Acts 6:8; 8:6-7) However, Phillip could not pass on this power to those whom he converted, for the apostles came and did this. (Acts 8:14-19)

(c) Hands were laid on to appoint people for special missions. It was a way of commending them to God's grace. (Acts

13:3; 14:26) Obviously this did not make Paul an apostle. (Gal. 1:1)

(d) Paul expressly said he gave Timothy a gift *through* the laying on of his hands. (2 Tim. 1:6) The elders had evidently shown their concurrence in setting Timothy apart for his work, for they laid on hands, too. (1 Tim. 4:14) The gift was given through or by means of Paul's hands, and Paul's laying on of hands was accompanied by or connected with that of the elders. They showed their approval, but it was not done *through* their hands.

(e) As far as I know, there is no scripture against, and there is an example of, the laying on of hands in setting people aside for a special work. (Acts 13:1-3; 14:26) It, along with fasting, was a means of commending them to God's grace. (Acts 14:26) I would certainly not object to such a practice, if there were no idea that one was conferring authority, or gifts on such a person. We do not know whether hands were laid on their heads, shoulders, or where. (See James D. Bales, *The Deacon and His Work*, 97-101)

VIII. RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD (6:2)

(1) The Old Testament indicated that man survives death, and Jesus showed that the Sadducees were wrong in denying the resurrection. (Eccl. 12:7; Matt. 22:23-33)

(2) The New Testament brings us a clearer revelation, and shows that Christ's resurrection is a promise of our own, and it makes clear that the resurrection will take place. (Rom. 8:11; 2 Tim. 1:10) We need not live in the darkness of the gloom of the tomb, but in the light of the resurrection of Christ and of our own resurrection. (1 Pet. 1:3-9)

IX. ETERNAL JUDGMENT

(1) The Old Testament taught that man was accountable to God, and would be judged by Him. (Eccl. 12:7, 13-14)

(2) Christ teaches that we shall be judged by Him and His word. (John 12:48; Acts 17:30-32; Rev. 20:11-15; 1 Pet. 4:17-18)

X. ARE YOU GOING ON TO MATURITY?

(1) Our life must be one of progress and growth. As Salmon said, Christianity is "not as a thing disposed of and settled in one great crisis, but as a long-continued, life-long series of actions and affections. That in such a life there will be crisis and points of transition we need not deny." We must not cut down the Gospel message to "ye must be born again," but we must grow. One is not complete in knowledge or character at the moment of his birth into the kingdom. (266-270)

(2) "And this will we do, if God permit." (Heb. 6:3) Some think that it has reference to instructing them further (5:11), and others to

their growing toward maturity to the extent that God gives them time and opportunity. Whatever the exact meaning, there is no doubt that this portion of scripture makes it essential to our salvation that we grow in grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ. (Compare 2 Peter 3:18)

(3) The writer expresses confidence that they will grow. (Heb. 6:9)

(4) What is your condition? (a) Have you been born again? (b) Are you still in the state of babyhood when you have had time to be otherwise? (c) Are you growing?

QUESTIONS

1. Why are some people satisfied with hearing the first principles which they have heard many times before?

2. Is there a danger of failing to preach first principles, and thereby letting a generation grow up in ignorance? Does this mean that one needs to learn how to approach some of the same subjects from different standpoints so as to instruct the newcomer without boring the oldcomer?

3. What is the danger of remaining with the rudiments?

4. What are the two main explanations of what the rudiments or first principles are? Which do you think is right?

5. In what sense were they to leave the first principles? Were they to abandon them?

6. What are dead works? What does repentance from dead works mean?

7. What is involved in faith toward God?

8. What baptisms are mentioned in the New Testament?

9. What is the one baptism of Eph. 4:5?

10. Are we baptized into Christ to be idle or to walk in the new life?

11. What were some of the purposes of laying on of hands in the Old Testament?

12. What were some purposes of laying on of hands in the New Testament?

13. Do we know where hands were laid on a person?

14. Do we have the power to transmit authority or gifts through the laying on of hands?

15. Did the Old Testament teach the resurrection of the dead?

16. Is there clearer light on the subject in the New Testament?

17. Do both Testaments teach the fact of judgment?

18. By what and by whom shall we be judged? (John 12:48; Acts 17:30-32)

19. Is Christianity something we do once for all?

The Doomed Apostate

(HEBREWS 6:4-8)

God would not warn us against a danger which could not exist. If apostasy was impossible, why did God place before Christians the necessity of growth and warn them that total apostasy was possible? (Heb. 5:12; 6:8) This does not teach that every sin means that one's case is hopeless, for we have an advocate with the Father; the Great High Priest. (2:17-18; 4:14-16; I John 2:1-2) However, it does mean that we can fail to grow, that we can rebel against God, and that we can become so hardened that we cannot be brought to repentance.

I. THEIR CONDITION BEFORE THEY FELL

(1) *Once enlightened.* The enlightened person is one who has been instructed, who has learned. The same idea is in Heb. 10:32 where they were said to have been illuminated. In 10:26 the idea is presented under the phrase "the knowledge of the truth." See also Eph. 1:18; 3:9; 2 Cor. 4:4, 6. S. F. Moulton, in C. J. Ellicott's *New Testament Commentary for English Readers*, wrote: "As the words stand in the Authorized version, 'enlightened' is but the first term of a series; but it is far more probable that the clauses which follow should be regarded as explanatory of the enlightenment itself: ' . . . those who were once enlightened, having both tasted . . . and been made partakers . . . and tasted. . . .'"

(2) *Tasted of the heavenly gift.* This does not refer to the Holy Spirit since He is mentioned in the next phrase. Perhaps this refers to Christ who is the living bread come down from heaven. (John 6:51) Peter spoke of tasting and seeing that the Lord is gracious. (I Pet. 2:3) It may have reference to the gift of salvation, the gift of freedom in Christ, which is from God in heaven.

(3) *Partakers of the Holy Spirit.* Every penitent believer receives the gift of the Spirit, the indwelling of the Spirit, when he is baptized into Christ. (Acts 2:38; 5:32; I Cor. 6:19). Some in the first century also had miraculous gifts which were conferred by the Spirit through the laying on of the apostles' hands. (Acts 8:15-18; 19:6)

(4) *Tasted the good word of God.* "And have been acquainted with the gospel which affords the promise of remission of sins, and of justification here, and of a resurrection to eternal life hereafter, (ver. 2) So the promise of bringing the children of Israel into the land of Canaan

is styled, 'a good word,' Josh, xxi, 45, xxiii. 15; the word of God for bringing his people out of captivity is styled, 'my good word,' Jer. xxix. 10; the words of consolation, which the angel spake to Jerusalem, are 'good words,' Zech. i. 13; the promise made to God's people of remission of sins, and peace and truth in the days of the Messiah, is a good word; and the prophet speaking of the Messiah saith, 'my heart meditateth a good word,' Ps. xiv. 1. This word they saw confirmed by the gift of tongues and prophecy, vouchsafed to the first preachers of it, and daily experimented in their assemblies (I Cor. xiv), and so they could not but be convinced of the truth of it." (Patrick, IV, 904)

(5) *Tasted the powers of the world to come.* Some think that this refers to the miraculous gifts of the apostolic age. "The world to come doth, in the language of the prophets and the Jewish doctors, signify the times of the Messiah. . . . 'The powers', therefore, 'of the world to come', according to the scripture indiotism, must be the external operations of the Holy Ghost, viz., the gifts of faith, of healing, etc. ... 1 Cor. 12:8-9". There are others who think that it signifies "the powerful persuasions of the doctrine of the future judgment administers to repentance and a new life. . . ." (Patrick, 904-905) Cameron wrote: "We take, however, the passage to mean the powers of the future life, the consideration of which makes powerful impressions on men's minds. People have often such thoughts of the future misery of the wicked as greatly disquiet their souls; and also such pleasing meditations on the blessedness of the saints as produce admiration. . . ." (I, 393)

(6) Some say this man was never converted. He only tasted of the word, but did not take it in. He did not really partake of it. If this is true, then Christ only tasted death but did not partake of it. (Heb. 2:9) The description given of this individual indicates that he had been a genuine convert. He had *once* repented, but now had become so hardened that he could not be renewed *again* unto repentance. (6:6)

II. THIS MAN FELL TO HIS DOOM!

(1) The King James translation, on Hebrews 6:6 says: "If they shall fall away", but this is not a correct translation as scholars of various religious bodies agree. Ellicott wrote: "Rather, *and (then) fell away*. There is no doubt that the ordinary translation is altogether incorrect, the Greek admitting of one rendering only." There is no "if" in the original.

On verse 6 Ellicott remarked: "The apostasy was indicated by a single word; these added clauses describe the depth of the fall, whilst they explain the futility of all effort towards recovering the fallen. Both the writer and his readers knew well what was involved in 'falling away' in such a case as this. To go back to Judaism implied an acceptance of all that Jews had said and done against the Son of God, a return to the bitter hate cherished by the falling nation, against the Crucified, a repetition in spirit of all that Pharisees had done, and without the palliation of ignorance; for the highest evidence for Christianity

that of true and deep Christian experience had been given to them. Again, the words used clearly describe a continuing state. Not the punishment for a past act, but the hopelessness of an existing state, is brought before us here. It is therefore of those who, with a distinct conviction of the divine mission of Jesus, have deliberately joined His foes, unite in denouncing Him as a 'deceiver' (Matt. XXVII. 63), rejoice in His shame, and thus 'for themselves crucify a second time the Son of God,' that the writer says, 'It is impossible to renew them again unto repentance.' " (III, 304) As one Baptist translator and commentator put it, in a footnote to a translation put out by the Baptist, or at least in which they cooperated: "*Have fallen away*. . . . There is nothing in the text to authorize the insertion of 'if. This particle first appeared in Tyndale, and was copied by Crammer, Geneva and the E. V. It originated in *dogmatic* consideration. So Beza translated 'si prolabantur' from the same cause, while Calvin, whose creed was the same with that of Beza, adhered to the original and rendered the passage, 'Et Prolapsi sunt'. Stuart, Wesley, 'have fallen away'; Campbell, 'and yet have fallen away'. . . ." (*Revised English Scriptures with Notes*, "The Book of Hebrews", pp. 25-26)

James MacKnight, a Presbyterian, wrote: "But it is rightly translated *have fallen away*, because the apostle is speaking not of any common lapse, but of apostasy from the Christian faith. See Heb. 10:29 where a farther display of the evil of apostasy is made."

"Pierce in his note on this verse saith, 'The reason why our author speaks so severely of such apostates, may be taken partly from the nature of the evidence which they rejected. The fullest and clearest evidence which God ever designed to give the truth of Christianity, was these miraculous operations of the Spirit; and when men were not only eye-witnesses of these miracles, but were likewise themselves empowered to work them, and yet after all rejected this evidence, they could have no farther or higher evidence whereby they should be convinced; so that their case must in that respect appear desperate. This may be partly owing to their putting themselves out of the way of conviction. If they could not see enough to settle them in the profession of the Christian religion, while they, made a profession of it, much less were they likely to meet with anything new to convince and reclaim them, when they had taken up an opposite profession, and joined themselves with the inveterate enemies of Christianity. — And finally, this may be resolved into the righteous judgment of God,' etc.

"Apostates are said to 'crucify in their own mind the son of God a second time,' and 'to expose him to infamy,' because by speaking of him as an impostor and inwardly approving of the punishment which was inflicted on him, they showed that they would have joined his persecutors in putting him to death, if they had an opportunity to do it. — On the authority of this text chiefly, the Novatians excluded from their communion those who in the time of the Diocletian persecution delivered up their copies of the scriptures, and renounced the profession

of the gospel. But the character and circumstances of the apostates of whom the apostle speaks, were very different from the character and circumstances of the apostates in the Diocletian persecution. The Hebrew apostates had seen the miracles of Jesus and his apostles, and had been themselves partakers of the Holy Ghost, and thereby had been *enlightened*, or persuaded to embrace the gospel; yet, through the influence of their passions and lusts, they had lost their conviction of its divine origin, and had returned to Judaism; and to vindicate themselves had spoken of Jesus as an impostor, who was justly put to death for his crimes. Persons acting in that manner, in opposition to all the evidences of the gospel, could not in the ordinary course of things be converted a second time to the Christian faith, because no farther evidence could be offered to them. Besides, their apostasy, proceeding from the corruption of their heart, was wilful, Heb. x. 26. — the case of the apostates in the Diocletian persecution was very different. Through fear of torture, they had delivered up the scriptures, in token of their renouncing Christianity, yet, being convinced of its truth, they were still Christians in their hearts. Now, however culpable these men may have been for their cowardice and hypocrisy, there was nothing in their case, as in the case of the others, which made it impossible for the ministers of Christ to persuade them to repent. The Novatians therefore shewed great ignorance, as well as great uncharitableness, in contending that the apostle had declared the repentance of such persons impossible; and that for their sin, as for the sin of those mentioned in Heb. x. 29, no atonement was provided in the gospel." (James MacKnight, *Commentary on the Epistles*. New York: Published by M. A. Dodd, Brick Church Chapel, pp. 532-533) Consider the extent to which he fell.

(2) It was impossible to renew him again unto repentance. (6:6) They have known and experienced the truth and now they utterly repudiate it. "Be it observed next what is said of *unto repentance* it is impossible to renew them. Such falling away after such experience precluded the possibility of repentance. On such persons the powers of grace have been exhausted." (*Pulpit Commentary*, 160) Since they cannot be renewed to repentance, they cannot be forgiven for they spurn repentance which is essential to forgiveness.

(3) They crucify the Son of God afresh. (6:6) They endorse Christ's crucifixion as a false teacher. They would have crucified Him if they had been there.

(4) They are not silent apostates, but actively campaign against Christ. They "put him to an open shame." (6:6)

(5) They are barren fields. (6:7-8) They have had every advantage but instead of bearing fruit for Christ, they have turned and borne thorns and thistles. James MacKnight said that "a principal part of the eastern agriculture consists in leading rills of water from ponds, fountains, and brooks, to render the fields fruitful. When this is neglected, the land is scorched by the heat and drought of the climate, and so being burned up is altogether sterile. The apostle's meaning is, that as

land which is unfruitful under every method of culture will at length be deserted by the husbandman, and burnt up with drought; so those who apostatize from the gospel, after having been given up by God and man as incorrigible."

James Hastings' *Dictionary of the Apostolic Church* said: "The writer exhorts his readers to be steadfast in the faith, and reminds them of the spiritual blessings which they have received. Just as the earth 'which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it,' and in spite of that 'beareth thorns and briers, is rejected,' so too will those who, endowed with all blessings and grace from above, fail to bring forth the fruits of righteousness."

III. THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT EVERY CHRISTIAN WHO DOES WRONG IS A DOOMED APOSTATE

(1) It did not say that they repented but God would not receive them. God has always been willing to receive the penitent, (a) Fallen Israelites. (Ezek. 33:11-16; Num. 14:19-20) Although they were kept out of Canaan, He did not say they could not repent and be saved eternally. Children of Israel in Jesus' day were not told they would not be received even if they repented. (Matt. 3:7-10; John 5:40, 46-47; Matt. 13:14-15; 23:37; Lk. 23:34; Acts 2:23, 38; I Tim. 1:15-16; 1 John 2:1-2)

(b) Fallen Christians will be received if they return to God. (Gal. 4:19, 21) Why was Galatians written if their case was hopeless? (I Cor. 5:1-11; 2 Cor. 2:6-11; 7:8-10; 12:20-21; 2 Pet. 3:9)

(2) "And as this impossibility is expressly said to be that of 'renewing them to repentance,' so, when anyone is 'renewed to repentance,' this passage contains not the least intimation that he cannot be forgiven." (George D'Oyly, Richard Mant, *New Testament According to the Authorized Version*, London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, Great Queen St., Lincoln's Inn Fields.)

QUESTIONS

1. Would God warn us against a danger which did not exist?
2. What was the condition of these apostates before they fell?
3. How do these show that they were actually Christians?
4. Is "if they shall fall away" a correct translation?
5. What did these apostates do which showed how far they had gone?
6. Was their lack of forgiveness due to God's lack of mercy or because they became so hardened that they would not repent? Can one pass the turning back place? If one turns to God for mercy does this prove that he has not reached the place where it is impossible to renew him unto repentance?
7. What are some of the examples where God showed mercy to penitent sinners?
8. If we do wrong does that mean our case is hopeless? If it does, of what value would it be to have a High Priest?

Be Steadfast Unto the End

(HEBREWS 6:9-20)

It is not enough to start, it is also necessary to finish. Christians must show "diligence to the fullness of hope even to the end". (6:11) They must through patience inherit the promises. (6:15) What encouragement is there for us to patiently endure unto the end?

I. THERE ARE THOSE WHO TRUST US

(1) It is discouraging to an individual if he feels that no one believes in him. Of course, this may lead some individuals to determine to strive all the harder, but many it will discourage. When they feel that no one believes in them, they may find it difficult to believe in themselves. When they feel that others think that they will fail, there are some who live down to that expectation of others.

(2) In spite of the fact that it was necessary to warn the Christians with the example of the ancient children of Israel (Heb. 3:7; 4:11); to rebuke them for their lack of growth (5:11-14); to tell them of the need to grow (6:1-3); and to warn them of the doom of the hardened apostate (6:4-8); yet he has confidence that they will heed the warnings and do the right thing. (6:9) Compare with other examples. (2 Tim. 1:5; Phil. 1:6) James MacKnight wrote: "This, as Pierce observes, is exactly in Paul's manner of softening the harsh things he found himself obliged to write. See 2 Thess. 2:13; Eph. 4:20." (533)

(3) Do you express confidence in individuals with whom you associate? Does your preaching ever express confidence in the people to whom you speak, or do you speak (or write) as if you did not expect them to do the right thing? Do you express confidence in your children or do you leave the impression that you expect the worst of them?

II. THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD TO HIS WORD ENCOURAGES US

(1) Regardless of whether others see our love and works, or remember our works, God sees and will not forget. (6:10) Note that we

show the right attitude toward His name through ministering to others. (6:10)

(2) God's word and God's oath were two immutable things, for He cannot lie, on which Abraham could depend. God made the promise (6:13), and it was fulfilled. (6:14-18) But Abraham had to patiently endure. What was the promise?

"This cannot be understood of Isaac the promised seed, he being not only born, but offered, when God made this promise to Abraham; nor can it be said that he inherited the promise because he saw it afar off, that being a sign he did not yet inherit it; or that he did this in his posterity, for the apostle saith, he himself inherited the promises: which is exactly true of the words cited here by the apostle, 'Surely, blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee;' for the book of Genesis assures us, this promise was exactly fulfilled in his life: for the Lord blessed him in all things. (Gen. xxiv. 1) He had a numerous seed by his wife Keturah (Gen. xxv.), to whom he gave gifts, (ver. 6) From Ishmael arose twelve sons, which were princes of their tribes, (ver. 13, 16) He lived fifteen years after the birth of Jacob and Esau by Rebekah, of whom the oracles declared, that 'there were two nations in her womb:' for Isaac was sixty years old when they were born to him (ver. 23:26); he himself was born when Abraham was a hundred years old (Gen. xxi. 5); Abraham was a hundred and seventy-five years old when he died (Gen. xxv. 7): he therefore lived fifteen years after the birth of Jacob and Esau, and ninety years after the birth of Ishmael; and so lived to see this promise verified to him." (Patrick, 905)

(3) We can be sure that He will keep His promises, and this enables us to have hope which is sure and steadfast. (6:18-20) This hope, based on the faithfulness of God to His promises, encourages us to be faithful unto the end.

(4) It takes faith, love, work and hope. (Rom. 4:20-21; Heb. 6:10-11)

III. THE EXAMPLE OF OTHERS ENCOURAGES US TO BE FAITHFUL

(1) Follow the example of the faithful and patient who in the past have inherited promises. (6:12, 15)

(2) They have done it, and we can do it if we be willing.

(3) Is your life an example which encourages others to be steadfast?

IV. STEADFASTNESS IS NECESSARY

(1) We must have the things which accompany salvation. (6:9)

(2) We must work (6:10), and be diligent unto the end. (6:11)

(3) We must not be slothful, but have faith and patient endurance in order to inherit the promises. (6:12) Notice that that is the way that Abraham obtained the promise. (6:15)

V. WE ARE SUSTAINED BY HOPE

(1) Our hope is based on God's faithfulness.

(2) It concerns the future reward which we have not yet received, and can receive only if we are faithful unto the end. (Rom. 8:24-25)

(3) Regardless of how dark the days, hope can be the sure and steadfast anchor which keeps us from drifting from the great salvation. (Heb. 6:18-19; 2:1-4)

VI. WE ARE SUSTAINED BY CHRIST OUR HIGH PRIEST IN HEAVEN (6:19-20)

(1) Christ has entered into heaven itself. (6:19-20; 9:3-28)

(2) He has made the one sufficient sacrifice. (1:3; 9:12-26)

(3) He functions as our high priest to whose compassionate throne of grace we can come. (Heb. 2:17-18; 4:14-16)

(4) He has entered as a forerunner for us. "The idea of a *forerunner* is that of a messenger who is sent to announce and prepare for the coming of a second party. John the Baptist was the forerunner of Christ; Jesus in his ascent and official enthronement in heaven, is the forerunner of his people. He carried with him, in his life and death, in his resurrection and ascension to the unseen world, the fortunes of his Church. He entered at once into the holy place, not in his own person only, but as our forerunner — 'having obtained eternal redemption for us.' " (John Burton, 265) We must be obedient to Him, and run with patience the race. (Heb. 5:9; 12:1-2) How encouraging it is to know that our High Priest is there interceding for us, and that He has entered as the forerunner for us.

VII. DO YOU HAVE THIS HOPE?

(1) Do you have this strong encouragement (6:18), refuge (6:18), hope, anchor (6:19), and high priest? (6:20) If not, you are without hope in this world and for the world to come.

(2) Accept Christ. (Gal. 3:26-27; Acts 22:16), and let all the things which we have discussed encourage you to be steadfast unto the end.

QUESTIONS

1. Does one win a race just by starting? Is starting essential?
2. What are some of the things which encourage us to finish the race? Discuss them in detail and show how we can help one another to keep on keeping on.
3. How can we have the hope of eternal life? How important is hope to life?

After the Order of Melchizedek

(HEBREWS 7)

Christians were encouraged to continue in the faith by the fact that Christ's priesthood is superior to that of Aaron. To return to the Levitical priesthood would be return to one which: (a) Was inferior. (7:1-7) (b) Was unable to bring perfection. (7:11) (c) Had promised another priesthood to take its place. (7:11-18)

I. THE SUPERIORITY OF CHRIST'S PRIESTHOOD

(1) Melchizedek was superior to Aaron. He was king as well as priest. (7:1) (a) Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek, and Abraham's descendants were not superior to Abraham. Therefore, since Melchizedek was superior to Abraham, he was superior to Abraham's descendants. (7:2-10) The less is blessed of the greater. (7:1, 7)

(2) There are those who have used this passage to show that Christians must tithe, since Christ's priesthood is like that of Melchizedek. However, the discussion is not whether Christians should pay tithes. The reference to tithes shows that Melchizedek was superior to Abraham. There is no New Testament teaching that Christians are to tithe. It would be too much for some and too little for others. The New Testament teaching concerning giving is found in many passages, but not in Heb. 7:2. The people who use this to show we are to tithe will not use it to show that the people of God today are to go to war as a church against her enemies, as Abraham did against his enemies, and then paid tithes of the spoils of war. (7:1-2)

(3) Melchizedek's priesthood was superior because he was a priest continually. (7:3) Does 7:3 mean that literally Melchizedek was eternal and was without father or mother? He could not have been, for he was a man. (7:4) How can this be explained?

(a) Some think it means that the Levitical priesthood had to be of certain line and served for a certain period of time, while this was not true of Melchizedek. He had no ancestors or predecessors in his office.

(b) Some think that insofar as the Bible is concerned, he appears and disappears without reference to ancestry, predecessors, or successors.

(c) Cameron pointed out, if he was literally without a father or mother, and literally without beginning of days or end of life, "he could not be a man; but *either an angel or the Son of God*. He was not the latter, for he is said to be made like him; nor was he an angel, because he could not be a priest unless he had been a man. 'For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins.' (Heb. v. 1) Because therefore Melchizedek *was a man* (7:4) he had, *as such, father and mother*, beginning of days and end of life, and descent (pedigree),

but not as a priest. *The description denying these to him applies not to his person but his office.* By comparing the apostle's account of him with Moses' narrative, we may discover the explanation of the mystery. He is abruptly introduced by Moses as 'the priest of the Most High God,' without any notice of parent, pedigree, birth or death. The apostle rests his arguments upon the intentional silence of Scripture on matters which were carefully noticed in the case of the Levitical priests, who, without a genealogy wherein their descent from Aaron was plainly recorded, could not lawfully be priests. Here was a priest whose descent was not counted from any one, but was *appointed to the office by God in a different way.* We do not know how this was done, but Abraham was satisfied with his sacerdotal character. We are equally ignorant of the beginning and end of his priesthood; for he is introduced to our notice a priest, and he disappears a priest. We first see him in his official capacity, and then we lose sight of him while he remains the same. Like a high mountain, the top of which is lost in a thick cloud, the Scriptures present Melchizedek to our notice invested with an unchangable priesthood; nor had he in reality either predecessor or successor therein. During the levitical era his office was only held in abeyance, but not superseded. It gave place to none until he arose of whom the Psalmist said that he should be 'a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.' (Ps. ex. 4) As all the types were fulfilled in him, the shadows cast by him as the Antitype disappeared when he came forth a Priest who continues forever. Seeing the Levitical priesthood was temporary, as every person who filled the office was, and seeing the priesthood of Christ is perpetual, it is therefore a better priesthood." (D. B. Cameron, I, 448-450)

II. CHRIST OUR HIGH PRIEST

(1) He is not a priest after the law of the Old Covenant. (7:11-16)

(a) Since it was promised that there would be another priest after the similitude or likeness of Melchizedek, it is evident that the Levitical system was not sufficient. (7:11-12)

(b) Thus a change of the priesthood was foreseen by the Old Testament prophets, and a change has now actually been made. (7:12-14)

(c) A change had to be made for Christ could not have been a priest under the law. (7:13-14)

(2) Christ was made a priest by an oath. (7:20-21)

(3) Christ has no successor. (7:23-25) Anyone who claims to be High Priest today is a pretender, a usurper, for Christ is our only high priest. He ever lives, so no one can or needs to take His place.

(4) He is able to save those who come to God through Him. (7:25) There is no need to try to go to God through another. No human priest can go to God for us.

(5) Our high priest is superior to all others in his character and station. (7:26-28)

(6) His sacrifice is sufficient, and once for all. (7:27)

(7) His work brings the perfection which the Levitical system could not bring. (7:11-19)

"It was declared hundreds of years before it happened that the ceremonial priesthood would be superseded by another. It was therefore evident that it could not procure perfection. This necessary change of the priesthood involved a change of the law which regulated its service. The appointment of a Priest, not descended from Aaron but from Judah, as was intimated in Old Testament Scriptures, proves the abrogation of the ceremonial law, for as that fundamental principle of it, whereby it was enacted that every high priest should be of the family of Aaron, was disregarded in the appointment of the new Priest, it proves that the law of the old priesthood gave place to a new law. Seeing that neither the Aaronic priesthood nor the law which regulated its services made nothing perfect, they were both abolished when a better Priest was introduced. Notwithstanding the declaration of David concerning the New Priest who was to supersede the old, and their own consciousness of imperfection, the Jews were so attached to the Mosaic dispensation that they would not believe that it could ever give place to another. Even many of those who became Christians did not believe that they could be saved without observing the rites of the ceremonial law. . . . *To show that the Mosaic dispensation was abolished because it had served its purpose, God, by its overthrow in the destruction of Jerusalem, rendered it forever impossible to re-establish it.* Sacrifices can no more be offered in the place once appointed by God for that purpose, nor can any Jew prove that he is descended from Aaron so as to shew his right to officiate as priest, for the genealogical registers were entirely neglected in the people's dispersion among the nations. Seeing, then, that God has manifested his displeasure against the obstinate adherence of the Jews to ceremonies which he abolished, though he had once established them, we conclude that *the reintroduction of unauthorized practices into the worship of God must provoke his anger.* When Christians are disposed to go back to such beggarly elements, it proves their ignorance of the perfection which Christ procured for the church, and the valuable privileges of knowledge, joy, and hope." (D. B. Cameron, I, 455, 456, 457)

(8) It should be carefully noted that the writer makes an argument from silence. At first it may sound contradictory, but it is not, to say that in some cases the silence of the scriptures authorizes us to do some things and sometimes the silence of the Scriptures prohibits us from doing some things. When God gives a general principle, everything included in that principle is authorized unless some specific thing is prohibited. If God had said to take priests from the children of Israel, it would have been scriptural to have taken them from any and all tribes. If God said to take priests from the people of God, with the exception of the tribes of Judah, then all tribes not expressly excluded would have been included. But God was specific as to tribe. He said to

take them from the tribe of Levi. He did not have to say, do not take them from the tribe of Judah, and so on until He had named all of the other tribes. When he specified Levi, this automatically excluded all others. It therefore excluded the tribe of Judah. (Heb. 7:13-14) If God had said to build the ark of wood, any wood would have been satisfactory. But God said *to* build it of gopher wood, and this excluded all other woods. (Gen. 6:14) Noah was not even to use oak wood as props to hold up the gopher wood in the ark. Concerning music, God has been specific under the New Covenant. We are to offer vocal music which is a sacrifice of praise, the fruit of lips; although we can praise God without singing but by the spoken word also. (Eph. 5:19; Heb. 13:15) To apply Heb. 7:14 to this notice: "For it is evident that our Lord authorized singing; but as to instrumental music he spake nothing." He has been specific as to the music we are to offer to Him in worship.

III. YOU APPROACH GOD THROUGH CHRIST

(1) It is not enough to reject the Levitical priesthood, we must go to God through Christ. (Heb. 5:8-9; 7:26-8:3) If you have not obeyed the gospel you must accept Him as Lord (King) and High Priest. (Acts 2:36-38; Heb. 8:1)

(2) If you have accepted Him, remember that you always have access to the throne of grace, that He is able to save, and that He ever liveth to make intercession for us. (Heb. 7:24-25) This encourages us to repent and accept His mercy.

QUESTIONS

1. Why should we refuse to go to the Aaronic priesthood?
2. What showed the superiority of Melchizedek's priesthood to that of Aaron?
3. Does Abraham's paying tithes mean that Christians are to tithe? Do you think tithing would be too much for some and too little for others?
4. How do we know that Melchizedek was a man and had a literal father and mother? What, then, does it mean that he was without father or mother?
5. How do we know that Melchizedek was not Christ?
6. Does Melchizedek's case show that God had some people other than Abraham in Abraham's day?
7. How did the promise, that Christ would be a priest after the order of Melchizedek, show that the Old Testament priesthood would be done away?
8. In what ways is Christ's priesthood superior to that of Aaron?
9. What argument from silence is made? (Heb. 7:13-14)
10. When does the silence of the scriptures prohibit?
11. When does the silence of the scriptures authorize?

Christ Our King and Priest

(HEBREWS 8:1-5)

As Cameron, a Presbyterian preacher, wrote: "The carnal Jews in the days of the apostle no doubt charged the Christians who separated from them with having no divine ordinances of worship, seeing that their religious services had no sacrifices offered by a high priest who was anointed with holy oil according to the ancient Mosaic institution. That view of the case was so plausible that it was well calculated to influence the minds of some to apostatize from the gospel, and of others to refuse to embrace the Christ. Against this sophistry, he proved that Christ is a High Priest who is superior to the Jewish high priest, notwithstanding the pomp of the sacrificial rites which they performed, and the magnificence of their sacerdotal robes. 'We have,' says he, 'an high priest' in whose person we, who are true believers, have such an interest that we rely on all his official acts as done for us. It is true that carnal men cannot recognize him, but we, who are spiritually enlightened, know him so well as to be able to rely with confidence on his sacerdotal acts. We can easily understand how the deluded subjects of the Romish superstition labour under the same difficulty. In their ignorance of the Priesthood of Christ they cannot see how . . . (we, J.D.B.) can transact with God without priests. There is an element of truth connected with their error, though it is sadly perverted, for no sinner can come to God without the intervention of a priest, but there is no room for a human priest, seeing Christ himself discharges all the duties of the office. To rely on any one else for this purpose is a criminal mistake, for no mere man, however holy can bring us to God. It becomes us, however, to see that we have a living interest in Christ by faith, so as to be able to say: 'We *have* such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.'" (D. B. Cameron, I, 446-448)

The Levitical system did not provide for a person who was king and priest. So it was not in the Levitical system that the Messiah was to reign.

I. CHRIST MINISTERS AS PRIEST FOR US IN HEAVEN

(1) He was not a priest while on earth (8:4), for the law of Moses was in force during his personal ministry (Gal. 4:4; Matt. 23:1-3; Col. 2:14), and Christ was not of the priestly tribe. (7:13-15)

(2) Christ ministers for us in heaven in the true tabernacle. (8:3; 7:27)

(3) He had something to offer. (8:3; 7:27)

(4) He is not idle there, but makes intercession for us. (7:25)

(5) This is not something for which no preparation was made, for it was foreshadowed by the Old Testament system. (8:2, 5) The Old was "a sign suggestive of" of the New; "a delineation"; an "outline"; a shadow. God ordered Moses to make the tabernacle just as He had revealed it (8:5); otherwise, it could not have foreshadowed the New Testament system.

II. CHRIST IS ALSO OUR KING

(1) The priesthood of Aaron and the Levites did not combine the priestly and kingly office. Melchizedek's did. (7:1) Christ is both king and priest. (1:3; 8:1; 1:13)

(2) This was prophesied. (Zech. 6:12-13)

(a) "The Great subject of promise will justly bear the name branch or *sprout*. For He will not descend from above in full glory, but, like a plant slowly springing up from the ground beneath, raise himself by degrees from his original obscurity." (E. W. Hengstenberg, II, 56) Christ is the Branch. (Isa. 11:1, 10; Rom. 15:12, 18)

(b) He shall build the temple of the Lord. This did not refer to the material, outward temple. "Nowhere is a building of the outward temple attributed to the Messiah. Our prophet had himself declared in the name of God, chap. 4:9-10, that the building of the temple begun by Zerubbabel, should also be completed by him; and this same temple, according to his predecessor Haggai, chap. 2:7-9, and his successor, Mal. 3:1, should be glorified by the presence of the Messiah. The building of the temple and the high priesthood of the Messiah must still stand in a certain relation to each other. If now, the purity to be effected by the latter (his work as priest, J. D. B.) is not outward, but inward; if, as our prophet from his zealous study of his predecessors (compare Isa. 53) must have known, and according to Chap. 12 and 13 (especially 12:10; 13:1, 6, J. D. B.), actually did know, this purity was to be obtained, not by the blood of animals, but by the high priest's own blood, then surely must the prophet, when he is led by the building of the temple in his time to attribute such a work to the Messiah, be understood figuratively; and the more so, since, as we have already had frequent occasion to show, blessings themselves, and to represent the future under the image, and by the name, of the present." (*Ibid.*, 57-58) A consideration of the divers manners in which the prophets spoke shows that sometimes they clothed their prophecies in the language which described the type, when the antitype was meant. (See James D. Bales, *The New Testament Interpretation of Old Testament Prophecies of the Kingdom*, pp. 17-40. See also the completely revised edition called *Prophecy and Premillennialism*.) Jesus said: "I will build my church". (Matt. 16:18) This church is the one new man (Eph. 2:15),

the one body (2:16), which is the church since there is only one body. (4:4; 2:15; Eph. 1:22-23) It was made possible by His cross. (Eph. 2:15-16) It is the temple of the Lord. (2:19-22)

(c) King. "The words, 'he shall bear majesty' (or glory, J. D. B.), contain the explanation of the putting on of the crown in the symbolic action. The noun . . . stands by way of eminence for the kingly majesty, compare I Chron. 29:25. . . . 'He sits', and 'he reigns', differ from each other in this, that the former signifies the possession of the regal honor and dignity, the latter the actual exercise of the regal power, (and remember that He is priest when He does this, J. D. B.) Christ is now king, since He has a kingdom (Col. 1:13), and reigns on a throne (Heb. 1:3, 8, 13; 8:1; Acts 2:30-36; I Cor. 15:24-28)

(d) He is priest while on the throne. In other words, He is both king and priest. ". . . the object of the prophet is rather, to render prominent the thought, that the Messiah would be both a king and high priest on one and the same throne, This truth, however, was in the highest degree consoling to the covenant people. It gave them a pledge, that their future head should possess both the power and the will to help them. As a true high priest, the Messiah should represent his people before God, and procure for them forgiveness of their sins — as a true king, of whose glory all who had preceded were only a feeble copy, he should protect the objects of his favor, and, in general, make them partakers of all the blessings designed for them by God." (*Ibid.*, 60-61) Christ is high priest on His throne. He is in heaven on His throne. (Heb. 1:3, 13; 4:14; 7:1, 11, 15, 17; 8:11; Psa. 110:1-4; Acts 2:34-36)

(e) It is through His function in both of these offices that peace is possible. "The prophet, therefore, represents the Messiah as King, and the Messiah as high priest, devising the best method and way to secure peace and prosperity to the covenant people. If at the present time, (their day) the common effort of Zerubbabel and Joshua, which was only a feeble type, to promote the best interests of the Theocracy, had been attended with happy results, what might be expected when the true high priest and the true king, the Messiah, should strive with anxious care for this object, when he should employ all the means which these two dignities united in himself supplied." (*Ibid.*, 60-61)

III. CHRIST REIGNS FROM HEAVEN (8:1, 4)

(1) The present reign, as King and Priest, was predicted by the prophet Zechariah. Thus His present reign is not something which was unexpected, insofar as prophecy is concerned. Therefore, His present kingdom was the subject of prophecy, since His kingdom in His rule over God's people, and He now rules as King and priest over God's people.

(2) His reign is not from a throne on earth. He is the invisible king since He reigns at God's right hand. Christ could not possibly have been crowned king on earth during His personal ministry, since the law

could not have been taken away before His death (Col. 2:14; Eph. 2:13-16) and since the law did not authorize Him, for He was of the tribe of Judah, to be a priest. (Heb. 7:13-14; 8:4). There had to be a change before He could be priest (7:12), and this change could not have been possible before His death, and offering. Thus it is impossible that the purpose, and the kingdom associated with His first coming, of His first coming could have been to establish a throne on earth over Israel. He came to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. (Heb. 9:26)

(3) The way some interpret prophecy there will be a so-called millennial kingdom which will restore the Levitical system. If so, Christ could not be king and priest then.

(4) He will reign until all enemies are conquered, and then He will deliver the Kingdom to the Father in eternity. (Acts 2:34-35; I Cor. 15:24-28; Rev. 20:11; 21:5)

IV. HAVE YOU ACCEPTED HIM?

(1) To accept Him as king means that you submit to Him, come unto His kingdom, and continue to submit to His will. (Acts 2:36-38; Gal. 3:26-27; Col. 1:13-14; Acts 2:42; Lk. 6:46)

(2) To accept Him as High Priest means that we approach God through Him. (Heb. 2:17-18; 4:14-16; 7:17-8:2) Forgiveness is available through Him.

(3) If you repudiate Him as king and priest, you will someday face Him as judge. (Acts 17:30-31; John 12:48)

QUESTIONS

1. To those who were wedded to the carnal ordinances of the Old (Heb. 9:9-10), was the New Covenant unattractive?

2. Why do so many people like ritualism such as is found in the Roman Catholic Church?

3. Are some religious people trying to get away from such ritualism and toward simplicity in worship?

4. Are some members of the church hankering after ceremonialism?

5. Why could not Christ be a priest while on earth? (Heb. 8:1-4)

6. What did Christ do for us when He ascended *to* heaven? (Heb. 1:3; 7:27)

7. What does He do for us as high priest?

8. Did the Old Testament foretell and foreshadow His work as high priest?

9. Of what value to us is it that He is both king and priest?

10. What temple of God is He building? (Eph. 2:20-22; 1 Pet. 2:5, 9) In what sense is this temple incomplete?

11. Did the Old Testament prophesy that His reign would be from a throne on earth or from heaven? (Psa. 110:1-4)

12. What does it mean to accept Christ as high priest? as king?

The Revealed Pattern

(HEBREWS 8:5)

The pattern for the tabernacle was of divine, not human, origin. For an extended discussion see James D. Bales, *Instrumental Music and New Testament Worship*.

I. IN THE OLD TESTAMENT GOD EXPECTED MEN TO DO JUST AS HE COMMANDED

(1) Noah. (Gen. 6:22) (2) Moses. (Exod. 25:40; Heb. 8:5) (3) David and Solomon. (1 Chron. 28:7, 11-13, 19) (4) Lev. 10:1-2 (5) Deut. 4:2; 12:32

II. IN THE NEW TESTAMENT GOD EXPECTS MEN TO DO JUST AS HE HAS COMMANDED

(1) John 12:48; 14:26; 16:12-15; Matt. 28:20; Acts 2:42; 2 Tim. 2:2; 3:10, 14; Matt. 15:8-9; 1 Pet. 4:11. The next to the last passage refers to people under the Old Testament, but the basic principle is still the same. "Old Testament worship consisted of what the apostle calls carnal ordinances, but all its parts were appointed by God. No change suggested by human wisdom was permitted to be made. An unauthorized alteration would be profanity, they would expose those who made them to the displeasure of God. Though a new order of things has been introduced under the gospel dispensation, we have no reason to suppose that God has granted liberty to men to introduce into Divine worship such ceremonies as they please." (Cameron, I, 486) The spiritual temple is the church. (Eph. 2:20-22)

(2) The divine pattern with reference to conversion to Christ. (Matt. 28:19-20; Mk. 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; 8:35-39; 10:48; 11:14; 15:7-11; 16:15, 30-34; 18:8; 1 Cor. 15:1-5)

(3) The divine pattern with reference to worship. It is not the Old Testament worship, for it was imposed only until the time of reformation. (Heb. 9:9-10) We are not under the Old Testament. (Heb. 8:5-13; 10:9; 9:15-17) The divine pattern with reference to New Testament worship is easy to discover and follow when men are content to stay

with the Bible. And this men ought to do (1 Pet. 4:11), so we may follow God's way, and not the way of man's traditions (compare Matt. 15:9); F. B. Fitzwater, 495-497, has pointed out that the worship of the primitive church consisted of (a) Reading of the Scriptures. (Col. 4:16; 1 Thess. 5:27; Rev. 1:3, "he that readeth", "they that hear") (b) Prayer. (1 Cor. 14:14, 16) (c) Singing. (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16) (d) Preaching. (Matt., 28:20; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 14:19, 26, 36) (e) Giving. (1 Cor. 16:1, 2) (f) Lord's Supper. (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:20-34) This is simple and easy for us to understand and follow. Does your worship have New Testament sanction? Has it been authorized by God or by man?

(4) Christian living. (2 Pet. 1:5-11; Titus 2:11-14)

(5) Are you content to abide within the divine pattern, and thus to be where God has promised to bless people? Should we be any less careful to follow God's instructions today than Moses was? (Heb. 8:5) Does not Heb. 2:1-4 show that we ought not to be any less careful than the people of old? (Heb. 12:25)

(6) We must not serve the tabernacle. (Heb. 13:10-15)

QUESTIONS

1. What Old Testament examples show that God expected obedience?
2. What passages in the New show that He still expects obedience?
3. What is the divine pattern with reference to conversion to Christ?
4. What is the divine pattern with reference to worship?
5. What is the divine pattern with reference to the Christian life?
6. Should we be less careful to obey God's word today than did those under the Old?

Jeremiah's Prophecy of the New Covenant

(HEBREWS 8:6-13)

All objections by Jews that the New Covenant did away with the Old Covenant, and that the New Covenant was different from the Old Covenant, fall to the ground when it is recognized that the Old Testament itself prophesied both these things. (Jer. 31:31-34) In making such a prophecy the Old Testament recognized its own insufficiency. For if it had been sufficient there would have been no need for another covenant. (Heb. 8:7-9) It also recognized that it was temporary, that it was not to last, but was to be replaced by the New Covenant.

I. THE FIRST COVENANT

(1) It was the decalogue covenant which was made when God brought Israel out of Egypt. (Jer. 31:31-32; I Kings 8:9, 21) This covenant contained, however, not only the decalogue, but also the tabernacle worship, and later the temple worship. (Heb. 9:1-4)

(2) Israel was unfaithful. They broke the covenant. (Jer. 31:32)

II. THE SECOND COVENANT

(1) The second covenant is the new covenant of which Christ is the mediator. The first covenant, made when God brought them out of Egypt (8:9), is called the old covenant. (8:13; 9:1) Christ is the mediator of the better covenant (8:6), which is the second. (8:7) Christ is the mediator of the New Testament (9:15); or covenant (12:24); and His blood is the "blood of the everlasting covenant". (13:20)

(2) The apostles were ministers of the new covenant. (2 Cor. 3:5-6)

(3) The New Covenant is not the Old Covenant. Some have said that it is the same old covenant, but just established on better promises. It is true that our covenant is based on better promises (8:6), but it is also a new covenant. ". . . this is the covenant . . . I will put my laws into their minds. . . ." (8:10), and it is not the same covenant once made with Israel. (8:8-9)

III. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NEW COVENANT, AS PROPHESED BY JEREMIAH

(1) Made with Judah. and Israel (Jer. 31:31), or Israel. (31:33) Literal Israel was told to accept Christ, and thousands did (Acts 2:36-41), but they were only a remnant. (Rom. 11:5) It was not, however, made with literal Israel as much. In fact not all literal Israel was true Israel (Rom. 9:6) Old Israel was a type of the church, the new Israel (see James D. Bales, *Prophecy and Premillennialism*, Bales Book House, Searcy, Ark. 72143, 1972). The covenant is made with all, Jew and Gentile, who will accept Christ. They become the seed of Abraham. (Gal. 3:27-29)

(2) Laws in their minds and hearts. (Heb. 8:10; 2 Cor. 3:3, 6) God's law is "*within* them, not an external code. In the latter the 'fleshy tables of the heart' are contrasted with 'the tables of the Law'. This is the first of the 'better promises.'" (C. J. Ellicott, III, 313) Christ emphasized the "inwardness" of His work. (John 4:10, 14) Ours is spiritual, not carnal. (John 4:23-24; Heb. 9:9-10)

The Expositor's Greek Testament thinks that "the meaning is that God's law, instead of being written on tables of stone, should under the new covenant be written on the spirit and desires of man. . . . This 'better promise' involves a new spirit. . . ." (IV, 325)

Patrick and Lowth think that these two metaphors (laws in *minds* and written in *hearts*) "both in the scripture and the Jewish writers, chiefly signify two things: 1. A clear and perspicuous revelation of the mind and will of God . . ." (Deut. 30:11, 14, 15; Rom. 10:8, 9) efficacious impression of them on the soul, and on the memory, so that we do not let them slip out of our minds." (Deut. 6:6, 7; Prov. 7:1, 3; IV, 912) Of course, it is possible to let it slip. (Heb. 2:1-4)

Milligan writes: "The ten fundamental principles of the Old Covenant were written on two tables of stone. (Ex. 34:1, 28; Deut. 10:1-5; 2 Cor. 3:7) . . . Many of the pious Hebrews no doubt, like David, treasured up these laws in their minds and in their hearts. (Psa. 119:11) . . . But multitudes of those who lived under the Old Testament never received the impress of God's law upon either their understanding or their hearts. And hence it was always to them but as a letter inscribed on stone, and not as an indwelling and life-giving power inscribed on their hearts. (2 Cor. 3) But not so under the New Covenant. For unless a man is begotten by the Spirit, through the word of truth, the good seed of the kingdom, he can not become a member of it, nor can he be a partaker of its benefits. (Compare John 3:3, 5 with I Cor. 4:15; Jas. 1:18; I Pet. 1:23) God first enlightens the understanding by means of his inspired word, and then he inscribes it on the heart. Through the heart, the truth effects the will, and through the will it controls and sanctifies the life, so that all the members of the New Covenant are really 'voluntary offers', according to the promise of God to his Son. (Psa. 110:3) It is not therefore 'the letter', but it is 'the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus' that constrains us to do the will of God from the heart." (Milligan, 233-234) Being written on their hearts may indicate a more willing obedience for it is out of the heart that life's issues proceed.

(3) Their God. This, too, was the aim of Old Covenant. (Ex. 6:7) On this Milligan commented: "This is the second of the 'better promises' on which the New Covenant is established. Under the Old Covenant, there were of course many true believers who, like Abraham, took Jehovah to be their God, all of whom he received and acknowledged as his people. (Ex. xix. 5; Lev. xxvi, 12) But many not knowing their right hands from their left, were of course incapable of so receiving him, and others were not willing to do so, preferring the worship of

Baal, and other heathen idols, to the worship of the only living and true God. 'The fact is,' says Delitzsch, 'there is no period in the history of Israel before the captivity, in which more or less idolatry was not united with the worship of Jehovah, except it be in the time of David and the first years of Solomon, during which the influence of Samuel continued to be felt. And when, by the captivity, idol worship was completely eradicated from the people, as far at least as regards that part of which returned, it is well known that a hypocritical letter worship got the mastery over them, which was very little better.' But under the New Economy, no such state of things is at all possible. No one can really become a member of the New Covenant, except by faith and obedience (Mark xvi. 16; Acts ii. 38, etc.), and no one can continue to be a member of it except on the same conditions, (ch. vi. 4-6 x. 26-31; 2 Pet. i. 1-11) 'Know ye therefore,' says Paul, 'that they who are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham, and heirs according to the promise'. (Gal. iii:29) To all such, God is now a God in even a higher sense than he was to the ancient patriarchs, for to none of them was the Holy Spirit given, as it is now given to all the subjects of the New Covenant, because that Jesus was not then glorified. (John vii. 37-39) But now we are not only brought nearer to God by the offering of Christ but we are also filled with his Spirit, through which we are enabled to cry 'Abba Father'. (Gal. iv. 6) Thus it is that Jehovah is now our God, and that we are his people 'in truth and in righteousness' (Zech. vii. 8)." (Milligan, 234)

(4) All know the Lord. (Heb. 8:11) This has reference to those who are in covenant relationship, since it speaks of fellow-citizens (neighbor) and brother. All in the New Covenant do know the Lord. One of the differences between the Old and the New is that you were born (with the exception of a few Gentile proselytes) into the Old and then taught to know the Lord as you grew up, but in the New you have to be taught before you can be born again and enter into covenant relationship. (Gen. 17:9-14; Ex. 12:26-28; John 3:1-5; 6:44-45; 2 Thess. 2:14; Matt. 28:19; Mk. 16:14-15; Gal. 3:26-27) Additional teaching is needed (Matt. 29:20; 2 Pet. 3:18), but all know God. They had to know God for His law is written on their hearts. (8:10)

(5) Be merciful and not remember their iniquities. (Heb. 8:12) Because the sacrifices of the Old Covenant were insufficient, there was a remembrance made of sins every year. (Heb. 10:1-4) However, because Christ's blood is sufficient to forgive, it was once-for-all offered. Our sins are forgiven, blotted out, to be remembered against us no more. (Heb. 10:10, 12, 19; 1 John 1:7)

IV. THE NEW HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED

(1) Jews have argued that it is the same covenant, but written in a new place, i.e. the heart. However, Jeremiah said it would not be like the old, and he described three of the ways in which it differed from the Old. We have already discussed these.

(2) Some, in an effort to preserve the Sabbath today, have said the

new covenant was made through Nehemiah. However, Nehemiah simply called them back to the law of Moses, to the Old Covenant. (Neh. 8:1-3, 7, 8, 14, 18; 9:29)

(3) New became operative after Christ's death, ascension, offering for sin, and the taking of His place on the throne. (Heb. 1:3, 13; 9:15-17)

(4) Premillennialism is wrong in saying that the New Covenant has not yet been established. (R. H. Boll, 102)

V. HAVE YOU ACCEPTED CHRIST, FORGIVENESS, AND THE NEW COVENANT?

(1) When God promised a New Covenant He placed the stamp of age, so to speak, on the Old. It was now about to vanish. (Heb. 8:13) Not only had the New been established, but with the coming destruction of Jerusalem even the outward vestiges of the Old and its temple service would vanish. We cannot return to that altar and still partake of Christ's sacrifice. (Heb. 13:10)

(2) God's New Covenant is not without law, for we are told He has laws which are written on our hearts. (8:10) We must obey His gospel in coming into Christ, and live the New life to continue as faithful members of the Covenant. (Acts 2:38; 2 Thess. 1:8; Rom. 6:2-5, 17-18; 1 Cor. 9:21; Gal. 3:26-29)

(3) The superiority of the New to the Old should encourage us to continue faithful in the everlasting covenant.

QUESTIONS

1. Is the Jewish objection to the New Covenant an objection to the fulfilment of the prophecy of Jerusalem? (Jer. 31:31-34)

2. Is it possible for anyone to keep the Old Covenant today?

3. What was the first covenant? Did it contain the ten commands as well as the Levitical temple system? (Jer. 31:31-32; 1 Kings 8:9, 21; Heb. 9:1-4)

4. Who is the mediator of the second covenant? (8:6; 9:15; 12:24) Whose blood sanctifies it? (13:20)

5. Of what covenant were the apostles ministers? (2 Cor. 3:5-6)

6. With whom was the Covenant made? (Jer. 31:31) Was it made with all of literal Israel? (Rom. 9:6) With any of literal Israel? (Acts 2:36) With Gentiles? (Gal. 3:27-29)

7. Does God have any laws today? (Heb. 8:10; Matt. 28:20; 1 Cor. 9:21) Where are they written? What does this signify? Does this mean that His laws are not recorded in the written word?

8. What did it mean that God would be their God?

9. What did it mean when it said that all would know the Lord?

10. What did the forgiveness of sins (Heb. 8:12) signify with reference to the New Covenant and its sacrifice?

11. How do we know that the New Covenant was not made with Nehemiah? (Neh. 8:1-18)

12. When did the New become operative? (Heb. 1:3, 13; 9:15-17)

The Better Covenant

(HEBREWS 8:6-9)

It is not disrespectful to the word of God to say that the new covenant is better than the old covenant. The word of God itself says so. (Heb. 7:22; 8:6-7) When people understand how much better the new is than the old they will not want to go back to the old. The old was an unbearable yoke. (Acts 15:10)

I. CHRIST HAS OBTAINED A MORE EXCELLENT MINISTRY

- (1) It "is after the order of Melchisedec." (Heb. 7:6-11)
- (2) It was instituted by an oath. (7:20)
- (3) Its perfection. (Heb. 7:19)
- (4) Its powerful operation. (Heb. 7:16)
- (5) Because of the place where it was exercised. (8:1)
- (6) Its everlasting continuance. (Heb. 7:3, 25)
- (7) By the kind of sacrifice; Himself. (Heb. 7:27)
- (8) By the dignity of his person, the Son of God. (7:28) (This section taken from William Gouge, II, 171)

II. CHRIST THE MEDIATOR

- (1) Christ, not Moses, our mediator. (1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 8:6)
- (2) He reconciles us to God. (Eph. 2:13; Col. 1:19, 21)
- (3) He is God manifested in the flesh. (1 Tim. 3:16)
- (4) Christ ever continues in this work. (Heb. 7:25)
- (5) All must be done in His name. (Matt. 28:18-20; Col. 3:17) No one can keep the Sabbath by His authority in the New Covenant for He did not bind it in the New. (Col. 2:14-17)

III. THE NEW COVENANT IS BETTER THAN THE OLD COVENANT

- (1) We have a better hope. (Heb. 7:19) This better hope brought in not by the old but after the disannulling of the commandments. (Heb. 7:18-19)
- (2) We have better promises. (Heb. 8:6)
- (3) Better things without which, and without us, those under the Old Testament could not be made perfect. (Heb. 11:40)
- (4) Better sacrifices. (Heb. 9:23)
- (5) Better covenant. (Heb. 8:6)
- (6) There is no lack in this covenant. (Heb. 7:19)
- (7) Better mediator. Christ the Son superior to Moses the servant. (Heb. 1:1; 3:3-7; John 1:17)
- (8) It goes deeper into the motive than did the decalogue. (Matt. 5:21)
- (9) The decalogue, *in itself*, made no provisions for forgiveness. (Rom. 5:6-11) Provision was elsewhere made. (Heb. 10:1-4; 9:15) Christ does.
- (10) Superior to the decalogue because it is more positive.
- (11) New standard and example of love. (John 13:34; 15:9; 15:12; Rom. 5:18, 1 Cor. 13)
- (12) Christians to go the second mile. (Matt. 5:38-48) Mercy emphasized.

IV. THE FIRST COVENANT

What was the first covenant? When was it made? In these passages the first covenant refers to the old covenant which God made with Israel when He brought them out of Egypt. (Heb. 8:7-9) The second covenant refers to the better covenant (8:6-7) which was promised by God through Jeremiah. (8:8)

(1) When and with whom the old covenant was made?

(a) Who? Israel. (Heb. 8:8-9; Deut. 5:1-6)

(b) When. (Heb. 8:9; 1 Kings 8:9, 21)

(2) It was the Ten Commandment Covenant.

(a) 1 Kings 8:9, 21; Jer. 31:31; Heb. 8:9; Exod. 20:1-2; Deut. 5:2, 3, 15, 22; II Cor. 3:6; Ex. 34:1, 28-30.

(b) The ten commandments are called the words of the covenant. (Exod. 34:27-29); Deut. 4:13; 9:9-11; 15)

(c) The ten commandments were the basis, although there were other things included in the old covenant system. Moses was told to make all things according to the pattern. This had reference to the tabernacle. (Heb. 8:5) It had various ordinances of divine service, which were to continue until the time of reformation. (Heb. 9:1-10) This is another way of saying that it was to continue until the old covenant was taken out of the way and the new covenant established. Christ came to take it out of the way. (Heb. 10:9-10; Col. 2:14) The new went into force after, not before, Christ's death. (Heb. 9:15-17)

(d) This, then, was the covenant which was to be replaced by the new covenant. No one today ought to go back to the old covenant delivered by Moses and try to bind it on Christians today. The Sabbath, for example. It is true that we have moral requirements as did the old covenant. But we know that these things are required of us because God has placed them in the new covenant. We go to Jesus Christ for our instruction. (Heb. 1:1-2; 2:1-4)

QUESTIONS

1. What shows that we are not disrespectful to the Old Testament when we say the New Testament is better?

2. In what ways is Christ's ministry more excellent?

3. What are some of the things which are true concerning Christ our mediator?

4. Can anyone keep the Sabbath by the authority of Christ?

5. In what ways is the New better than the Old?

6. What was the first covenant? With whom was it made?

7. How do we know it was the ten commandment covenant?

8. Did it also include the Levitical system? (Heb. 8:5; 9:1-10)

9. How long did it continue?

10. Under what covenant are we today?

The Two Covenants: Points of Similarity

(HEBREWS 8:6-13)

The statements in these verses do not mean that there are no points of similarity between the two covenants. There are, although the two covenants are different *covenants*. The fault (Heb. 8:7) with the old covenant was not that it did not contain good laws, but that it could not justify the sinner. Sinners violated the law, and it became to them the ministration of death. (2 Cor. 3:6-7) It did not justify them. (Heb. 9:9, 13; 10:1-4) The new covenant can justify the sinner because of the blood of Christ. (Heb. 9:14; 10:10)

I. THE DECALOGUE

(1) We must worship God, as surely as they had to worship God. (Exod. 20:1-3; Matt. 4:10; John 4:20-24; Rev. 22:8-9) However, we have a fuller revelation of God (John 14:8-9), and worship according to the New Covenant. (John 4:20-24; Heb. 9:9-10, 24; 13:10-15)

(2) Idolatry is as wrong for us as for them. (Exod. 20:4; Acts 17:29; 1 Cor. 8:4-6; 10:7, 14; 1 John 5:21) Idolatry is broadened to include covetousness. (Col. 3:5)

(3) Swearing. Exod. 20:7; Deut. 6:13; Lev. 19:12; Matt. 5:33 contrasted with Matt. 5:34-37; Jas. 5:12. Since Jesus said that the Old Testament said that they were not to swear falsely, but perform unto the Lord their oath (Matt. 5:33), there are some who think that swearing which is warned against is swearing about things which we say we shall do in the future (over which we have no control), and not to take a judicial oath to tell the truth about something which has happened in the past. The courts of our land permit one to affirm instead of taking an oath. Paul called God to witness. (Rom. 1:9; Gal. 1:20; 2 Cor. 11:31; **1:28**; Phil. 1:8; 1 Thess. 5:27) These were in substance judicial oaths.

(4) Sabbath. (Exod. 20:8-11) Notice that it was a sign between God and Israel (Deut. 5:15); that it did not command public worship, and that it presupposed a condition wherein Israel had a land and cities wherein they could require the strangers within their gates to rest on the Sabbath. (Exod. 20:10) We are under Christ, not Moses (Heb. 1:1-2; 2:2-4), and Christ has not commanded us to keep the Sabbath. It has been abolished. (Col. 2:14-17) We do not keep a day as they kept the Sabbath, but we do meet on the first day of the week to observe the Lord's Supper, etc. (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:20; 16:1-2)

(5) Obedience to parents. (Exod. 20:12; Eph. 6:1-3) But the parents

nurture the children by the word of Christ and not by the old law. Parents also told not to provoke children to wrath. (Eph. 6:4)

(6) Murder. (Exod. 20:13) Hate is murder. (1 John 3:15; Matt. 5:21)

(7) Adultery. (Exod. 20:14) To look on a woman to lust after her is adultery. (Matt. 5:27, 23; 1 Cor. 6:9-11, 13-20)

(8) Stealing. (Exod. 20:15) Not only are we not to steal, but are to work. (Eph. 4:28)

(9) Do not lie. (Exod. 20:16) Do not lie (Rev. 20:15), but speak truth. (Eph. 4:25)

(10) Covetousness. (Exod. 20:17; Col. 3:5) Told to be unselfish. We meet requirements (which Christ has bound on us) not because of what Moses required, or did not require, but because Christ has required it. Our commandments sometimes go beyond similar commandments in the decalogue. Furthermore, the decalogue did not require faith in Jesus Christ, our risen Lord. The Old Testament saints looked forward to the coming of the Christ, but now Christ has already come, and no one can be saved who believes that Christ has not yet come, but someday will come. For to have such a faith would be to deny that the one, Jesus, who has already come is the Christ. There is nothing in the decalogue about how to become a Christian (faith in the risen *Christ*, repentance, confession of Christ, and baptism into Christ are not mentioned in the decalogue or elsewhere in the Old Covenant). Furthermore, the decalogue itself did not make provisions for the forgiveness of sins. Provisions were made elsewhere in the decalogue for the purifying of the flesh (Heb. 9:9, 12-13); but there was a remembrance of sins made again every year. (Heb. 10:1-4) Christ's death benefits those who were faithful under the Old Testament. (Heb. 9:15)

QUESTIONS

1. How is it that the two covenants can be different covenants and yet have points of similarity?

2. Do we obey these things because they are in the Old or because they are in the New?

3. What are the points of similarity between the decalogue, or ten commandments, and the requirements of the New?

4. How are they different? Do we keep the Sabbath? Do we have a special land? Are they revealed on a higher level in the New? If so, how?

5. Did the ten commandments tell one how to become and to remain a new creature in Christ? Did they make provisions for forgiveness of sins?

6. Are there any laws in the New? (Heb. 8:10; 1 Cor. 9:21; 14:37)

7. In what way did Christ place the two great commandments on a higher level?

8. Did both covenants have mediators? What are the differences?

9. Did both have a priesthood? How do they differ?

10. Were both dedicated with blood? How are the two contrasted?

The Shadow of Heavenly Things

(HEBREWS 9:1-14)

These ordinances of divine service are those of the first covenant: (a) He says that the first had these ordinances, and the first refers to the old, or Mosaic covenant. (8:7, 8, 9, 13) (b) The ark of the covenant (9:4) was the ark which contained the covenant — the ten commandments. (I Kings 8:9, 21; Deut. 10:1-5) (c) The tables of the Covenant (9:4) were the tables of stone. (Deut. 4:14; 9:11) This makes it clear that although the decalogue is sometimes called the covenant, for it was the basis of the covenant, the covenant included other things; such as the ordinances of divine service. (Heb. 9:1)

These ordinances of divine service were types of realities which we have under the New Testament. On Heb. 8:5 Milligan commented: "Or more literally and correctly: *Who serve the delineation and shadow of heavenly things*. The Word rendered delineation . . . means (1) a private sign or secret token, and (2) a delineation or copy of anything. Here, it denotes that the Jewish tabernacle, with all that pertained to it, was but a faint symbolical representation of the heavenly Sanctuary and the true Tabernacle. The word shadow ... is added with view of intensifying the thought; thus indicating that the given representation was wholly destitute of the substance which is inherent in the heavenly realities." (222-223)

As we study the ordinances of divine service of the first covenant let us discern, insofar as we are able, what they foreshadowed under the new covenant.

I. THE FIRST ROOM OF THE TABERNACLE, OR THE HOLY PLACE (9:2)

(1) The articles of furniture of the holy place, which are mentioned by the writer are:

(a) Candlestick. (Exod. 25:31-40) "On the top of the main stem and each branch there was a lamp in which pure olive oil was kept constantly burning (Exod. 27:20, 21; Lev. 24:1-4)." (Milligan, 243) Milligan thinks that this typified the "Church of Christ, not as a dwelling place like the Tabernacle, but as God's appointed means for perpetuating and dispensing the light of the Gospel. (Zech. iv. 1-14; Rev. i. 20) And hence every . . . congregation should be a light-supporter and a light-dispenser. (I Tim. hi: 15) But observe, the candlestick served only to

support and dispense the light. It was the oil, not the candlestick, that produced it and throughout the Bible, oil is used as the appropriate symbol of the Holy Spirit. See, for example, Isa. lxi. 1; Acts x. 38; Heb. 1:9; I John ii. 20, 27. The seven lamps seem to be symbolical of the perfect light of the Gospel". (Milligan, 243) The Spirit does it through His word and those who teach it.

(b) Table and shewbread. (Heb. 9:2; Lev. 24:5-9) Milligan suggests that "These cakes were eaten by the priests, and were symbolical of the spiritual food of Christians, all of whom are made priests to God through Christ. (I Pet. ii. 5, 9; Rev. i. 6; v. 10) The frankincense seems to have been emblematical of praise and thanksgiving (Rev. v. 8)." (Milligan, 244)

(2) Priests. (9:6) "These services consisted in dressing the lamps and offering the incense every morning and evening; and the change of the presence-bread on every sabbath." (Milligan, 248)

II. THE SECOND ROOM OR MOST HOLY PLACE (9:3)

(1) The articles of furniture of the holy of holies, which are mentioned by the writer, are:

(a) Gold censer. Although commentators are divided as to whether the Greek word here refers to the censer, or the golden altar (Lev. 30:27, 8) Milligan thinks that the weight of evidence is somewhat on the side of censer — which the high priest used to burn incense on once a year in the Holy of holies. (Lev. 16:12) Cameron thinks that: "This incense represented the intercession of Christ which is efficacious on account of the sacrifice which he offered." (I, 547)

(b) Ark of the covenant which contained the tables of the covenant. (9:14; Deut. 10:15) This shows that these ordinances of divine service (9:1) were part of the Old Covenant system. (9:4; 8:6-13) Because of 2 Chron. 5:10 some think that the golden pot of manna and Aaron's rod that budded were by the side of the ark. (See also Exodus 16:33, 34; Num. 17:10)

(c) Cherubim of glory which shadowed the mercy seat. (9:5) It will be noticed that the mercy seat was between the people and the **law**, which was in the ark.

(2) High priest. (9:7) This signified 9:8, on which Milligan comments, in part, as follows: "The Holy Spirit is here acknowledged to be the designer, as well as the interpreter of the Old Economy. It not only moved the ancient prophets to speak to the people the words and thoughts of God (see references), but it also breathed into the inanimate types of the Old Covenant a language which shows that they are all of God, and are designed to shadow forth and illustrate the sublime mysteries of redemption. And not only so — not only were these types made shadows of good things to come, but they were moreover so framed as to indicate also in various ways the comparative darkness of the Jewish age. In fact, for instance, that none but the high priest was allowed to go behind the Vail, and that even he was allowed to do this but once a

year, and then not without blood which he was required to offer for his own sins and for the sins of the people — all this served to demonstrate that the way into Heaven, the antitype of the Most holy place of the Tabernacle (vv. 12, 24) was still a mystery, a matter that was not fully understood by any one but God himself while the Tabernacle and temple worship was continued. That God did, in anticipation of the shedding of Christ's blood, justify and save believers, under both patriarchal and the Jewish age, is of course conceded. See Ex. iii. 6; xi. 13-16, etc." (Milligan, 249) Christ's death was also prophesied. (Isa. 53)

III. WE ARE NO LONGER UNDER THE WORSHIP OF THE OLD TESTAMENT TABERNACLE

(1) It could not make men perfect. It was a figure. (9:9) "The idea of the Apostle seems to be this: That the Jewish Tabernacle with all its rites was made a symbol of the good things of the kingdom of heaven; and that as the law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ (Gal. iii. 24), even so the symbolic worship of the tabernacle was designed to continue until the beginning of the new dispensation under the reign of Christ. But no longer; for since the coming of Christ, we are no longer under the schoolmaster. (Gal. iii. 25)" (Milligan, 250)

(2) Imposed until the time of reformation. (9:10) The carnal ordinances of the Old Testament are not bound on us today, as the book of Hebrews shows, so we are in the time of reformation. The shadows of the Old Testament system have given way to the substance of the New (Heb. 10:1-19), so we are in the time of reformation. No one has the right to go to the Old Testament and bring over its ceremonies and try to bind them on Christians. (Note *until* in 9:10) It may be observed here that these Old Testament things will never be restored. And yet, the way some interpret prophecy the time will come when the entire Levitical system will be restored. (See James D. Bales, *New Testament Interpretations of the Old Testament Prophecies of the Kingdom*, Chapter V)

(3) We can be cleansed through Christ's blood. (9:11-14) Have you come the way of the cross? (Rom. 6:3-5)

QUESTIONS

1. What were some of the ordinances of divine service in the Old Covenant?

2. Did they point to something beyond themselves?

3. What was in the holy place? Do we have to know what each item typified in order to know that the Old was a type?

4. What do you think the items in the holy place typified?

5. What was in the most holy place? What did it and the things in it typify?

6. Was the temple system designed to be permanent? (9:9)

7. How long was it .to last? (9:10) Should we bind it today? (13:10)

8. How are we cleansed?

Christ's Death and the New Covenant

(HEBREWS 9:11-23)

The superiority of Christ's covenant over the old is proved by several things. (1) The old was but a figure, while Christ is the high priest of those good things to which the old pointed. (9:8-10, 11) (2) His blood is vastly superior to that of animal blood. (9:12-14, 23) (3) His blood is sufficient. (9:18-26) (4) His blood enables us to be cleansed and serve God. (9:14) (5) His blood made operative the new covenant. (9:15-17) (6) His blood makes possible for us to receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. It benefits those who died faithful under the old as well as us today. (9:15; Rom. 3:24-26) (7) Our mediator is vastly superior to Moses through whom the old was given. (9:15; 8:1-2)

I. THE COVENANT OR TESTAMENT

(1) A covenant was an agreement which involved obligations on the part of those entering it. The word is used several times in the New Testament. (Matt. 26:28; Mk. 14:24; Lk. 22:20; Gal. 3:4; 2 Cor. 3; Rom. 9:11; Lk. 1:72; Acts 3:25; 7:8; Rev. 11:19; Heb. 9:15-17)

(2) In Hebrews the covenant is used in the sense of a will or testament made by a testator. (9:15-17; 10:9-10) Wilfrid J. Moulton said that in New Testament "times the general principles of Roman law were well established and were known throughout the Empire ... all St. Paul's readers, as well as the readers of the Epistle to the Hebrews, whether these were Palestinian or Italian, knew the general customs with regard to will-making — customs which have lasted to our own day." (In James Hastings, Editor, Dictionary of the Apostolic Church, II, 681)

Geerhardus Vos has an extended discussion of the word "covenant" and argues that the word does not mean testament everywhere, but that "in 9:16, 17 it is plainly given the meaning of *testament* referring to the death of the person who has made it." (28)

(3) No one has the right to change the covenant. (Gal. 3:15)

II. THE COVENANT NOT OPERATIVE BEFORE CHRIST'S DEATH

The church is the church of the New Covenant. The time of the

establishment of the church is of real importance for it involves the questions of how we enter the church, what is involved in the new life in Christ, and how we are to approach God in worship. Some think the church was established in the days of Abraham, and therefore includes infant membership. (Gen. 17) There are others who think it was established by John the Baptist, or by Jesus in His personal ministry. They use the thief on the cross as proof that one does not have to be baptized into Christ. (Lk. 23:33-43)

(1) Although every possible point which is true of a will made by man is not true about Christ's testament — for example, He was raised from the dead — the following is true. When Christ forgave people during His personal ministry, these were not the conditions of forgiveness under the New. He did teach that when the New came that men would have to be born again (John 3:1-5), but during His personal ministry He forgave on different conditions, such as: (a) When Jesus saw *their* faith, that of the man as well as of those who brought him, He forgave the man. (Mk. 2:3-11) (b) The woman who loved much. (Lk. 7:47) (c) The rich young ruler. (Matt. 19:16-21) As far as we know, he did not meet the conditions. Why do people, when trying to get away from baptism, fly to the case of the thief on the cross instead of to the rich young ruler as a model case of terms of forgiveness under the New Covenant? Of course, all these conditions could not have availed, just as faithfulness under the law could not have availed, were it not for the death of Jesus; which was still future during the personal ministry. A man may dispose of his goods during his life on various conditions, but once he dies and his will is in force, his goods are disposed of according to the will. If he gave you something during his lifetime, it does not mean that you will share in the will. You cannot say you will be saved like the thief on the cross, for this was not a case of forgiveness under the terms of Christ's testament for it was not then in force.

(4) There are many other lines of argument which show that the church was not established during the personal ministry, although it was a time of intense preparation, but that Christ's reign was first proclaimed to men on the first Pentecost after Christ's resurrection. These were briefly presented in the lesson on the Old Testament and the New Testament. For a discussion of the passages used by those who believe the church was established in the personal ministry of Jesus, see the Appendix in James D. Bales, *The Kingdom: Prophesied and Established*.

III. HAVE YOU ACCEPTED CHRIST, HIS SACRIFICE, AND HIS COVENANT?

(1) One lawyer said: "I have yet to see the reading of a will, however lengthy, where those affected by it did not hang on every word." How much more so should we be concerned that we enter into covenant relationship with Christ, and are heirs of life eternal under the terms set forth in His will or testament?

(2) No man has the right to change the terms of His will. (Gal. 3:15) If Christ wants to make exceptions on Judgment Day, that will be His business. We plead with people to accept Him. If any mercy is extended above and beyond what He has revealed in His will, that is the prerogative of the Judge and not our right. We cannot promise what He did not promise. We urge all to accept Him and His Covenant, and on His terms, for the promises are predicated on our acceptance of Christ. What right have you to promise yourself what He did not promise?

(3) We must be sons of God through the new birth (John 3:1-5), we must be sons in Christ, in order to be heirs. (Gal. 3:26-29) We cannot *merit* eternal life but we must do something in order to become children of God, and remain faithful children, in order that we may *inherit* life eternal.

(4) Are you a son and an heir? Where will you be, on whose side, when the will is read on the day of judgment? You make that decision in this life, and today is the day of salvation. There is no promise of tomorrow.

QUESTIONS

1. What are seven things which show the superiority of Christ's covenant to the old?
2. What is the meaning of covenant or testament as used in Heb. 9:15-17?
3. Do we have the right to change the covenant? (Gal. 3:15)
4. What are some of the different times when people think the church was established?
5. What relationship does the time of the establishment of the church have with relationship to its nature?
6. What were the cases during the personal ministry where Christ forgave sins?
7. Were these the terms of the forgiveness of sins under the New Covenant?
8. How do we know that the New Covenant was not in force during the personal ministry? (Heb. 9:15-17)
9. Could the New Covenant church have been in operation before the New Covenant was in operation?
10. Does Hebrews 9:15-17 say that Christ administered the New Covenant during His life on earth, and that after His ascension the Holy Spirit administered the New Covenant?
11. What must we do to become sons of God, and remain faithful sons, that we may inherit eternal life?

Two Advents and Two Appointments

(HEBREWS 9:24-28)

Two appointments for man, and the purpose of the two advents of Christ, are set forth briefly in these verses. Anything which is out of harmony with any of these things in unscriptural.

I. THE FIRST ADVENT

(1) Christ came to die for sins of world. (Heb. 9:26; John 1:29; Matt. 1:21) Heb. 9:27 shows: (a) Its sufficiency. It does not need to be repeated, as did the old sacrifices. (Heb. 10:1-18; 9:13-15, 25-27) (b) Time. End of the world. ". . . at that period of history in which all that has happened since the foundation of the world . . . finds its interpretation and adjustment." (*Expositor's Greek Testament*, IV: 340). The sacrifice of Christ ended one age (Col. 2:14-17; Eph. 2:13-16), and made possible the beginning of another. (Heb. 9:15-17) The end of the world must refer to the end of the Jewish age, since we know from other scriptures that that was the time that He was manifested (Gal. 4:4), and that His death make possible its end or abolition, (c) Its purpose: abolition of sin. (9:26) (d) Some think that because the word is also translated ages; that it means the end of the patriarchal and Jewish ages. But had not the Gentile world gone into apostasy? (Rom. 1:18-32)

(2) The purpose of His first advent shows us also, the nature of the kingdom which He came to establish, (a) Came to establish a kingdom. (Matt. 3:2; 4:17, 23; 9:35; 10:7; 16:18-19; Mk. 9:1) (b) Came to die. (Heb. 9:26) These purposes must have been in harmony with one another. For He could not have come to do *two things which contradicted each other*. It therefore follows that the type of kingdom which He came to establish was a kingdom which took into consideration the fact that He would die before He became king. He must first suffer and then enter into His glory. (Lk. 24:25-26) Entering into his glory includes entering into His kingdom. (Compare Matt. 20:21 "in thy kingdom", with Mk. 10:37, "in thy glory".) He did not sit down at God's right hand to rule until after He had made purification for our

sins. (Heb. 1:3, 13) The kingdom of God's dear Son (Col. 1:13), of which Christians are subjects, is the kingdom into which He entered after the cross. It is the kingdom in which the crown (the throne, or rule) came after the cross (the suffering for the sins of the world). He was received up into glory. (1 Tim. 3:16)

Jesus Christ could not have come to establish a kingdom in which He was received by the Jews and enthroned without being rejected and crucified. If He had come to do this, to establish this type of kingdom, He could not have come to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. Some teach that He came to establish a kingdom on earth over Israel, and that this was the type of kingdom preached at hand by John. (Matt. 3:2) But when the Jews rejected Him, Jesus changed the nature of His message and after His death established the church instead. (R. H. Boll, 59-77) Boll believed that the rejection and the church age were anticipated. (70) Yet he thinks that the kingdom John announced as at hand was one which has not yet been established, (pp. 59-66) But Christ could not have come in His first advent to establish a national kingdom of earth over Israel (Heb. 9:26), and therefore we know that John did not announce any such kingdom as at hand. But since He came to die for man, and to establish a kingdom, it must be that these two purposes harmonize. The nature of the kingdom announced by John must have been one which took into consideration His death. The nature of the kingdom which was actually established, and of which we are members, does take into consideration the fact that the cross had to come before the crown. The kingdom which some think He came to establish does not harmonize with this. Therefore, He did not come to establish that type of kingdom, but the kingdom which was actually established. (Col. 1:13; James D. Bales, *The New Testament*, 1-10. See also *Prophecy and Premillennialism*).

II. THE SECOND ADVENT

(1) The second advent brings salvation to the saints. (Heb, 9:28) We are saved from past sins when we are baptized into Christ (Mk. 16:15-16), but we must be faithful unto death in order to receive eternal salvation. (Heb. 3:6, 15; I Pet. 1:5; Phil. 3:20-21; 2 Tim. 4:8; Rev. 2:10; Jas. 1:12)

III. TWO UNAVOIDABLE APPOINTMENTS

There are some appointments we would like to make, but cannot. There are some we do not want to make, but must make. There are some we may forget or cancel, but there are two which have been made for us and which we cannot cancel.

(1) It is appointed unto man once to die. Because of sin, death entered into the world. Although there were two exceptions (Heb. 11:5; 2 Kings 2:1), and the living when Christ comes will be translated (I Cor. 15:51-58), the general rule is that man dies. Regardless of how long we live, life is brief, death is certain, and life is uncertain. As

death finds us, so shall the judgment. Do you live as if you think that you will never die, as if you have a lease on life, as if you have a promise of tomorrow, and that which happens to others cannot happen to you? Life ought to be lived in the realization that this is an appointment which we shall keep whether we want to or not. Let us face it with Christ and hope. (2 Tim. 2:10)

(2) It is appointed that man shall be judged by Christ and His word. (Acts 17:30-31; John 12:48) Therefore, men ought to turn to the Lord and have the confidence that Paul had. (2 Tim. 1:12) Are you ready for these appointments? (Acts 2:36-42; Rom. 6:2-5, 17-18; Gal. 3:26-29)

QUESTIONS

1. Why did Christ come to earth?
2. What shows the sufficiency of His sacrifice?
3. To what did the end of the world refer in Heb. 9:26?
4. Did Christ's coming also have to do with the kingdom?
5. Do these two purposes harmonize with one another? How?
6. What bearing do these two purposes have on the interpretation of prophecy and on premillennialism?
7. What does the second advent bring? To whom?
8. What are two appointments which all men must keep? Will there be any who do not die? (1 Cor. 15:51-58) Were there any exceptions to the appointment with death in the Old Testament? (Heb. 11:5; 2 Kings 2:1)
9. By whom and by what shall we be judged?
10. How can we be ready for these two appointments?

Shadow and Substance

(HEBREWS 10:1)

The specific point of discussion in Heb. 10:1-4 is that the system of sacrifices under the old was but the shadow while Christ's sacrifice is the substance, or reality, which takes away sin. However, we know that the entire Old Testament is filled with types (shadows) which pointed to the antitype (substance) under the New. A type was an Old Testament individual, institution, or event which God designed to bear some point of resemblance to, and to point to, something in connection with the New Covenant and Christ. The word is broader than this in some cases, but this is what is meant by the study of types. (See Mickelsen, 239) The Old Testament was the shadow which pointed to the substance or reality. (John 1:17; Heb. 10:1-20; Col. 2:14-17)

I. THE RELATIONSHIP OF TYPES TO THE INTERPRETATION OF PROPHECY

Although we have discussed this earlier in the book, we shall briefly review it here.

(1) Relationship to prophecy, (a) Types were fact-prophecies in contrast with the word-prophecies, (b) Type-languages prophecy. Sometimes one name, because of certain resemblances, may be used to identify someone or something else. Israel spoken of as Sodom and Gomorrah. (Isa. 1:6, 9-11) We do not cite this as a case of type and antitype. However, the same thing is true in some prophecies, i.e. the language which describes the type is used to refer to the antitype.

(2) How determine? (a) When such an interpretation is necessary to harmonize the O. T. with itself, (b) When New Testament thus interprets it. (c) When it is necessary to interpret it in this manner so as to harmonize with the New Testament.

II. DIFFERENT CLASSES OF TYPES

- (1) Persons. Adam and Christ. (Rom. 5:14, 19; I Cor. 15:45-47)
- (2) Institutions. (Heb. 9:24-26; 10:1-4)
- (3) Offices: Prophets, priests, kings. (Terry, 250)
- (4) Events. (I Cor. 10:1-13; Matt. 2:15; Hosea 11:1)
- (5) Actions. (John 3:14-16; Matt. 12:39; I Cor. 15:1-5)

III. INTERPRETING TYPES

- (1) We can know that something is a type only if identified in the

New Testament, or such an identification is necessary to harmonize with the Old Testament and with the New Testament.

(2) They are not identical. Christ not a sinner because David, a type of Christ, was a sinner. There are points of resemblance.

(3) Type was temporary. Shadow to give way to substance, and be fulfilled in the substance.

(4) The antitype is greater than the type. (Heb. 10:1-4)

IV. OLD TESTAMENT TYPES FULFILLED

We shall give some examples of where words are used in the New Testament which are identical in spelling with those in the Old, but have reference to God's new covenant people and not to the old covenant people. These terms are spiritualized in that they refer to the antitype in which they are fulfilled. For example, we today are not literal Israel, but we are spiritual Israel.

(1) Abraham's seed. (Rom. 9:6-11:23; 4:9-25; Matt. 3:2-9; Gal. 3:8-29)

(2) Heirs of the promise to Abraham. (Gal. 3:26-29)

(3) True Jew. (Rom. 9:6-7; 2:28-29; Col. 2:11-14; Phil. 3:2-7)

(4) Circumcision. (Matt. 3:2-9; John 3:1-5; Phil. 3:2-7; Rom. 2:29; Col. 2:11-17)

(5) True Israel. (Rom. 9:6-7; Gal. 5:6; 6:14-16) Old Israel cut off because of unbelief. (Rom. 9:6-7; 11:20-23) Commonwealth of Israel. (Eph. 2:11-19)

(6) Covenant not made with physical Israel as such. (Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:5-13; 12:18-28; 13:10-15, 20)

(6) Israel as God's child a type of Christ. (Hosea 11:1; Matt. 2:15)

(7) Elijah a type of John the Baptist. (Malachi 4:5-6; John 1:19-25; Matt. 11:13-17; 10:13; Lk. 1:17; compare 2 Kings 1:8; Matt. 3:4)

(8) David the king a type of Christ. (Ezek. 37:21-28; Joseph Klausner, *The Messianic Idea in Israel*, N.Y.: The Macmillan Co., 1955, p. 125)

(9) David's throne a type of Christ's throne. (Acts 2:30-36)

(10) Jerusalem. The Old to cease to have its significance. (Matt. 23:37; 24:2; John 4:20-24; Heb. 12:22) We leave the old city. (Heb. 13:10-14; Gal. 4:21-31)

(11) Zion, the place of the rule of the king. (Psa. 2:1-6; 110:1-4; Acts 2:34-36; 4:25-28; Heb. 12:22, 24; 13:10-14)

(12) Spiritual kingdom. (John 18:36; 3:1-5; Matt. 5:1-12; 8:11; 21:43; Eph. 2:12; Col. 1:13; Rom. 14:17)

(13) Temple. (John 4:20-24; Matt. 24:1-2; Heb. 13:10-15) *First*, our body. (I Cor. 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16) *Second*, the church as temple. (Eph. 2:19-21; I Pet. 2:5, 9)

(14) High Priest and his work. (Heb. 8:1-4; 5:1-10; 7:1-28; 2:17-18; 3:1; 4:14-16)

(15) Sacrifice for sins. (John 1:29; Heb. 10:1-21; 1:3, 13)

(16) We are priests. (I Pet. 2:5, 9)

(17) Our sacrifices. (Rom. 6:12-13; 12:1-2; Phil. 4:18; Heb. 13:15-16; I Pet. 2:4, 5, 9)

(18) Christ our passover. (I Cor. 5:7)

V. THE LITERAL INTERPRETATION OF SOME PROPHECIES TEACHES THE RESTORATION OF THE SHADOWS

- (1) David dethroned Christ. (Ezek. 37:24-26)
- (2) Old Testament temple and sacrifices. (Isa. 60:3, 7, 13, 21-27; 66:22-23; Malachi 3:1-4; Jer. 33:15-18, 21, 22; Ezek. 43:1, 21-27; 44:27; 45:17; 44:24) They could not even be restored as a memorial, for they were shadows. We have the memorial of Christ's sacrifice. (I Cor. 11:24) Old cannot be restored. (Heb. 10:1-4; 13:10, 20)
- (3) Christ would cease to be our high priest. (Heb. 7:11-28; 8:1-4)
- (4) New Covenant be abolished. (Rom. 7:1-7; Heb. 10:8-9)
- (5) Israel's ancient enemies be resurrected and spoiled by Israel. (Isa. 11:10-14)
- (6) Israel will war. (Isa. 11:9-14; 49:26; 66:24)
- (7) Modern means of transportation not be used: Fly on shoulders (Isa. 11:14); arms (49:22), camels, etc. (Isa. 60:6; 66:20)
- (8) Israel literally "suck the milk of the gentiles" and the breasts of kings. (Isa. 60:16)

VI. IF YOU GO BACK TO THE SHADOW, IT WILL SEND YOU TO THE SUBSTANCE

- (1) Moses to Christ. (Deut. 18:15-18; Acts 3:22-23)
- (2) Moses as mediator to Christ as Mediator. (Heb. 8:6; 12:24)
- (3) Old Covenant to New. (Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:5-13; 13:20)
- (4) Temple and its sacrifices. (Heb. 10:1-4)
- (5) Animal blood to Christ's. (Heb. 9:15-17, 23-28; 13:20)
- (6) Old Temple, then way into heaven not manifest. (Heb. 9:6-12, 24, 25, 26; 10:19-22)
- (7) Priest point us to our priesthood. (I Pet. 2:5, 9)
- (8) Jewish kingdom to spiritual. (Haggai 2:6; Heb. 12:18-28; 13:20)
- (9) Dan. 2:44 to Heb. 12:28.
- (10) O. T. kings and high priest to Christ. (Psa. 110:1-4; Heb. 7:11-28; 8:4)
- (11) Abraham sends us to His seed, Christ. (Gen. 22:18; Gal. 3:16-29)

QUESTIONS

1. What was a type?
2. Are we to let people bind the types on us? (Col. 2:17)
3. What bearing do the types have on the language of some prophecies?
4. What were some of the different classes of types?
5. What are some of the rules which we must follow in interpreting types?
6. Discuss the Old Testament types which are fulfilled in the New.
7. If some prophecies are interpreted literally will the types be restored? What are some of them? How do we know that this proves that these particular prophecies must not be interpreted literally? (Col. 2:17; Heb. 13:10)
8. Give some illustrations of the fact that if you go back to the shadow it sends you to the substance.

Christ's Sacrifice Sufficient

(HEBREWS 10:1-22)

To go back to the Old Testament, and try to live by it today, is to abandon the substance and go back to the shadow. It is to turn away from the sacrifice which is sufficient and to go back to the sacrifices which were insufficient, and which purified the flesh only. (Heb. 9:13; 10:1-4)

The Old Testament had not "the exact likeness, reality, and full revelation, such as the Gospel has. The 'image' here means the archetype (cf. 9:24), the original, solid image (Bengel) realizing to us those heavenly verities of which the law furnished but a *shadowy outline before*." (Jamieson-Fausset-Brown, *Commentary on the New Testament*, p. 465).

I. THE INSUFFICIENCY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT SACRIFICES SEEN IN THEIR REPETITION

(1) The repetition of these sacrifices (10:1-2), showed the insufficiency of animal blood. (10:4)

(2) Remembrance of sins. (10:3) "*A remembrance* — a recalling to mind by the high priest's confession, on the day of atonement, of the sins both of each past year and of all former years, proving that the expiatory sacrifices of former years were not felt by men's consciences to have fully atoned for former sins; in fact, the expiation and remission were only legal and typical, (verse 4, 11) Gospel remission, on the contrary, is so complete, that sins are 'remembered no more' (verse 17) by God. It is unbelief to '*forget*' this once-for-all purgation, and to fear on account of 'former sins'. (2 Pet. 1:9)" (Jamieson-Fausset-Brown, 465-466)

(3) Without what we have — Christ and His blood — they could not be made perfect. (Heb. 11:40) In his forbearance God passed over their sins, but Christ had to die for their benefit as well as ours. (Rom. 3:23-26; Heb. 9:15) Those who were faithful in times past were, of course, safe since Christ was to come and die for them as well as for us.

II. THE SUFFICIENCY OF CHRIST'S SACRIFICE

(1) A body prepared (10:5), for He came to die for the sins of the world. (9:26)

(2) He came to take away the first covenant and establish the second covenant. (10:9) He made possible the taking away of the first covenant through His death. (Col. 2:16; Eph. 2:13-16) Thus the first covenant could not have been taken away before His death. This shows that the second covenant, the new covenant, could not have been in force during His lifetime while the first covenant was in operation. The second could not have been in force before Christ's death. (9:15-17) Since the church of Christ is based on the new covenant, it is clear that the church of Christ could not have been in existence before Christ's death.

(3) He made one sacrifice for sins and then sat down at God's right hand. (1:3, 13; 10:10, 12-14)

(4) Testimony to sufficiency of the sacrifice of Christ is indicated by the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament prophecy of the New Covenant. (10:15-18)

(5) The Roman Catholic Church is wrong in thinking that the priests, in the Lord's supper, sacrifice Christ anew. His sacrifice was once for all.

III. THE LESSON FOR US

(1) Go the new and living way. (10:19-23)

(2) Hold fast. (10:23; 3:6, 14)

(3) Has your heart been sprinkled from an evil conscience by the blood of Christ? (Heb. 10:22; compare 9:14, 21-22; I Pet. 1:2, 19) Has your body been washed? "There is here a manifest reference to the bath of regeneration. (Titus iii. 5) It will not do to say with Calvin, Limborch, Owen, Bengel and others that this is a mere symbolical expression, having reference simply to the inward cleansing of the soul by the blood of Christ and the renewing influence of the Holy Spirit. The strong and pointed antithesis which the Apostle here makes between the sprinkling of the heart and the washing of the body forbids any such interpretation of the passage. This is conceded by Delitzsch, Alford, Moll and others. Indeed nearly all eminent expositors are now agreed that there is here a manifest reference to the ordinance of baptism. Alford says, 'There can be no reasonable doubt that this clause refers directly to Christian baptism. The bath of water ... of Eph. v. 26, and the bath of regeneration ... of Titus iii. 5, are analogous expressions; and the express mention of *body* here as distinguished from *hearts* before, stamps this interpretation with certainty.' To the same effect are the remarks of Prof. Stuart. In commenting on our text he says, 'It seems to me that . . . (the) allusion is to the use of water in the initiatory rite of Christian baptism. This is altogether consonant with the method of our author who is everywhere comparing Christian institutions with Jewish ones. So in the case before us he says the Jews

were sprinkled with blood in order that they might be purified so as to have access to God; Christians are internally sprinkled, that is, purified by the blood of Jesus. The Jews were washed with water in order to be ceremonially purified so as to come before God; Christians have been washed by the purifying water of baptism. So Ananias exhorts Saul to be baptized and wash away his sins. (Acts xxii. 16) In this latter case and in that before us the phrase is borrowed from the legal rite of washing for purification.' To these very judicious remarks I need only add that the obvious design of our author in using this expression is to indicate that the *whole man*, both soul and body, should be sanctified and consecrated to the service of God. See Rom. xii. 1." (Milligan, 282)

Joseph Bryant Rotherham made the following observation: "The rhetoric of our Author tends to hide his logic from observation. In this very exhortation there is a logical order employed in describing the way of approach which has possibly not attracted much attention; the immediate cause of the partial concealment being this: That, although there is a logical order, it is an *inverted* order, in other words, as actually named, we have:

1. The sprinkling of the heart from an evil conscience;
2. The bathing of the body in pure water;
3. The confession of the hope.

"It is not fanciful to say that the bathing of the body alludes to Christian immersion. Unless words are perverted or historic facts distorted, it can allude to nothing else, seeing that there is, in the process of consecration to Christ, no other observance to which the words can literally apply; and, as to literalness, it may justly be observed that if 'body' does not mean 'body', neither does 'heart' mean heart; but, in fact, the very contrast between the two necessitates the acceptance of both terms in their usual significance. But when this is settled, is it fanciful to see further in this place a tracing backwards of the process of conversion? Let us try the hypothesis of inversion; and, doing so, the order will stand thus:

1. The confession of the hope;
2. The bathing of the body in pure water;
3. The sprinkling of the heart from an evil conscience.

Now it is notorious that in primitive times such was the common order of conversion:

1. The Christian hope was confessed with the mouth;
2. The body of the confessor was immersed in pure water;
3. And seeing that the baptism of the penitent was avowedly 'for the remission of sins,' it follows that just as certainly as the obedient believer trusted the assurance given by God in this covenant ordinance, so certainly would his heart be sprinkled from an evil conscience; and,

like the Ethiopian Eunuch, he would go on his way rejoicing.

"The reason of the inversion is evident. The whole process of the foregoing discussion of Messiah's heavenly priesthood having carried the writer in thought *into the Holiest*, what more natural than that he should mentally *step backwards*, retracing the way by which all converts in those days passed into the shrine of the Divine Presence?" (Rotherham, 151-152)

". . . if having *the body washed with pure water* were to be understood entirely of something spiritual and internal, it would be hard to distinguish it from the *sprinkling of the heart from an evil conscience*. . . ." (Archibald McLean, Hebrews, 182)

(4) Accept Christ today. Accept the benefits of His sacrifice by being baptized — obeying from a believing, penitent heart — into His death for our sins, His burial and His resurrection. Then live the new life in Christ. (Rom. 6:2-5, 17-18)

QUESTIONS

1. Were the Old Testament sacrifices able to forgive sins? (Heb. 9:13; 10:1-4)
2. What showed the insufficiency of these sacrifices?
3. Did they depend for their value on what Christ did?
4. Why was a body prepared for Christ?
5. What does Heb. 10:9 say that He came to do? Did He do it? (Heb. 9:15-17)
6. When did He sit down to reign? (Heb. 1:3, 13)
7. What in Hebrews 10 shows that the Roman Catholic Church is wrong in claiming that in the "sacrifice of the Mass" their priests make a sin offering?
8. What way do we approach God? (10:19-23)
9. Is it enough to start? (3:6, 14; 10:23) ' "
10. What did it mean to have one's heart sprinkled from an evil conscience?
11. What did it mean to have one's body washed with water?
12. What was Rotherham's comment on Heb. 10:22. How do you evaluate his comments?

The Spirit Is a Witness to Us

(HEBREWS 10:15)

It amazes us sometimes how much is contained in one passage of scripture and how much light one passage may throw on another passage. The writer of Hebrews set forth the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice. (Heb. 10:10-14) Then he said: the Holy Spirit also is *a witness to us*. Then the writer comments: "Now, where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin." (Heb. 10:15-18) Under the Old Testament there was a remembrance of sins every year (10:3), since it is impossible for the blood of bulls and of goats to take away sin. (10:1-2, 4) The fact that sacrifices continued to be offered indicated that there was no remission of sins. (10:2) The fact that the New Covenant was to convey remission of sins, and the sins would not be remembered any more, indicates that the sacrifice under the New Covenant would be sufficient, and thus would not be repeated every year. The Holy Spirit, in the prophecy of the New Covenant through Jeremiah, had indicated that the sacrifice which dedicated the New Covenant would be sufficient to take away sins, and would thus be offered once for all.

I. THE SPIRIT BORE WITNESS THROUGH THE WRITTEN WORD

It will be noticed that the writer said that "the Holy Spirit also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before. . . ." (10:15) He then quoted something which had been written centuries before. From this we draw the following conclusions:

(1) Jeremiah was inspired by the Holy Spirit (Jer. 31:31-34), since the words of Jeremiah are quoted and attributed to the Spirit. Jeremiah attributed them to the Lord. They were not just Jeremiah's word, but the Spirit's word.

(2) The written word is the word of the Spirit. Through it the Spirit can and does speak. It has been revealed and confirmed. (Heb. 2:3-4; Jude 3)

(3) The Holy Spirit can and does bear witness to us through the written word. When we read it the Holy Spirit speaks to us. (10:15)

"witness", "said") Since the Holy Spirit has shown that God speaks to us today through His Son (Heb. 1:1-2; 2:1-4), how can it be said that something in the Old Testament is a witness of the Spirit to us? In this manner: Centuries before the New Covenant came the Holy Spirit promised another covenant in which sins would not be remembered any more. This promise has now been fulfilled, and one of the witnesses we have to the truth and nature of the New Covenant is the prophecy made and recorded by the Spirit, through Jeremiah, centuries before. Thus we see testimony borne by the Holy Spirit through the written word.

(4) This means that the written word is not a dead letter, but that the Spirit speaks to us through it. Jesus set forth this same truth when He showed that God speaks to us through the written word. ". . . Have ye not *read* that which was *spoken unto you by God*, saying. . . ." (Matt. 22:31)

These things have an important bearing on Rom. 8:16, and how the Spirit bears witness with our Spirit. How is the Spirit's witness borne *with* our spirit?

II. HOW THE SPIRIT BEARS WITNESS THAT WE ARE SONS OF GOD (Rom. 8:16)

(1) Does the Spirit do it today in some miraculous way? The passage does not say that it is borne in a miraculous way. Those who say that it is so done, assume the very thing which they are under obligation to prove, i.e. that this witness is borne today in a miraculous way apart from the word of God. Since neither this passage nor any other passage teach that such witness is borne today in a miraculous, direct testimony of the Spirit to the human soul; and since other passages show how witness is borne; I must not conclude that it is done in some miraculous direct way.

(2) Is the witness borne through our feelings? The passage does not say that it is done through feelings. We all know how deceptive our own feelings can be. Nowhere has God said that we are His children if we feel like we are. It is right for the children of God to feel good because they are children of God. But they do not know by their feelings that they are children of God. Our feelings flow from our faith, and our faith is based on testimony. If the testimony is wrong our feelings cannot make it right. When, however, we get the testimony from the Word of God we know that it is right, and when we submit to God we can go on our way rejoicing as did the eunuch. (Acts 8:38-39) Anyone who feels that he is a child of God, but who has not done what the Spirit has taught in the New Testament that one must do to become a child of God, does not have the witness of the Spirit that he is a child of God.

(3) The witness is borne through the word of God. How can we know that God accepts us as His children? We cannot know unless God lets us know in some way. "For what man knoweth the things of a

man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; *that we might know* the things that are freely given to us of God. *Which things also we speak*, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but *which the Holy Ghost teacheth*; comparing spiritual things with spiritual." (I Cor. 2:11-13). As he had said in verses 9 and 10, "But as it is written, eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But *God hath revealed* them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." Then it was that Paul pointed out that we could not know the mind of God, but God's Spirit did, and that the Spirit had revealed to them in words what the mind of God was.

Paul does not here teach that everyone is inspired. If they were there would be no need for anyone to speak the words, revealed by the Spirit, to someone else. Those who were inspired, such as Paul, knew and taught the mind of God because the Spirit revealed to them God's mind and taught them what they should say.

Thus we know how one must become a child of God through the teaching which the Spirit has revealed.

(4) Since we do not have any inspired men today, we must turn to the message in the Bible which was recorded by inspired men. Through His written word the Spirit speaks to us. The Spirit tells us what we must do to become children of God. The spirit of man knows what is within him (I Cor. 2:11), and our spirit thus knows whether we have accepted and obeyed what God's spirit teaches us through the written word of God. When God's Spirit testifies as to what we must do to become children of God, and when our spirit testifies that we have done it, then His Spirit bears witness and our spirit bears witness that we are children of God. His Spirit bears witness *with* our spirit. The two witnesses together show that we are God's children. Let us notice what the Spirit of God has said in the word of God.

(1) The Spirit bears witness that we must believe. (Mk. 16:16) Faith comes by hearing the word. (Rom. 10:17; John 20:30) Our spirit bears witness that we do believe.

(2) The Spirit bears witness that we must repent. (Acts 2:38) Our spirit bears witness that we have repented.

(3) The Spirit bears witness that we must confess Christ. (Matt. 10:32) Our spirit bears witness that we have confessed, and that we are willing to confess.

(4) The Spirit bears witness that we must be baptized. (Acts 2:38; Gal. -3:27) Our spirit bears witness that we have obeyed Christ in baptism.

The Spirit testifies that we must be born of water and of the Spirit in order to enter the kingdom of God, and our spirit testifies, when we obey the gospel, that we have been born of water and of the Spirit.

We are then in the family of God, and thus His Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. We know Him because we keep His commandments. (I John 2:3)

III. THE SPIRIT WHICH THE HEALING CULTS HAVE BEARS FALSE WITNESS AGAINST THE SPIRIT OF GOD

(1) Their spirit bears witness that salvation comes before baptism, but the Holy Spirit placed salvation after baptism. (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16) •

(2) Their spirit teaches that denominationalism is right, but the Holy Spirit condemns denominationalism. (John 17:20; I Cor. 1:10-13; Eph. 4:1-6)

(3) Their Spirit tells sinners seeking salvation that they should "pray through" for salvation. The Holy Spirit never told seeking sinners to do this; instead they were told to arise and be baptized. (Acts 22:16)

(4) Their spirit tells them that all should be baptized in the Holy Spirit; but the Holy Spirit never commanded anyone to be baptized in the Spirit. Some individuals did, it is true, receive the promise of the miraculous baptism of the Spirit; but it was not a command, and it was not promised to all.

(5) Their spirit bears witness that they heal and perform miracles as did the apostles and Christ, but the Holy Spirit's record of miracles in the New Testament when compared with modern miracles reveals that people today do not work miracles as did the apostles and Christ.

We could point out many other instances in which their doctrine conflicts with the doctrine of the Spirit in the New Testament; but these are sufficient to show that *the spirit in them bears false witness against the Spirit* which was in the apostles, for their spirit teaches, supposedly in the name of the Holy Spirit, doctrines which are contrary to the apostles' doctrine. *It is thus evident that they do not have the same Spirit, for they do not have the same doctrine.*

IV. WHAT DOES THE SPIRIT WITNESS ABOUT YOUR CONDITION?

(1) If you have obeyed the gospel, the Spirit tells you that you are a child of God, and He tells you this through His word. His word is faithful. To ask for some sign or for some feeling, to assure us that we are His children, is to say in effect — whether one realizes it or not — that God's word is not good enough for us. When God promises remission of sins to the believing penitent who is baptized into Christ, we can be assured that He fulfills the promise when we obey the gospel from the heart. (Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:2-5, 17-18)

(2) Does the Spirit through His word show that you are continuing faithfully? He has shown us in His word in what the New life consists and He has shown us that we are cleansed by Christ's blood if we turn to Him. (I John 1:5; 2:6) What is your standing?

(3) For an extended discussion of the witness of the Spirit see the chapter in James D. Bales, *The Holy Spirit and the Christian*.

QUESTIONS

1. To what did the Spirit bear witness in Heb. 10:15-18?
2. Did the Spirit bear witness through the written word? Was it Jeremiah's word? God's word? the Spirit's word?
3. How does this show that the written word is not a dead letter?
4. Does the Spirit bear witness that we are God's children? (Rom. 8:16) Is it done miraculously? By a still small voice? By each of us being inspired? By our feelings?
5. How do we know the mind of God concerning sonship and other matters? (1 Cor. 2:11-13) Does this mean that each individual was inspired?
6. Does the Spirit bear witness in the word and show what one must do to become a child of God? Does our spirit know whether we have done this?
7. Would the Spirit bear witness to someone today that they are a child of God when they have not been born of water and the Spirit? (John 3:3-5)
8. What are some of the things which some people today, who claim to be inspired by the Spirit, teach which contradict the Spirit in the New Testament? How do we know that they are not miraculously guided by the Spirit. (1 Cor. 14:37)
9. Is anything which the Spirit has revealed in the Bible the Spirit's witness on that subject?

Forsake Not the Assembly

(HEBREWS 10:24-25)

Some through fear, and perhaps some through carelessness, were making it a custom to forsake the assembly. When did the Christians assemble? This shows that they had a regular day of assembly. History (Hessey, *Sunday*), and the Scriptures show that they met on the first day of the week to observe the Lord's Supper.

I. THINGS WHICH TOOK PLACE ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK

- (1) Christ arose from the dead. (Mk. 16:9; John 20:1; Matt. 28:1)
- (2) Christ met the disciples after the resurrection and on that day. (Mk. 16:9-13; Matt. 28:8-10; Lk. 24:34; John 20:19-23)
- (3) Birthday of the church. (Matt. 16:16-19; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4, 38-42; 11:15) Pentecost always came on the first day of the week. (Lev. 23:11, 15)
- (4) Spirit came on that day. (John 14:26; 16:7-13; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4, 33)
- (5) Beginning of the last days. (Joel 2:28; Acts 2:17, 18)
- (6) Kingdom came on that day (Mk. 9:1; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4), and Christ first proclaimed as reigning at God's right hand. (Acts 2:30-36; Heb. 1:3, 13) It was the beginning of the reign of Christ which will last until the resurrection and judgment. (I Cor. 15:24-28)
- (7) Disciples met on the first day of the week for the Lord's Supper. (Acts 20:7) But let us examine this more closely.

II. "THE LORD'S SUPPER AND THE ASSEMBLY"

- (1) Disciples commanded to partake of the supper. (Matt. 26:26-28; Lk. 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:24, 25)
- (2) Christ's people commanded to assemble. (Heb. 10:25) It does not say on which day of the week, but it had to be on some day, "there could not be an assembly without some time for the assembling."
- (3) The disciples ate the Lord's Supper when they assembled. (1 Cor. 11:18-34) "They were perverting the institution by making a full meal out of it (or eating it along with a meal, J. D. B.), and thus they received condemnation on that occasion. But the passage does reveal what was God's will in the matter. This was not an eating at home, but when they came together in the church — into one place (verse 20)." They could eat their meals at home (11:34), when they came together they were to eat the Lord's Supper. (11:29, 33)

(4) "Christians came together for the purpose of eating the Lord's Supper. Read 1 Cor. 11:33: 'Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another.' What did they come together to do? Paul said they came together to eat. That was the purpose of their assembling. Thus we see that their eating the Lord's Supper and their assembling were closely related. Jesus commanded both of them; and when they ate the Lord's Supper, they did it in an assembly; and they assembled for the specific purpose of eating. And bear in mind this fact: the Lord's Supper is the only thing God has ever required Christians to eat in an assembly. God has never required Christians to assemble to eat anything else but the Lord's Supper.

(5) "Now, if we can find when Christians assembled — or came together — *to eat*, we will know when they partook of the Lord's Supper in remembrance of Jesus. We have the record in Acts 20:7: 'And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them'. Here is an assembly — they 'came together.' And the Lord commanded an assembly. (Heb. 10:25) They broke bread. And the Lord commanded Christians to do that. (1 Cor. 11:24-20; 1 Cor. 10:10) Furthermore, they came together *to break bread* — for the specific purpose of eating. And since the Lord has never required His people to come together to eat anything else but the Lord's Supper, this is the Lord's Supper. And when was it done? 'On the first day of the week'. So here is a worship God has ordained for the first day of the week." (W. Curtis Porter, *Dugger-Porter Debate*, 118)

II. THE MEETING AT TROAS (Acts 20:7)

(1) Tarried seven days more than once. (Acts 21:3, 4; 28:13, 14; Acts 20:0, 7) This shows reason for waiting seven days.

(2) There a full week but the "only assembly of the disciples mentioned is a first-day meeting. There is not even a hint of Sabbath day, nor a meeting on the Sabbath day." Why no mention of such a Sabbath day meeting, if they were Sabbatharians, instead of the reference to the first day of the week meeting?

(3) Why did they assemble?

(a) Not to hear Paul preach. But the SDA say that Paul was a Sabbatharian because he preached in Jewish synagogues on the Sabbath. Thus their own logic proves he kept the first day; but we say that he worshipped on that day in the public assembly for Christians do not keep a Sabbath as did the Jews.

(b) Break bread — they assembled for that purpose. Stated in such a way as to indicate that they regularly assembled on the first day of the week for such a purpose; it was not a special meeting because Paul was there.

(c) Did not regularly assemble for regular meal for Paul forbade mixing. (1 Cor. 11:20) Observance of the supper. (Lk. 22:19, 20; 1 Cor. 11:20; 10:10) (Porter, *op. cit.*, 115)

What Day?

(HEBREWS 10:25)

Is it the first day of the week? The day of the destruction of Jerusalem? The judgment day? If we are unable to decide with certainty, our own duty concerning the Christian's life and worship is still clear. No doubt is cast on what we are to do, just because we may not be able to be certain what day this is.

I. WHY SOME MIGHT FORSAKE THE ASSEMBLY

- (1) Fear of Jews. (Westcott)
- (2) Self-confidence, i.e. feel no need for it. (Westcott)
- (3) Too proud to assemble with brethren of low estate.
- (4) To some "the Christian assemblies must have appeared insignificant when compared with those to which the Hebrews were accustomed." (Westcott)

II. THE DAY OF THE LORD

- (1) "This absolute use of 'the day' . . . is peculiar. The nearest parallels are I Thess. 5:4; Rom. 13:12; in both of which passages the contrast with 'night' is brought out. Compare I John 2:8."
- (2) " 'The day' is elsewhere spoken of, according to the phrase of the Old Testament as 'the day of the Lord'". (Acts 2:20; 1 Thess. 5:2; 2 Thess. 2:2; 2 Pet. 3:10. Westcott)
- (3) Stuart thinks day is an elliptical expression for the day of the Lord.

III. THE DAY OF THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM

- (1) In working out these various thoughts (based on the use of the day of the Lord, etc. J. D. B.) it will be seen that a day of Christ's coming in judgment on a people is at once a fulfillment and a prophecy: a judgment and a promise. Such was the final overthrow of the Jewish system at the fall of Jerusalem. "The expectation of the Lord's speedy coming, which then had accomplishment, is found expressed in each group of writings of the New Testament, and under the same term *coming*." (Westcott)
- (2) The exhorting one another was done in the assembly, such

as in the first day of the week assembly. A regular assembly is indicated, for if there were no regular assembly, how could anyone forsake it? Negatively he states that they are not to forsake the assembly; positively he states that they are to exhort one another. *The Lutheran Commentary* suggests that the exhorting is done in the assembly. The idea, some think, is don't forsake the assembly, but *assemble and exhort*.

(3) If it referred to the first day of the week assembly, it would indicate that they were exhorting one another on Monday, let us say, but by Saturday they would be exhorting one another all the more. This may be the case, but it hardly seems likely. On the other hand if it refers to the destruction of Jerusalem, then "the nearness of the great crisis enforces the obligation of coming together and affording mutual support. The danger is great, the time short, hence the necessity of the closest inward and outward union. Westcott: 'Those who deserted the Christian faith would be swept away in the ruin soon to follow.' " (Lutheran Commentary)

(4) The approaching destruction of Jerusalem was discernible from the signs mentioned by the Lord. (Matt. 24:6ff)

(5) It may be that Heb. 8:13 indicates that the Jewish system would pass even from sight. It was old, the new covenant had come, and with the destruction of Jerusalem even its outward aspects would vanish.

(6) John Owen suggested that: "All the duties of these assemblies, especially those which are useful and needful to prevent backsliding, and preserve from apostasy, are proposed under this one, which is the head and chief of them all." (Owens, VI, 534)

The day was "an eminent day". (Owen, VI, 536) "The rule whereby we may determine what day is intended, is this: it was such a day as was a peculiar motive unto the Hebrews, in their present circumstances, to attend diligently unto the due performance of gospel duties. It is not such a day, such a motive, as is always common to all, but only unto those who are in some measure in the same circumstances with them. Wherefore it is neither the day of death personally unto them, or the day of the future judgment absolutely, that is intended; for those are common unto all equally, and at all times, and are a powerful motive in general unto the performance of gospel duties, but not an especial peculiar motive at some time unto peculiar diligence. Wherefore, this day was no other than that fearful and tremendous day, a season for the destruction of Jerusalem, the temple city, and nation of the Jews, which our Saviour had forewarned His disciples of, and which they had in continual expectations." (Owen, VI, 536-537)

"It is impossible that men should go or be carried through a day of public calamity, a destructive day, comfortably and cheerfully, without a diligent attendance unto those known duties of the gospel." (Owens, VI, 537)

IV. THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK

There are those who believe the day refers to the first day of the week. In point (3) under (III) we have indicated why we do not believe

this to be the case. However, we do believe that Christians are to assemble on the first day of the week to partake of the Lord's Supper, etc.

V. THE DAY OF JUDGMENT

(1) How could this be the day, since we do not have any signs whereby to know when it will draw nigh? (Mk. 13:32)

(2) The generation to which Hebrews was written would not live to see the day of judgment draw nigh, but they did live to see the day of the destruction of Jerusalem.

VI. CHRISTIANS NEED TO ASSEMBLE THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE GOSPEL DISPENSATION

(1) Christians are to assemble to partake of the Lord's Supper, etc., until Christ comes. (I Cor. 11:26) We need to assemble to worship God. It is our duty and privilege.

(2) We need fellowship, instruction, exhortation, and encouragement, strength, comfort and the assembly can help us in all these things.

(3) We need to encourage others by our presence and participation. The Christian who isolates himself becomes cold and alienated from Christ and the brethren.

(4) Private worship is an essential part of our spiritual life, but so is the assembly. We do not have reference to those who because of being in prison for Christ's sake, or because of physical condition, are unable to assemble. Although they can live the Christian life, yet they miss something by not being able to assemble. We who are free need to realize our obligation to assemble, and the privilege of assembling.

(5) How many meals would a child have to miss in our home before we tried to locate him? How many Lord's days can some miss without anyone trying to find out why?

VII. YOU NEED CHRIST

(1) Of what value is it for you to attend the assembly if throughout life you refuse to obey Christ? Attendance, however, should be a means of encouraging you to surrender. Furthermore, you cannot worship God through Christ if you have not accepted Him.

(2) Accept Christ today. (Gal. 3:26-27) Obey Him and enjoy the privileges in Christ for the rest of your life on earth, and throughout eternity.

QUESTIONS

1. Why were some forsaking the assembly? Why do some do it today?
2. What arguments are used to show the "day" referred to the destruction of Jerusalem?
3. What arguments are used to show it is the first day of the week?
4. Do you think it refers to the day of judgment?
5. Are Christians to assemble throughout the New Testament dispensation?
6. Do we have to know what "day" is meant in order to know our duty?
7. What can we do to keep people from forsaking the assembly?

No More Sacrifice for Sin

(HEBREWS 10:26-31)

Some Christians have been disturbed by the reference to the wilful sin, because they have interpreted it to mean any sin that one does knowing that it is a sin. If this is what it means, there is no hope for anyone, for all of us have done something which we have known to be wrong. (Gal. 2:14) That this is not what it means is evident from two considerations: (a) The tense in the Greek indicates that it is not one isolated act of sin, but a habitual manner of life into which this one has fallen, (b) The nature of the sin which is under consideration is further described in verse 29. This shows that it is a man who has so hardened himself against Christ, having once had a full knowledge of the truth of Christianity, that he will not turn back to Christ. There is no hope for him for he has rejected the only sacrifice for sin.

I. APOSTATES HARDENED CONDITION (10:29)

(1) Trodden under foot the Son of God. He whose superiority even to the angels is emphasized in Chapter I, is here trodden underfoot by these apostates. "The highest of Beings who has deserved best at his hands is spurned with outrageous scorn." (*Expositor's Greek Testament*, IV, 349)

(2) Counted the blood of Christ (10:29; 9:14; 13:20) an unholy thing. ". . . here it is thus designated because repudiation of the covenant is in question. This blood is the purifying agent by which men are fitted for the fellowship and service of God, and so brought within the covenant. . . . This sole means of purification, and sanctifying virtue of which the supposed apostate has experienced, he now counts . . . common or unclean . . . which has no more worth than the blood of other men.' . . . What is 'common' is unsanctified, ceremonially unclean." (*Expositor's Greek Testament*, IV, 349) In fact, he is regarding Christ as a blasphemer for in counting His blood unclean he is denying that He died as the Son of God and the Lamb of God.

The fact that this individual was once sanctified, shows that he was once a Christian, once a child of God. He had been sanctified with the blood, for the Holy Bible says that he "hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing. . . ." (10:29) This man was once in grace, and then fell from grace.

In trying to deny that this man was once in grace, some have said that the blood wherewith he was sanctified refers to Christ. Christ, not this man, was sanctified by the blood. This is not true, (a) The discussion does not concern Christ but the apostate, (b) Christ was sinless, and He had no need to be sanctified by His own blood. How could it be said scripturally that Christ was sanctified by his own blood?

(3) Done despite to the Spirit of Grace. *Expositor's Greek Testament* (IV, 349) puts it: "and has insulted the Spirit of grace." Milligan wrote: "That is, to the Holy Spirit. It is here called the Spirit of grace, because through it God imparts all grace, comfort, and salvation to our helpless and sinful race. By it, Christ himself worked all his miracles (Matt. xii. 28); and by it, he convinces the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment (John xvi. 8); and by it, he comforts his saints and helps their infirmities. (John vii. 39; Rom. viii. 26) To insult this Spirit then, as does the apostate, is manifestly the height of all wickedness, maliciousness, and impiety." (Milligan, 287)

II. HIS SAD CONDITION

(1) He is left in his sins, for he has rejected the only sacrifice for sin. When one utterly and finally rejects Christ, he rejects his only hope. There is no other sacrifice for sin, "There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins". (10:26)

(2) His frightful future. (10:27-31) The New Testament is very clear in showing that it is no light matter to reject the Son of God. A fate worse than death itself awaits this apostate.

III. IT IS POSSIBLE TO FALL FROM GRACE

That it is possible, has just been shown. However, we shall emphasize it from other passages also. Christians should not be so "generous" that they give all these passages to people who think one cannot fall from grace. These passages were written to Christians to warn them to walk circumspectly lest they fall from grace. It is right to use them to show that those people are wrong who deny the possibility of apostasy. See the discussion, for example by Shank on *Life in the Son* in which he shows that it is possible to fall. But Christians must beware lest they argue that one can fall from grace and then live as if they thought that it was impossible for them to fall. What are some other passages which show one can fall from grace?

(1) Faithfulness unto death is necessary. (Rev. 2:10; Jas. 1:12; Mk. 10:30-31; Matt. 24:13)

(2) Branches must bear fruit. (John 15:2-6)

(3) It is possible to leave one's first love. (Rev. 1:20; 2:4-5; Jas. 1:12)

(4) Children of God are also His servants, and a servant can be unfruitful and be cast out. (Rom. 6:13, 18, 19, 22; Matt. 25:14, 26-30)

(5) We must hold fast unto the end. (Heb. 3:12-14)

(6) Simon *himself believed also*, so he was saved as surely as were the others. (Acts 8:12-13) However, his soul was endangered by his sin. (8:20-23)

(7) The cleansed can become dirty again, just so the cleansed person can go back into sin. (2 Pet. 2:20-22)

(8) We must let the truth abide in us, and keep the word. (I John 2:3-4, 24-25)

(9) Note what James said concerning brethren erring. (Jas. 5:19-20)

(10) The Israelites were God's children, but some of them were lost,

driven out, became children of the devil, and were warned that if they forsook God He would cast them off. (Deut. 14:1-2; Lk. 16:23-29; Hosea 9:1, 15-17; John 8:31-54; I Chron. 28:6, 9)

(11) Some say: Once a child of God, always a child of God. But we can cease to be faithful children, become children of the devil and be disinherited. (John 8:44; Num. 14:12) We must walk after the Spirit (Rom. 8:1), for if we live after the flesh we shall die. (Rom. 8:12-13)

IV. WHAT IS YOUR CONDITION?

(1) It is possible to start on a course of carelessness, or because of fear of the enemies of the gospel, that one first forsakes the assembly and later completely departs from the faith. For after warning them against forsaking the assembly, he speaks of the fate of the hopeless apostate. Let us walk carefully lest we start on the road that leads to death.

(2) It is possible for a person to be lost simply by neglecting the Christian life. He can drift into sin and die in sin. It is possible to be lost simply by neglecting to obey the gospel. You do not have to become as hardened as the person in 10:29 in order to be lost. (Heb. 2:1-4)

(3) Does the fearful judgment which waits the sinner create within you the desire to flee from sin? Does the love of God as manifested in the Christ draw you to Him? If you want to know what to do, we turn to the inspired scriptures for the answer. (Acts 2:37-41; Rom. 6:3-5; Eph. 2:8; Gal. 3:26-27)

(4) What a shame for a person to suffer much for Christ, and then to fail to follow through and shrink back unto perdition. (Heb. 10:32-38) However, the writer encourages them so that they will not fall back but "have faith unto the saving of the soul." (10:39) Then he gives them many examples of faithful people in Chapter 11.

(Note: Concerning the sin unto death, I John 5:16, see the article by G. C. Brewer, "Questions and Quibbles (No. 2)", Gospel Advocate, August 26, 1948, p. 830).

QUESTIONS

1. Does "wilful sin" mean any sin that we realize is a sin but which we commit anyhow? If so, can anyone, including Peter, be saved? (Gal. 2:14)
2. Discuss the three things which this hardened apostate had done?
3. How do we know that he had been a Christian?
4. Does "sanctified" in 10:29 refer to Christ?
5. Why is there no hope for him? (10:26)
6. What frightful future awaits him? (10:27-31)
7. Are we to give all the scriptures on falling from grace to those who do not believe that one can fall? Is it possible to live as if one thought it was impossible for him to fall?
8. What are some of the passages which show that a child of God can become disobedient and be lost?
9. What are some of the reasons some fall away from the faith?
10. What must we do in order to keep from falling?

The Necessity of Endurance Unto the End

(HEBREWS 10:32-39)

It is necessary to start, but a start does not guarantee that one will finish. It is necessary to endure unto the end. (Rev. 2:10) Here the writer exhorts those, who have already borne much for the faith, to continue steadfast for if they draw back into perdition God will not take pleasure in them. (10:8-39)

I. WHAT THEY HAD ENDURED IN TIMES PAST (10:32-34)

(1) "Gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions". (10:33) They were made a "spectacle". Some are influenced more by reproaches, by being jeered or scoffed at, than by bodily persecution. "What these sufferings were is described in two clauses, they were partly in their own persons, partly in their sympathy and voluntary sharing in the suffering of others." (*Expositor's Greek Testament*, IV, 350)

(2) They were not crushed by the loss of material goods. "Ebrard suggests that by this 'we are to understand what we find still at this day taking place in the sphere of the Jewish mission. When a Jew shows himself determined to become a Christian, he is disinherited by his relations, his share in the property is withheld from him, his credit and every source of gain withdrawn; he falls into a state of complete destitution.'" (*The Pulpit Commentary*, 286)

"The severity of the sufferings of the early Christians is witnessed to by very many portions of the New Testament (Acts 5:17-42; 9:9-15; 7:54-60; 9:1-4; 9:1, 2; 12:1-5, 14:19; 16:19-24; 21:27-32; 22:24, 28; I Cor. 4:9-13; 2 Cor. 4:8-11; 9:23-27; I Pet. 4:12-19; Rev. 2:9, 10.)" (*Ibid.*, 287)

(3) Why were the Christians persecuted? There is antagonism between evil and good, and thus the world rejected Christ and persecuted His followers. (John 15:20; I John 3:13) Israel persecuted the Christians because they believed that Jesus was a false Messiah, and because the preaching of the risen Christ showed that they were ignorant of the prophecies of the Messiah, and that His blood was at their door. (Acts 5:28; 13:27) Pagans persecuted them because they were against idolatry,

and undermined those trades which flourished on idolatry. (Acts 19:24-27)

II. WHY THEY HAD ENDURED AND WHY THEY SHOULD CONTINUE TO ENDURE

(1) Hope of Heaven (10:34; I Pet. 1:3-5), which would be a great recompense of reward. (10:35)

(2) If they turned back now they would not *inherit* the promise. (10:36)

(3) God would not be pleased with those who turned back, and they would suffer perdition. (10:37-38)

(4) The memory of former sufferings for Christ should spur them on. (10:32) If they turned back into the world, and renounced Christ, they would lose all for which they had formerly suffered. (10:35-36)

(5) "All the help afforded them in former sufferings was available unto them still. The God who had helped them in the past would not forsake them in future trials; for he is ever the same — the same in wisdom, in power, in faithfulness, in goodness. Thus, the recollection of former deliverances should be an inspiration in present trials and for future difficulties." (*Ibid*, 287)

"Stand up! Stand up for Jesus!
The strife will not be long;
This day the noise of battle,
The next the victor's song."

III. ARE YOU WILLING?

- (1) The necessity of suffering with Christ. (Rom. 8:17-18)
- (2) Have you started the good fight of faith? If not, enroll now.

QUESTIONS

1. How long must we endure? (Rev. 2:10)
2. What if we draw back. (Heb. 10:38-39)
3. What had these people endured in times past?
4. Why were they persecuted?
5. Why are Christians persecuted today?
6. Are there different kinds of persecution?
7. Why had they endured and why should they continue to endure?
8. Do these things show that we cannot rest on the achievements of the past, regardless of how fine they were?
9. If we suffer with Christ, what will be our reward? (Rom. 8:17-18)

Now Faith Is

(HEBREWS 11:1)

"Having mentioned *faith*, i.e. belief or confidence, as a peculiar and most important characteristic of those who persevere in the Christian religion so as to secure their salvation, the writer, now proceeds, with great force and propriety, to make his appeal to the Old Testament Scriptures in order to shew that *faith* or *confidence* in the divine promises has, in all ages, been the means of perseverance in true religion, and consequently of salvation." (Moses Stuart, 483)

I. THE SUBSTANCE OF THINGS HOPED FOR

Faith is a "firm and well grounded confidence in reference to the objects of our hope." (Robert Milligan, 300) Stuart translates it: "now faith is confidence in respect to things hoped for". He comments: "This sense is evidently appropriate here. The writer had just been exhorting his readers not to cast away their *confidence* or *boldness*, which would ensure a great reward. (10:35) If any one should object to this exhortation, that the objects of reward are all *future* and unseen; the reply is, that 'the very nature of belief or faith implies confidence in respect to objects of this kind. All the patriarchs and prophets possessed *such* faith'. (Stuart, 484)

The Expositor's Greek Testament: "Now faith is assurance of things hoped for". "It seems never to be used", the writer maintains, "in a subjective sense for 'conviction', 'persuasion'; although here this meaning would suit the context and has been adopted by many. . . . Faith is that which enables us to treat as real the things that are unseen." (IV, 352)

Sampson maintains that the word "substance" should be used, and that it not only carries the idea of conviction regarding things hoped for, but also that it gives them a confidence in God's word and its present reality. And it is true of faith that our confidence concerning things in the future is such that it gives present reality to these things. It makes them real to us now, so that they rightly influence our present lives. Sampson said: "Some interpreters, among whom are the authors of our English version, render this word 'substance;' others render it 'firm persuasion.' Both the senses are good, and accord with the uses of the word, as may be ascertained by reference to the common New Testament Lexicons." (Francis S. Sampson, 407)

"The representation of faith contained in all these expressions is, that it gives the soul a substantial reality upon which its actions may go forth, and its spiritual senses may fix themselves. ... It is not only true of faith that it is a 'firm persuasion' of the existence of such things, but that it gives them, so to speak, '*present subsistence*'. It gives them the force of present realities. This sense therefore includes the other, and is for this reason preferable, that, while it expresses all that is expressed by the other, it gives more fulness and strength to the Apostle's words." (Sampson, 408)

Cameron observed: "Faith gives a reality to these things by bringing them within the cognizance of the mind, so that it is seen that they have a subsistence corresponding to them. To understand the apostle's expression we would need experience of the power of faith to give real being in the mind to the objects of hope. A powerful telescope is somewhat analogous to faith in this matter, inasmuch as it causes objects which are millions of miles away to appear close to the eye of the observer. There are heavenly bodies which are beyond the range of our ordinary vision, but by means of these ingenious instruments they obtain to us a reality, so that we can clearly discern them. Thus faith does to 'the things hoped for' by mixing itself with the promises concerning them. In this way faith appropriates the things revealed to it in the word of God, so that they are substantially enjoyed by us. They are brought to us, so that by faith we feed upon them." (Cameron, II, 110)

What are some of the things for which we hope?

(1) There is a hope of righteousness. (Gal. 5:5) ". . . true Christians, not trusting in carnal ordinances, but strengthened by the Spirit, wait for the fulfillment of the hope which righteousness by faith, instead of by law, insures to us."

Hope of eternal life. (Titus 1:2; 3:7) Eternal inheritance. (1 Pet. 1:3-5) Hope of rest. (2 Thess. 1:5)

(2) Be like Christ. (1 John 3:1-3)

Without hope we could not go on, and thus it is said to save us, for it leads us to persevere unto the end. (Rom. 8:24) It is an anchor of the soul and keeps us from drifting to destruction on the sea of life. (Heb. 6:19)

II. THE EVIDENCE OF THINGS NOT SEEN

"Evidence of things not seen". "The meaning is, that faith in the divine word and promises, is equivalent to, or supplies the place of, proof or demonstration in regard to the objects of the unseen world, i.e. it satisfies the mind respecting their reality and importance, as proof or demonstration is wont to do." (Stuart, 484)

Milligan wrote: "There can, of course, be no conviction without a sufficient proof; but it is not I think to the proof, but to its effect on the soul, that the Apostle here particularly refers. This is most in harmony with his main object throughout the entire chapter, which is manifestly to describe faith in its relations to the soul, both as a power of endurance, and a means and principle of enjoyment. He, therefore, begins the discussion with the simple affirmation, that faith is to the soul of the believer confidence with respect to things hoped for, and conviction with respect to things not seen: that is, with respect to such invisible realities as are revealed to us in the word of God. For where there is no testimony there can be no faith. (Rom. x. 17) But when God speaks, His word is to the believer an end of all controversy. It is to the Christian what a demonstration is to the mathematician: it gives

confidence with respect to whatever is promised; and it begets conviction with respect to the truth of whatever is affirmed. Do the Scriptures teach, for example, that 'the hour is coming in which all that are in their graves shall hear His (Christ's) voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good to the *resurrection of life*; and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation?'—the Christian receives this testimony, believes it, and acts in reference to it with all confidence. Why so? Simply because *God says so*. No reasoning, no philosophy, and no demonstration of any kind, can ever go beyond this. And hence it is, that to the believer *all the promises of God* are yea and amen in Christ Jesus (2 Cor. i. 20); and like Moses he endures as seeing Him who is invisible (ver. 27)." (300-301)

(1) Creation. (11:3)

"The assertion of the writer then is, that 'visible objects, i.e. the visible creation, did *not spring from* objects that were apparent,' i.e. that the visible creation was not made out of matter before existing; which is the same as to say, that the world was created *or brought into* existence by the word of God simply, and was not a mere reducing to order materials that before existed; see on the succeeding clause of the *verse, in the sequel*." (Stuart, 485-486)

God thus existed before the universe, He is independent of it, and is its Creator. All of these things were contrary *to some of the* things taught by some of the philosophers.

(2) Heaven. (2 Pet. 3:7-12; Rev. 21:1-5)

III. THE VALUE OF FAITH

(1) It enables these unseen and future things to have an influence for good on our life here and now.

(2) Enables us to be commended of God. (11:2, 6)

(3) Gives life meaning and happiness. "Substantially the words mean that faith gives to things future, which as yet are only hoped for, all the reality of things unseen and brings us into their presence. Things future and things unseen *must become* certainties to the mind if a balanced life is to be lived. Faith mediating between man and the supersensible is the essential link between himself and God, 'for in it lay the commendation of the men of old.' " (IV, 352)

(4) Have you accepted Christ by faith? (Gal. 3:2G-27)

QUESTIONS

1. What is the relationship of chapter 11 to the last verses of chapter 10?

2. What is meant by faith being the substance of things hoped for?

3. What are some of the things for which we hope?

4. Does hope imply that we have not yet possessed that for which we hope?

5. What is the *meaning of faith being* the evidence of things not seen?

6. What are some of the things which are not seen?

7. What are some of the values of faith for our lives here *and now*?

8. How do we accept Christ by faith?

He Being Dead Yet Speaketh

(HEBREWS 11:4)

How shall man come before God has always been an important question. (Micah 6:6-8) God instituted the sacrificial *system*, but unless it was accompanied by a dedicated life, the sacrifices were not acceptable. After the fall of man, the first controversy God had with man was over the question of worship. (Heb. 11:4; Gen. 4:4-7) It is a matter of importance how we approach the great of this earth — the President, *for example*. *How* much more important *is* the *question* of how to approach God in worship.

I. THREE BASICALLY DIFFERENT APPROACHES

Over a century ago James Begg, a Presbyterian, emphasized that corruption in the matter of worship involved principles which led to all sorts of departures from the New Testament in government, doctrine and discipline. There were, he pointed out three basically different positions concerning worship.

(1) The Roman Catholic theory, which is accepted by others also, that the "church can introduce into the Divine worship whatsoever forms and ceremonies she pleases." This opens the floodgates for all of Roman ritualism and other departures.

(2) The position "Acted upon by the church of England, viz., that everything is lawful in the Divine worship which is not *expressly condemned* in *scripture*. *This makes way for the introduction of many things which can evidently plead no scriptural authority. . . .*"

(3) The position of the Presbyterian church of his day "that nothing is to be admitted into the Divine worship, which cannot plead a direct scriptural authority." (James Begg, *The Use of Organs and Other Instruments of Music in Christian Worship Indefensible*, Glasgow: WRM'Phun & Son, pp. 19, 10-12, 150-151) John L. Girardeau, also a Presbyterian, said the controlling principle is: "A divine warrant is necessary for every element of doctrine, government and worship in the church; that is, whatsoever in these spheres is not commanded in the Scriptures, either expressly or by good and necessary consequences from their statements, is forbidden." (*Instrumental Music in the Public Worship of the Church*, Richmond, Va.: Whittet & Shepperson Printers, 1888, p. 6, 9)

A. T. Kretzmann, a Lutheran, put it this way: "With the term *Sola Scriptura* the church has always intended to give expression to the truth that Holy Scripture *alone* and *all* of it, as it interprets itself, must be and remain the only source of all *doctrine taught and believed* in the church." He cited the fact that the expression "thus saith the Lord", "It is written" often occurred in the Bible. Men were to hear God's appointed spokesmen. (Lk. 16:29; Isa. 8:20) ". . . the Lutheran Church in its Smalcald Articles declares: *The rule is: The Word of God shall*

establish articles of faith and no one else, not even an angel' Part II. Art. II. 15." Faith, he pointed out, comes by hearing God's word. (Rom. 10:17; Acts 2:42; "The Sola Scriptura Principle Applied to Texts on Church and Ministry." *Sola Scriptura*, Sept.-Oct. 1971, pp. 4-5)

II. WHICH PRINCIPLE IS SCRIPTURAL?

(1) Commands, not the customs of men, constituted the foundation of one's approach to God in the patriarchal dispensation. (Gen. 4:4-7; Heb. 11:4; Rom. 10:17)

(2) Men had to do as God directed under the Mosaic dispensation. (Deut. 5:32-33; 12:32; Acts 7:44; Heb. 8:5; 9:1; I Chron. 15:16; 28:11-19; 2 Chron. 5:12-14; 29:25-35)

(3) The New Covenant tells us to do whatsoever Jesus has commanded, *not all things whatsoever He has not forbidden in so many words*. (Matt. 28:20) We are to continue in the apostles' doctrine, which is another way of stating Matt. 28:20. (Acts 2:42) We must hear Christ, not the Old Testament prophets. (Heb. 1:2; 8:6-13; 12:18-29; 13:20; Gal. 3:15) Jesus said we must worship in Spirit *and in truth*. (John 4:20-24) We have enlarged on this in our book on *Instrumental Music and Worship*. If we do not continue in His word concerning worship, there is not a way to distinguish between worship according to man's doctrines — which is vain worship (Matt. 15:8-9), worship in ignorance (Acts 17:23), will worship (Col. 2:20-23), and acceptable worship. (John 4:20-23)

(4) The New Testament is clear that the music we are to offer to the Lord is the fruit of lips (although this praise may also be vocal without being singing, but certainly it includes singing) which must be in or accompanied by the heart. (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Heb. 13:15) We must not serve the Old Testament tabernacle or temple. (Heb. 13:10)

(5) When God gives a general commandment it includes everything that the general commandment covers. The only thing which would be excluded would be some thing God expressly forbade. However, when God gives a specific commandment the only thing included is that specific thing. Anything else would have to be authorized by some other commandment. If God had said for Israel to take priests from the people of God, every tribe would have been included; unless God had expressly excluded some tribe or tribes. However, God was specific as to tribe and therefore every tribe not specifically authorized was forbidden to furnish priests. God did not have to say: "thou shalt not take priests from the tribe of Judah" in order to eliminate Judah. He simply said they were to come from the tribe of Levi. This excluded every other tribe. (Heb. 7:13-14) So as was said of Judah, we can say of instrumental music: "Of instrumental music God said nothing." However, vocal music He authorized.

(6) At the very time some religious bodies are trying to get away from ceremonialism, and return to simplicity in worship, some of our brethren want to start on the road which leads to Roman ritualism. It would be too much of a shock for them to take it all at once, but if

they travel the road Rome travelled they will arrive where Rome arrived. Our new trial of old errors will be no more successful, and no more scriptural, than was theirs.

(7) The question of the music to be offered in worship to God is not a complex one. It is a simple one to know that God authorized vocal music. (Eph. 5:19; Heb. 13:15) The complexity comes only because those who seek to justify instrumental music make a thousand and one arguments, and this requires us to examine these arguments. Our practice is simple and easy to prove. Theirs cannot be proved to be scriptural although they may use many and involved arguments.

(8) Let us not set up an idol in our hearts, in this matter or others, but love and obey God. (Ezek. 14:3-10; Matt. 22:37-38; John 7:17; 14:15; Matt. 7:21)

(9) Let us also remember that each new generation arrives untaught, and that unless we teach each new generation they grow up in ignorance and can be easily misled by the doctrines of men.

(10) Some say this is a trifle, but: (a) How we approach God in worship is important and is decided by God, not by man. (b) Unity is a great thing. If the instrument is such a little thing, why not omit it for a big thing — unity? Its use violates our conscience, (c) Those who say they do not make it a test of fellowship fail to realize that in its very nature the introduction of the instrument means that one must either accept it or depart, (d) Opposition to instrumental music is based on principles which preserve New Testament Christianity, while its advocacy involves positions which pervert New Testament worship, (e) Instrumental music was not used in the New Testament Church, it was an innovation in most religious bodies, and it was not used in the beginning of the restoration movements. But what does this have to do with Abel?

III. ABEL OFFERED BY FAITH

What does it mean that Abel offered by faith, and evidently Cain did not? (Heb. 11:4)

(1) There is no *record* in Genesis 4 which says that an animal sacrifice had to be offered. However, we know that "apart from shedding of blood there is no remission." (Heb. 9:22) This must have been true from the very time that man sinned, so God must have required it of Adam, Eve, Cain, Abel, etc. even though there is no record of it in Genesis 4. Through his animal sacrifice Abel "had witness borne to him that he was righteous". (Heb. 11:4) An offering which involved blood was essential to being declared righteous. Furthermore, we are told that he offered by faith, so this must have been based on what God had revealed to them. (Rom. 10:17)

(2) What "by faith" cannot mean, (a) It cannot mean that Abel believed in God's existence, but that Cain did not. (b) Abel did not think that God should be worshipped, and Cain did not. (c) Abel did not make an offering, and Cain did not. Cain made an offering of that

which he grew, while Abel made an offering of an animal. Each offered according to what he raised or tended. Abel kept sheep, Cain tilled the ground. (Gen. 4:2) They both offered, but Cain's offering was not accepted. (4:3-5) It is evidently not offered by faith. But since "by faith" does not mean Cain did not believe in God, or did not believe that God should be worshipped, or did not make an offering, it must mean something else. In Hebrews 11 time and time again when something was said to have been done by faith, it was done not only with belief in God but according to God's directions. Therefore, are we not safe in concluding that Cain failed to offer by faith in the sense that he did not make an animal sacrifice which involved the shedding of blood without which there is no remission? He could not have failed to have offered by faith in this sense, nor Abel to have offered by faith in this sense, unless God had revealed that an animal sacrifice was necessary. (Rom. 10:17) In effect, did not Cain reject atonement through the blood?

(3) We are clearly told that this has a message for us. ". . . and through it he being dead yet speaketh." (Heb. 11:4) We must worship by faith. We cannot make the offering for sin. Christ has made that one and sufficient offering, but we must accept it. (Heb. 10) Furthermore, in our approach to God under the New Covenant we must worship "by faith" which is based on God's word. (Rom. 10:17)

(4) Are you worshipping God vainly (Matt. 15:8-9), ignorantly (Acts 17:23), will-worship (Col. 2:20-23), or in spirit and in truth? (John 4:20-24) How can you know, unless you study the Bible and worship God by faith based on His revelation. (Rom. 10:17)

QUESTIONS

1. Why is it important as to how we approach God in worship?
2. What are three basically different approaches to the question of what can be included in our worship of God?
3. Which principle, or approach, is scriptural? On what scriptural grounds can you justify your position?
4. How does Heb. 7:13-14, and the principle contained in it, apply to our approach to God in worship?
5. Are some religious people seeking for simplicity in worship?
6. Are some brethren trying to move toward ceremonialism and ritualism such as is found in some denominations?
7. Is the question of what music we are to offer to God a complex one?
8. What shows that the matter of instrumental music is not a trifle?
9. What lesson must we learn from the fact that each new generation is an untaught generation?
10. Abel offered by faith? What did this *not* mean?
11. What did it mean?
12. Does his case have a message for us? If so, what is it?
13. What does it mean to do something "by faith"?
14. What kinds of worship are mentioned in the Bible?

The Man Whom God Took

(HEBREWS 11:5; GENESIS 5:22-24)

"That Enoch should immediately succeed Abel in this record of the ancient heroes of faith is not a little significant. How remarkable is 'the contrast between the fate of Abel and Enoch! The one was crushed to the earth by the hand of a brutal and ferocious murderer; the other was conveyed to heaven, most likely by the ministry of some benevolent intelligence. The one met death in its most repulsive form, and will probably be the longest tenant in the sepulchre; the other entirely escaped it, and was the first to possess the happiness of perfect and immortal humanity. There is something instructive in these characters being placed side by side on the page of revelation. The contrast seems to furnish an illustration of the mysterious diversities of fact and circumstance, which are perpetually occurring in the moral government of God.' " (*The Pulpit Commentary*, 321)

I. ENOCH WALKED WITH GOD

(1) Faith leads one to act. Where Paul in Heb. 11:5 said that Enoch was translated by faith, Moses said in Gen. 5:22-24 that Enoch walked with God, and was not for God took him. Faith acts.

(2) To walk with God one must agree with God's will. (Amos 3:3) Whatever dispensation a person lived under he had to accept God's will. It is still true today, although Enoch had to do some things doubtless that we do not, and we do some things which he did not do. For we live under different dispensations. But each must do what God's will had laid on him. Enoch doubtless offered animal sacrifices, we do not. We must be baptized into Christ (Gal. 3:26-27), Enoch was not. But what he did is not an example for us — except in the general principle of faithfulness to God; and the fact that he was not commanded to do some of the things that we are commanded to do does not excuse us from doing them.

II. GOD TOOK ENOCH

(1) God translated him. He was not, for God took him. People

searched for him (this is implied in "and was not found"), but Enoch had gone to glory without undergoing death. There is only one other case like this. (2 Kings 2:1-12)

(2) The miracle which God wrought for them He has not wrought for anyone else. Although there is no passage that says in so many words that you will not be translated, yet it is implied in the general principle of Heb. 9:27. We have no promise or expectation of such. This does not mean that God has changed or that God in a bad sense played favorites with them. It means that God has not seen fit to exercise His power in such a manner with reference to others. There are some people who think that any miracle in the Bible can be duplicated today, but they leave Enoch's case alone! Some think that if one believes hard enough that he can duplicate these miracles. This is false, for no such promise has been made to us and therefore we cannot believe that God will do this for us. In fact, it is contrary to Heb. 9:27.

III. YOU CAN BE TRANSLATED TWICE

(1) The translation everyone ought to undergo today. (Col. 1:13; Rom. 6:3-5)

(2) Translation from mortality to immortality, (a) The living saints will be translated. (1 Cor. 15:51-52) (b) Dead raised incorruptible. (1 Cor. 15:42-58)

(3) If we are to enter into eternal fellowship with God in eternity, we must walk by faith with Him in time. One cannot be out of fellowship with God here, and have the promise of fellowship with God in the hereafter. Walk with God if you want God to someday take you into eternity with Him.

QUESTIONS

1. What contrast is there between Abel's fate on earth and Enoch's? What can we learn from this?
2. What difference is there between the way Heb. 11:5 speaks of Enoch and Gen. 5:22-24?
3. What must we do in order to walk with God? (Amos 3:3)
4. What other case was similar to Enoch's? (2 Kings 2:1-12)
5. How do these cases help us to answer those who say that God has changed, or that God is guilty of favoritism, if He does not give us power to work miracles as He gave in the first century?
6. What translation should we undergo today? (Col. 1:13) How does this take place?
7. What translation shall Christians undergo in the future?
8. How are the two translations related?

The Faith of Noah

(HEBREWS 11:7)

The sinfulness of the world led God to destroy it. (Gen. 6:11-12) As Cameron has pointed out, when God's people were "nearly destroyed by the wickedness which prevailed, God announced to Noah, who had obtained grace in his sight, that he would cut off the whole human race except himself and his family. He commanded him to make an ark to preserve his household, with regard to the structure of which he gave him detailed directions. This overthrow was necessary to the preservation of the seed of promise. The deluge was an eminent example of God's method of upholding his cause on earth, as thereby he delivered his people from the pollution of the world. He saves by destruction. He overthrew many nations for the preservation of true religion. 'I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee; therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life.'" (Isa. 43:3-4)

I. NOAH BASED ALL ON CONFIDENCE IN GOD'S WORD

"His faith rested upon a Divine communication. (Gen. vi. 13-21) 1. *This basis was exclusive.* Noah had nothing else upon which to ground his faith — nothing which could serve as an auxiliary support to it. On the other hand, matters were not lacking which were calculated sorely to test his confidence, e.g.:

(1) The entire absence of any precedent of an event corresponding to that which had been announced to him. The world had existed long, but no such devastating flood had ever occurred.

(2) The uniformity of the courses and operations of nature. It surely would not have been strange if he had reasoned thus with himself — 'Not but by a miracle can this thing be. The fashion of the world we heretofore have never known to change; and will God change it now?'

(3) His own soul might have suggested serious doubts. Would God destroy all his human creatures — the creatures whom he had created

in his own likeness? True, the race had become terribly depraved, men were great sinners; but could he not save them? Would he destroy the innocent child as well as the hardened rebel? And would he wreck the beautiful and fertile earth which he had made and embellished? Or the question may have arisen — Why would he and his family alone be spared in the universal destruction? He was conscious of imperfections and sins, his family too were sinners; then why would the Almighty bestow His mercy upon them, and upon them only? To meet doubts and questions of this or any other kind, Noah had simply the word of God which had been made known unto him, and his faith rested upon that word. *This basis was sufficient for Noah.* He founded his faith upon the communication which he had received from God, as upon a rock; and his faith remained firm and steadfast throughout its protracted and severe trials. God had spoken to him, and that was enough for him." (*The Pulpit Commentary*, 323, 324)

II. NOAH'S FAITH

(1) It enabled him to accept as a coming fact a future reality, the flood.

(2) It enabled the future reality to have a practical influence on his life.

(3) Enabled him to endure the scoffing which must have come his way.

(4) Faith was careful to do just what God had commanded, without substitutions or modifications. (Gen. 6:22)

(5) Saved him from destruction by the flood. He would have perished if he had not built the ark by faith.

III. NOAH'S WORK

(1) Built the ark. Faith acted.

(2) Warned others. (2 Pet. 2:5)

IV. NOAH'S SALVATION

(1) Ark saved him from the waters of the flood which destroyed the wicked.

(2) The waters of the flood saved him from the wicked world. (1 Pet. 3:20-21) It was the line of demarcation. "God saves His people by the destruction of those who oppose them. This method of salvation was exemplified when he delivered Israel from Egypt; for, by cutting their enemies off, he set his people free. The ungodly among themselves, who tempted the rest to sin, perished in the wilderness. The nations of Canaan were overthrown before Israel." (Cameron)

V. THE WARNING WHICH COMES TO US

(1) World to be destroyed (2 Pet. 3:7-12), and the wicked separated

from the righteous. (Matt. 13:40-43) God is a God of justice as well as of mercy and those who spurn His mercy will reap the wages of their sinful life. (Rom. 6:23)

(2) Water constitutes the dividing line now. (1 Pet. 3:20-21; Gal. 3:26-27; Rom. 6:3-5) In Christ we must Rev. 2:10 in order to Jas. 1:12.

(3) We have been warned of God concerning things not seen as yet. Will we move with godly fear and enter God's ark of safety today — Christ. Or will we be like those who refuse to heed the warning, and were overtaken by the judgment of God? (Matt. 24:37-39) Faith should give present reality to the future judgment, and we should move with godly fear to do exactly what God has commanded.

QUESTIONS

1. Why did God send the flood? (Gen. 6:11-12)
2. In what way does God save by destruction and judgment?
3. On what did Noah's faith rest? Would sight have led Noah to expect the flood?
4. What are some things which reason could have suggested to show that there would be no flood?
5. What did Noah's faith enable him to do? How is it parallel to what our faith enables us to do?
6. How did Noah's faith work? Did it involve warning others?
7. Does 1 Pet. 3:20-21 refer to the salvation from the water in the ark? If not, to what salvation does it refer?
8. How, and about what, have we been warned?
9. In what sense is water the dividing line now?
10. Is baptism sufficient? (Rev. 2:10; Jas. 1:12)
11. What comparison is there between the flood and the judgment? (Matt. 24:37-39)
12. How does faith lead us to act in view of the coming judgment?

The Faith of Abraham

(HEBREWS 11:8-19)

Abraham is set before us as the father of the faithful (Rom. 4:12-13), and those who are Christ's are said to be Abraham's seed. (Gal. 3:26-29) His life of faith should be an encouragement to us. It will be noticed that his faith was a growing faith. It had its times of weakness, as is evident from the fact that twice he lied about his wife through fear. (Gen. 12:12-20; 20:1-18) This shows us that we ought not to become discouraged because we may falter and fall at times. Instead, let us arise and determine to grow in faith. Abraham grew in faith to such an extent that he believed Heb. 11:17-20.

The text brings before us several tests which Abraham's faith underwent.

I. THE SEPARATION FROM HIS HOMELAND

(1) Trusting in God's promise. (Heb. 11:8-10)

(2) God's promise to him has been fulfilled. (a) Made a great nation of him. (Gen. 12:2) (b) Made his name great. (Gen. 12:2) Both Jew and Christian look back to him as the father of the faithful, (c) Cursed those who cursed Abraham and blessed those who blessed him. (Gen. 12:3) (d) His seed Christ has been a blessing to people of various nations. (Gen. 22:18; Gal. 3:16) We can rest assured that God's promises to us will be fulfilled, if we are faithful to Him we shall receive His blessings.

II. THE CHILD OP PROMISE

(1) At one time Abraham and Sarah did not have sufficient faith to believe that they would have a child. Sarah once laughed inwardly at the idea. (Gen. 18:12-15) She and Abraham had once tried to arrange a plan, without God's consent, to fulfill the promise of a child. (Gen. 16)

(2) Abraham's and Sarah's faith finally grew so strong that Heb. 11:11-12; Rom. 4:19-21.

III. ISAAC OFFERED BY FAITH

(1) God's promise of a great nation to come through Isaac (Heb. 11:18), seemed in direct contradiction to God's commandment to sacrifice Isaac. (11:17) But Abraham's faith was so strong by now that he started to carry out the commandment with the belief that God would raise him from the dead in order to fulfill the promise through Isaac. (11:19)

(2) What took place, in that God provided the offering and did not demand the death of Isaac, is what God meant to take place. He never meant for Abraham to kill Isaac. In his heart he did offer Isaac up, and was about to do it in slaying Isaac. But God did not permit it. This showed conclusively that God did not demand, as did the pagan gods, that human beings offer up their children as a sacrifice for sin.

IV. WE ARE ALL PILGRIMS

(1) It may be that you fail to realize that you, too, are a pilgrim. You are just passing through. No one is staying on earth. Their confession, that they were pilgrims on earth (Heb. 11:13), did not make

them pilgrims. However, by their realization of it, they make preparation for their destiny. (11:14-16)

(2) No one knows when his pilgrimage will end. So let us live for the Lord each day that we may save ourselves and others.
V. DO YOU HAVE THE FAITH OF ABRAHAM?

(1) We do not have some of the same commandments which Abraham had, but we must have the same attitude of confidence in God's word that he had. His faith acted. He was not blessed because of faith alone, but because of a faith which functioned. He acted on God's word even when it seemed foolish, to human wisdom, to do so.

(2) Some people think it foolish that God should give remission of sins to the believing penitent who is baptized into Christ. (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38) But faith takes God at His word and acts in harmony with His commandments, and confidently expects that He will be as good as His word and grant the promised blessings. Are you a child of God by faith? Are you Abraham's seed? You are if Gal. 3:26-29.

QUESTIONS

1. What is our relationship to Abraham? (Rom. 4:12-13; Gal. 3:26-29)
2. How do we know that Abraham's faith was not always strong? Was he just a young man when he lied about his wife? What lessons can we learn from his weakness. Does this show that faith does not always have smooth sailing, and that although we start right it does not mean we shall have no setbacks?
3. What two examples of his faith are found in Heb. 11:8-10?
4. What promises did God make to Abraham? Have they been fulfilled?
5. Did Sarah always believe God's promise?
6. Did Sarah and Abraham think that God's promise could not be fulfilled unless they figured out their own way to fulfill it?
7. How strong did their faith become? (Rom. 4:19-21) How can we be sure that we are depending on what God has promised? Does this refer to what we may have promised ourselves or what others may have promised us?
8. How did the promise of God and the command of God seem to conflict with reference to Isaac? (Heb. 11:17-18)
9. How strong was Abraham's faith? (Heb. 11:19)
10. How does Isaac's case show God did not want human sacrifice?
11. Who provided the offering? (Gen. 22:13) Who is our sacrifice for sins?
12. Did their confession make them pilgrims? (Heb. 11:13-16) Is everyone a pilgrim?
13. Do we know when the pilgrimage will end?
14. Did the patriarchs realize that this earth was not their final home? (Heb. 11:13, 16)
15. How does Abraham's case show that faith must act?
16. What must faith do in order for one to come into Christ? to abide in Christ?
17. How can we be sure that we are children of God?

Jericho Fell by Faith

(HEBREWS 11:30)

This case, like other cases in Heb. 11, indicates that when something is accomplished by faith it is not a dead faith, by faith alone, but by living faith; a faith which functioned in meeting whatever conditions God laid down.

I. JERICHO WAS A GIFT WHICH WAS RECEIVED BY FAITH

(1) Jericho a gift (Joshua 6:2, 16), but it had to be received by a faith which submitted to God's conditions.

(2) Salvation is a gift (Rom. 6:23), but it must be received by the faith which submits to God's conditions. (John 3:16; Heb. 5:8-9; Gal. 5:6; Gal. 3:26-27)

II. THE FAITH BY WHICH JERICHO FELL WAS A FAITH WHICH FUNCTIONED

(1) It fell by faith after faith had met the conditions which God laid down. (11:30) The people had to do something. (Joshua 6:3-6) There was no cause and effect relationship between the conditions and the falling of the walls. We cannot walk around a walled city in that manner and bring the walls down. It was God's power which brought the walls down, and He had ordained that when faith had functioned in harmony with His conditions that He would bring the walls down. The people had to do something, but they could not boast of what they had done. What they did seemed foolish to the eyes of men who did not believe God's word. It was a very "unmilitary" way to bring down the walls of a city. But it was brought down by God's power, and not by man's wisdom and force.

(2) The faith which saves us is not a dead faith (Jas. 2:14-26), but a faith which functions and meets the conditions which God had laid down. It seems foolish to the world to be saved by the cross. (I Cor. 1:18-21) It seems foolish to people that we must meet by faith such a condition as baptism (I Cor. 1:18-21), but faith meets it for it recognized that Rom. 6:3-5, 17, 18.

III. HISTORY SHOWS THAT JERICHO DID FALL

John Garstang wrote: *"How the Walls Fell*. The visible effects of this catastrophe were summarized in a field report (dated March 2nd, 1930) endorsed by brother archaeologists from which we quote the following description: 'The main defences of Jericho in the late Bronze Age followed the upper brink of the city mound, and comprised two parallel walls, the outer six feet and the inner twelve feet thick. Investigations along the west side show continuous signs of destruction and conflagration. The outer wall suffered most, its remains falling down the slope. The inner wall is preserved only where it abuts upon the citadel, or tower, to a height of eighteen feet; elsewhere it is found

largely to have fallen, together with the remains of buildings upon it, into the space between the walls which was filled with ruins and debris. Traces of intense fire are plain to see, including reddened masses of brick, cracked stones, charred timbers and ashes. Houses alongside the wall were found burnt to the ground, their roofs fallen upon the domestic pottery within." (John Garstang, *The Story of Jericho*, 136)

Garstang thought that an earthquake brought down the walls. "One conclusion indeed seems certain: the power that could dislodge hundreds of tons of masonry in the way described must have been superhuman. Earthquake is the one and only known agent capable of the demonstration of force indicated by the observed facts; and there is reason to believe that in this lies the real answer to our question. Not only does Jericho lie in a volcanic zone which is never wholly free from earthquake shocks, but the evidence of the site itself, as revealed by our excavations, points incontestably to this solution." (*Ibid*, 138)

If it was an earthquake it was one which the Lord sent and which He localized sufficiently that the children of Israel were not destroyed by it, but that it did the work that He wanted done with reference to the destruction of the city, and also spared Rahab's house so that no one in it was destroyed.

Archaeologists have found that the city was burnt with fire. "One gets used to 'burnt layers' in excavations of this kind, for it was the usual fate of houses and cities to perish by fire; but this was no ordinary burning. The layer of ashes was so thick and the signs of intense heat so vivid, that it gave the impression of having been contrived, that fuel had been added to the fire. Amongst the embers were traces of charred reeds and bits of wood: it is true that such materials were employed locally to roof the houses, but here was ten times more than was necessary for that purpose, and traces were equally abundant outside the house areas as within. It was the same between the city walls, where in places the pile of burnt matter was as much as five feet high, and the inner face of the main walls still showed clear signs of the conflagration for several years after it had been exposed. It looks, in short, as though Jericho was finally burnt after deliberate preparation; that it was in fact devoted as a holocaust, precisely in the manner described in the Book of Joshua: '*They burnt the city with fire and all that was therein.*' (vi. 24)

"In addition then to the coincidence in date, another of the points which we set out to examine may be regarded as established, namely, that the destruction of the Fourth City corresponds in all material particulars with the Biblical narrative of the Fall of Jericho before the Israelites under Joshua." (*Ibid*, p. 142)

"The mound of the ancient city covered some 7 acres, being 1100 feet long by 500 feet broad, and rising about 40 feet above the plain. 'All of Canaanite Jericho,' says Barton, 'could be put in the Colosseum at Rome.'

"The wall surrounding the city was found to be double, both con-

structed of sun-dried mud brick; the outer wall, which was the older of the two, being about 5 feet thick, and the inner one, 10 feet. Over the space between them, cross beams of timber had been laid, and upon the timber ordinary buildings such as Rahab's house, had been built. (Josh. 2:15) In Sellin's judgment, 'Ancient Jericho must have been an exceptionally well fortified place.'

"In 1929 the task of excavating Jericho took a new direction. Sir Charles Marston organized a new expedition, and for five successive winter seasons (1929-1933), under Prof. Garstang's directorship, the work went forward. Sellin and Watzinger had already found ample proof that the city at one time had been burned; and they had unearthed on the eastern edge of the city, the foundations of a large stone building which they identified as probably the palace or fortress of the city, which had been rebuilt by Hiel of Bethel (I Kings 16:34), in defiance of Joshua's curse. (Josh. 6:26)" (G. L. Robinson, 174, 175) For a further discussion of Jericho, read Walter J. Beasley, *Jericho's Judgment*.

Scholars, endeavoring to determine the time of the fall of Jericho by archaeological research, are uncertain as to the exact time. Some have dated it at 1400 B.C. (Garstang), some between 1350 B.C. and 1200 B.C. (See G. Ernest Wright, 107-108). As long as there is some uncertainty as to the time that the Bible dates the fall of Jericho, and since there is uncertainty among the archaeologists, he would be a rash man indeed to maintain that the Bible and archaeology conflict. It also should be borne in mind, that Jericho may have fallen to more than one enemy at more than one time. (See Donovan A. Courville, *The Exodus Problem and Its Ramifications*, Caldwell, Idaho: Bible Science Ass'n.)

IV. YOU MUST WALK BY FAITH

(1) Jericho did not fall by faith until they had in faith done what God commanded.

(2) You cannot become a Christian without doing by faith what God has commanded. In itself, there was no cause and effect relationship between the walking and the falling of the walls. But God had ordained that His power would go into operation, and bring down the walls, when they did as He commanded. There is no cause and effect relationship within themselves of the believing penitent being baptized into Christ and obtaining the remission of sins. But God has ordained that when faith acts according to His authorization He forgives us. (Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:2-5, 17-18)

QUESTIONS

1. How do we know that something may be a gift, and yet one must receive it by faith?
2. How do we know that faith involves the works of faith?
3. Did the works of faith have the power to bring down Jericho's walls? What power brought down the walls?
4. Does archaeology indicate that Jericho was destroyed?

The Faith of Rahab

(HEBREWS 11:31; JAMES 2:25)

The fact that faith must work in order to justify an individual is seen from what Paul attributed to faith (Heb. 11:31), James attributed to works. (Jas. 2:25) These works were works of faith, although they were not works which merited her justification. Paul indicates that the faith which justified her was the faith which worked since she did what she could for the spies.

I. HER NATIONALITY

"She was a Canaanite, one of a race devoted to destruction, on account of their atrocious wickedness. She belonged to the Amorites, the worst tribe of that people, a branch of the Canaanites which were leaders in sin; for, when God ratified the covenant with Abraham, he referred to them, saying: 'The iniquity of the Amorite is not yet full.' (Gen. 15:16) . . . She was in a very unfavorable position, seeing that she was all her life surrounded by an ungodly people among whom she was brought up in ignorance of the true God. . . ." (Cameron, II, 354)

God has authority over the life of man, and He has the right to say when men had so conducted themselves that they had forfeited their right to live. He, however, waited until they had had abundant opportunity to repent. They did not, but ripened in their wickedness until they were ripe for punishment. (Gen. 15:16) His goodness and mercy is shown in that He spared -people when they repented. Rahab believed in God, and God spared her and all who had faith enough to assemble in her house. "If all the inhabitants of the city had like them turned to God, we have reason to believe that they would be spared also." (Cameron, II, 356)

From the destruction of these people we can learn: (a) God's face is set against sin. (b) He will not always continue to bear with sinners, (c) That sin is exceedingly sinful, (d) That judgment is certain to those who reject God and walk in their own ways.

II. RAHAB'S LIFE HAD BEEN EVIL

"If we had been spectators on the day on which the walls of Jericho fell, we might observe one part of the wall still standing with the house built upon it. When we approach to inspect it we see a line of scarlet suspended on the outside from a window; we see two men of Israel' enter it, they take the inmates out, they leave them in a safe place until the work of destruction is finished, and then they carefully conduct them to the camp of Israel. Surely they must have been a

holy family, who lived in virtue all of their days, when they are thus distinguished from their neighbours. On examination we learn that the house was a place of public entertainment of evil repute, for its mistress was an harlot. The house might not be the worst of its class in the city, seeing that worthy strangers put up there, but this is the name given to Rahab, a word nowhere used in Scripture but in an evil sense. When we know this, we ask how it happened that the whole family was not among the first involved in the overthrow of the city." (Cameron, II, 354-355)

Why were they spared and the others were not? The difference was faith. See what a difference faith makes!

III. THE FAITH OF RAHAB

(1) Her faith was so strong that she risked her life in order to hide the two men of Israel. (Josh. 2:1-8) She enabled them to escape. (2:15-16)

(2) She believed that God had given them the land. (2:9-11) Terror has helped lead some to accept God. Terror has a part in awakening men to their awful condition. The severity of God, as well as the goodness of God leads us to repentance. (Rom. 2:1-5) Alarm, however, is not enough. It must lead us to an actual change of mind and heart. The people in Acts 2:37 were alarmed, but mere alarm is not repentance although it may precede and help bring about repentance. What they were told. (Acts 2:38)

(3) She believed that God was "God in heaven above, and in earth beneath." (Joshua 2:11)

(4) She requested that the Lord spare her and her family. (2:12-13)

(5) The people to be spared had to come into her house, and she had to bind a line of scarlet thread in the window. (2:18-19)

IV. WHEN JERICHO FELL SHE WAS SPARED (Josh. 6:17, 25)

V. WILL YOU PERISH?

God has announced the doom that awaits the sinner. Will you perish, or will you avoid such a doom by having a faith which works. You cannot hang a scarlet thread out of the window as did Rahab. You must come the scarlet route, however, for you must come the blood route. You must believe the gospel in your heart, and obey it from the heart in being baptized into the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. (Rom. 6:3-5, 17-18) You must be raised to the new life.

QUESTIONS

1. How do you harmonize Heb. 11:31 that Rahab was justified by faith, and James' statement that it was by works? (Jas. 2:25)
2. Why was God destroying the Canaanites? What lessons can we learn from this?
3. Why was Rahab spared? How do we know she had faith?

The Race Before Us

(HEBREWS 12:1-13)

With the example of the heroes of faith of past centuries before us, we ought to be encouraged to run the race of faith with perseverance. Concerning the cloud of witnesses A. B. Davidson wrote: "The notion of spectators seems foreign to the connection, the point of which is not that they beheld us, but that we behold them. Undoubtedly they are conceived as in a sense present, for we are surrounded by them; they and we have been made perfect together. The point, however, is the stimulus which their example and presence should be to us, not that we are running under their eye and subject to their verdict, or that they are absorbed in the interest of our struggle. . . . A dear memory of one departed is more powerful to us than the example of the living. The heroes of the past are present with us in their spirit and example, and in the great deeds which they did. They surround us as a cloud, and we realize their presence, without supposing that they are conscious of us." (A. B. Davidson, 233)

I. THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS A RACE

(1) It is a race appointed by the Lord and which we must run.

(2) One must enter the race or he can never gain the prize.

(3) One must run the appointed course. "They must run on the appointed course, for those who take shorter or smoother ways shall forfeit the prize. Some turn out of the course when they find it rough by the trials of opposition or other afflictions. When they find that uprightness exposes them to worldly losses, self-restraint, or the hatred of men, they take a smoother road. Such may run fast in their own crooked ways, but God will not acknowledge them." (Cameron, II, 454)

(4) One must run in the right direction. "They must run in the right direction, for the faster one runs in the wrong direction the farther he goes from the appointed goal. All men run to eternity, while none but believers run on the way that leads to heaven. Whether ungodly sinners go on rough or smooth paths, they all run toward the same dismal end. We cannot wish them speed, because they walk on

the road that leads to eternal death. On this way there are men of different characters: some are sober, others are dissipated; some are upright, others are dishonest; some are irreligious, others are formally devout; but notwithstanding these diversities they go toward the same miserable end." (*Ibid.*, 455)

II. THE RACER MUST TAKE HEED TO HIMSELF

(1) He must lay aside weights which would interfere with his running. "In the ancient races the competitors divested themselves of all encumbrances that would impede their progress by preventing the free action of their limbs. No matter how becoming their garments might be, or how costly their valuables which they carried about them, they laid them aside when they seriously meant to win." (*Ibid.*, 455)

"Every weight. The word means what exceeds the proper extent or mass of anything — what is superfluous. Said of a runner, the word may refer to clothing or undue fleshiness of body, or whatever would weigh him down in the race. This, if he is to run with success, must be laid aside before attempting to run. Interpreted, the reference may be to social or national connections, as those in which the Hebrews were involved; or to bodily or mental peculiarities of the individual, as love of ease (vi. 12), or esteem (xiii. 14), or wealth (x. 32-34). . . . The Hebrews probably were aware of the things that were so in their case; now, perhaps, we shall only become aware of them when we actually find them impeding us in the race." (Davidson, 233)

"The Christian runner must rid himself even of innocent things which might retard him. And all that does not help, hinders. It is by running he learns what these things are. So long as he stands he does not feel that they are burdensome and hampering." (*The Expositor's Greek Testament*, IV, 365)

Are you being hindered by the cares of this world, the love of pleasure, the deceitfulness of riches? Is some friendship with an unbeliever such that you are allowing him to lead you from things spiritual?

(2) The sin which doth so easily beset. (12:1) Many commentators think that this refers to the sin of apostasy "or defection from their Christian profession; against which the whole epistle is directed. They were under peculiar temptation to this sin, in consequence of the persecution which they endured, and of their former prejudices in favour of Judaism." (Moses Stuart, 510) Doddridge thought that it was "a disposition to relinquish or dissemble the Gospel, for fear of suffering." But since it is a lack of faith which is underneath apostasy, and since the context had emphasized the need for faith, it may well be that this has reference to the sin of unbelief.

(3) One must run with patience, with endurance. Too often some have a limited conception of patience. They think that it is wholly passive, and that the patient person is one who waits. He may well be

a patient person, but he might even be a lazy person. At times patience, endurance, does involve the idea of bearing whatever may be our lot, but it is also something which is active in that we endure, continue, in the race. Running with patience or endurance is certainly not something which is passive.

"The word 'patience' is often rendered long-suffering, lit. length of mind, whether as opposed to shortness of temper or anger, or to despondency. It is here patient waiting for that which is long deferred, and is allied to hope. There is another patience (x. 36, xii. 1, and the verb, x. 32, xii. 2, 3, 7) which means patient bearing up under afflictions, and is akin to faith. The subject of the present passage to the end of the chapter is hope." (Davidson, 225)

(4) One must not allow persecutions to keep him from running well the race. (Heb. 12:3-11)

III. THINGS WHICH MOTIVATE US TO RUN THE RACE

(1) The fact that others have been faithful—the cloud of witnesses. (12:1)

(2) The fact that Jesus endured all that we endure and much more. (12:2-3) As Herman Hoeksema said: "And patience is the strength to endure hardship and suffering for Christ's sake. For if Christ be in us, and we have become new creatures in Him, and we walk no longer in darkness, but in the light of life, we must expect opposition. They hated Him, they will also hate us. The more faithful we are, and the more we hold fast to our profession of His name, not only in word but also in all our walk and conversation, the more this opposition of the world will reveal itself. The world, carnal men, will contradict us. And if, then, we should grow wearied and faint in our minds, discouraged, and inclined to hang the harp in the willows, and to give up the battle, it is time we look upon the Author and Finisher of our faith. It is true, there is also a cloud of witnesses: the saints that have gone before us, that lived and battled and died by faith. They, too, endured the contradiction of all the world. But at the head of them all stands Jesus. He was contradicted more than any other. If, therefore, we are contradicted for His name's sake, we may gather courage, considering, first of all, that exactly in our being contradicted by the world we are in good company; and, secondly, that even as He endured unto glory and victory, so by His grace we may also endure." (69-70)

(3) The fact that Jesus is the author and finisher of faith. (12:2) Davidson said: "The thought seems to be that in the career of faith He led the way, and perfectly realized the idea, and finished the course of it without fail." (234)

Sampson thinks that "The author teaches us that Christ engages us in this race at first, that it is His help and strength which bring us to the goal, and that it is He who crowns us with glory at the last." (437)

- (4) Keep one's eyes on Christ.
- (5) See the joy and reward which is before us.
- (6) Recognize that we have not suffered unto blood as have some. (12:4)
- (7) Regard persecutions as discipline from God, which can educate us. (12:5-11)
- (8) So brace up. (12:12-13)

"The apostle still retains the metaphor of the race with which he opens the chapter. The competitors needed activity in such contests. If the strength of hands and knees failed they would certainly lose. As weak hands and feeble knees are often symptoms of constitutional debility or exhaustion, the figure signifies either a heartlessness in spiritual exercises, or despondency. It is not only our duty to guard against yielding to these infirmities, but also to encourage those whose activity in spiritual things is manifestly diminishing because their hope of success is becoming weaker. Indifference to the spiritual prosperity of others indicates serious weakness in ourselves, if not an entire absence of life. Decaying vitality is often recovered by putting forth efforts to stimulate others who are in a similar state of debility." (Cameron, II, 484)

(9) Encourage others. (12:13) "The whole verse forms an admonition to the healthier portion of the church to make no deviation from the straight course set before them by the example of Christ, and thus they would offer no temptation to the weaker members (the lame and limping) to be turned quite out of the way, but would rather be an encouragement to them and so afford them an opportunity of being healed of their infirmity." (*Expositor's Greek Testament*, IV, 369)

IV. YOU AND THE RACE

- (1) If you have already entered it, are you running well? (Gal. 5:7-8)
- (2) If you have not already entered it, will you enter now? (2 Tim. 2:5; Rom. 6:2-5, 17-18; Gal. 3:26-27)

QUESTIONS

1. What cloud of witnesses surrounds us? What do you think this means?
2. What are some things which are true about a race which are true concerning the Christian life?
3. What are some of the weights we have to lay aside?
4. What does it mean to run with patience?
5. What are some of the things which motivate us to run the race?

It Is for Education That Ye Endure

(HEBREWS 12:3-13)

Christians must run with patience the race. We are encouraged by being told to look to Jesus who endured because of the joy set before Him. (12:1-2) They were not to faint because sinners opposed them, for Jesus knew what it was to endure such, even unto death.

Our faith has not cost us our lives, as it has others, and as it cost Jesus to make redemption possible so that we can run the race. (12:4) How insignificant our sufferings, which we endure for Christ, when compared with His!

I. EDUCATIONAL PROCESS

(1) We should regard the opposition and gainsaying of sinners as a part of our educational process. "The purpose of the hardship Christians have to endure ... is *paideia*, a term which embraces the chastening of children (*paides*), their discipline or training generally, and then (as it pertains to their intellect and spiritual nature) their education." (Gleason L. Archer, Jr., 88)

As Johannes Schneider points out: "The Church must pass through the school of suffering. That follows quite naturally and of necessity from the fact of our being God's children. Everybody who is a son must experience discipline and nurture. Otherwise God will not attain his purpose with us. Sufferings, according to biblical insight, belong to the great educative means of God. Indeed, chastisement appears in the Letter of Hebrews to be even a privilege of a son. This distinguishes him from the illegitimate descendant, the bastard, who has no claim to the inheritance. This chastisement always contains the bestowal of grace and love. Through the divine educative discipline the believer is to participate in God's holiness and to harvest the fruit of suffering for righteousness' sake. The divine pedagogy leads the believer to a 'height of purity and perfection of moral life' (Riggenback) unattainable through any human system of education. The God who disciplines us is the 'Father of spirits.' This means that He is the creator of life, and that His will as the educator of His children is directed toward but one end, namely, that they may participate in the imperishable life which is His by virtue of His being the primeval ground for all spiritual life.

"The author of the Letter — I am convinced — knows full well that the meaning of suffering is not always immediately discernible. It takes much grace for a person to learn to understand the hidden mystery of the blessing of suffering. The first sensation which all of us instinctively feel in the presence of suffering is that of 'sorrowfulness.' We are dismayed, discouraged, filled with grief. We are disconsolate and cannot grasp that suddenly we should be torn away from

life's rich opportunities and that the use of our powers should be hindered at all. Often it takes a long time before we understand what God wants to say to us in our suffering. But when the mystery of God's dealings with us has been revealed, then it may happen that we not only resign ourselves to God's will, but that our very sadness is turned into 'joy,' that is to say, we arrive at the full affirmation of the divine educative dealings with us. He who has reached that stage where sorrow is changed into joy has reached inward maturity; he is on his way to the perfection of his being.

"The author of our Letter confirmed in his assertion concerning suffering a grand tradition. In the Old Testament we find again and again the idea that suffering is to be understood as part of God's educative design; and the New Testament is rich in statements with respect to the blessings of suffering. The apostles learned from Jesus that there is a joy in suffering, and that this joy is to be counted among the greatest blessings in a Christian life." (117-119)

(2) The apostle is speaking of those things which we have to endure because we are God's children (10:32-39), and of the "gainsayings of sinners" against Christ, and, by implication, of His having resisted even unto death in His running the race and doing God's will. (12:3) Therefore, the apostle is not saying that everything which happens to us in life, things which happen to sinners as well as to saints, are the discipline or chastening of the Lord of which he here speaks. If it were, then it would mean that the gainsaying sinners were God's children for they, too, undergo suffering and illness which is the common fate of mankind. However, as we shall observe, we can even learn from the ills which are common to both unregenerate and regenerate humanity.

II. A PROOF OF SONSHIP

Of course, every person who suffers is not thereby proven to be a son of God. We must be born again, and we must live the Christian life. The suffering is the suffering which we endure as a result of our being faithful children. As G. H. Lang said: "The word translated chastisement 'signifies all those steps which a parent takes to educate, correct, train the boy he loves and fit him for his post and privileges in life.'" (237) What does it prove?

(1) It proves that we are God's children. We are a "genuine son of the house, for a father does not chasten another man's child. . . ." (Lang) "Chastening is a part of a father's training, and one of the marks of sonship. Submission to chastening forms and proves the truly childlike character. God's chastening makes us partakers of God's holiness." (490) "Let the child of God learn the lesson — suffering is chastening, the chastening of love . . . it enables us to be 'in the right attitude for bearing and being blessed by it.'" (Murray, 490-491)

(2) It proves we are not bastards, we are not illegitimate. We are not one who is not a "member of the family, or his training would be neglected." (Lang) ". . . if Christians were to escape any *paideia*, this

might indicate, not fatherly favor, but the neglect and indifference a man might show towards a spurious child . . . presumably a product of marital infidelity, hence a hypocritical professor who tries to serve both God and Mammon at the same time, who is not regarded as truly belonging to God's household." (Archer)

How many parents treat their children as not really of their household? They do this through a permissiveness which does not exercise any sort of discipline. Discipline includes far more than a switching when a little child needs it. It includes all those admonitions, corrections, examples, exhortations, encouragements, praise, blame, instruction, and punishments which are designed to educate the child. We are not to be brutal, we are not to put the child under such pressure that we provoke him to wrath, "but nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord." (Eph. 6:4) Discipline, education, is not something which should start after the child is several years old, and then suddenly clamp down on him. It is something that starts from the very beginning of life and involves all of those things whereby we try to educate them to become what they ought. Christians should realize that children differ and that one cannot discipline all of them alike. What will work with one may not work with another. Mistakes will be made, and often one will be driven to his knees before God as he or she asks for help and wisdom in the education of the child in the right way. Too many parents are inconsistent, and discipline only when angry. Some do not really love the child, but only themselves and the child as he reflects credit on them. We must love the child, and one does not know love unless he can love even the child who gives him problems.

(3) The child (although he at the time may find the discipline irksome or even painful), who develops the proper attitude, respects his father (and the father must try to so live as to gain the child's respect), and gives him "reverence." Human fathers make mistakes, but God does not. Therefore, how much more should we be in subjection to God and live? (12:9)

(4) Our human fathers act within the realm of their shortcomings, and their lack of understanding and knowledge at times —: even though they may be doing the best they know, but God does not make mistakes and His object is our holiness. (12:10) "Human training is very brief, 'a few days' — (Note this instance of 'day' meaning a period. Compare 'hour' in John 4:23, 24 and 'moment' in II Cor. 4:17). But God is training His children for eternity, and He takes care that education shall suit the destiny. For the central, vital necessity is holiness." (Lang, 238)

III. CHASTENING IS PAINFUL

(1) That the chastening is from the Lord does not mean that it is not painful. "As an old believer said, when speaking of one of the promises, Yes, it is blessedly true; but still it hurts." (Murray, 492)

(2) However, it should not result in bitterness, disillusionment, or

defeat. We look to the ultimate fruit, when it is rightly borne. (12:1-2, 11) It results in the peaceable fruit of righteousness.

(3) However, it results in this only if we take it in the right spirit, as the chastening of the Lord. We must be exercised thereby. The word for exercise referred to gymnastic training and was "appropriate for an athlete preparing for victory." (Archer) "The word exercise (*gymnasticize*) carries the picture of the Greek gymnasium where youths were trained for athletic contests. The prizes were coveted, the struggle arduous, the training correspondingly severe." (Lang) Weakness must be detected and eliminated. The runner actually suffers pain as he exercises and deliberately tries to increase his speed or lengthen his endurance. He does not enjoy the pain but views the goal as sufficient justification to endure the pain. We must face the pain with the right attitude, and see not just the moment but the ultimate goal.

IV. CHASTENING YIELDS GOOD FRUIT

(1) Its objective is our holiness, and it yields fruit of righteousness to those who are exercised thereby. (12:10-11)

(2) In view of these things, we are told to brace up, instead of letting persecution crush or discourage us. (12:12-13) "Take courage, he says, and gird yourselves for the race — without it the prize can never be won." Don't let lameness continue, but get things in joint; be healed. (Murray, 495) Straighten up and fly right, so to speak. (Rom. 5:3-5)

(3) One must not expect that the Christian's life will be without opposition (Matt. 5:10-12), or that it is not, spiritually speaking a strenuous life. It is a race which demands endurance, it is a life which involves opposition, but by accepting the Father's discipline and keeping our eye on the goal we can run a rocky and rough road since it leads home.

(4) Some lessons we can learn from the chastening, (a) We shall not be tempted above what we can bear. (1 Cor. 10:12-13) (b) God can work in His providence so that what men mean for evil God can overrule for our discipline, and the spread of His kingdom, and the accomplishment of other purposes which He may have in mind. (Gen. 45:5; 50:20) This does not relieve the guilty of their responsibility for their mistreatment of God's people, (c) God may use someone to chastise people because of their sins, and then punish the one who did it for he did it through evil motives. (Isa. 10:4-9) (d) We are reminded that we are not of this world, that there is a war between God and the world, and that we must endure as good soldiers of the cross, (e) It emphasizes to us that this earth is not our home, (f) We can learn that God is not so much interested in making us comfortable all the days of our lives as He is in making us holy. Some assume that if one is a Christian, God will not let anything happen to him. Hebrews assures us that we need chastening which, when rightly endured, produces the fruit of righteousness and holiness, (g) It emphasizes that it is essential

to endure. (h) We are assured that we can be victorious through Christ.

V. WHAT ABOUT THOSE THINGS TO WHICH ALL FLESH IS HEIR?

Hebrews is speaking of the persecution, of one type or another, and hardships which we encounter as a result of our being Christians. It is not speaking of the ills to which saint and sinner may both fall heir. How shall we face these? We should try to learn from them, and try to face them with faith in God.

(1) In some cases opposition may come not because of the gospel, but because we went at things the wrong way, we were mean in our presentation, we thought we had to put salt and pepper on the sword of the Spirit in order to give it an additional sting. Reflecting on this should lead us not to view it as persecution for righteousness, but as opposition due to our lack of conduct as a Christian. We should repent, apologize, and do better.

(2) We may be involved in accident, or overtaken by sickness which was not our fault. From this we can learn the uncertainty of life, the need to do each day what the Lord will have us to do, to be careful lest we cause someone else to be involved in an accident, and to cultivate the attitude — as well as use the expression from time to time — "if God will." (Jas. 4:13-17)

(3) We may learn that certain things are happening to us because we are violating some of God's physical laws. This can lead us to a greater effort to live by these laws.

VI. LET US NOT FAINT BUT RUN THE RACE WITH PATIENCE UNTO THE VERY END

(1) We should not faint because of persecution or other things that may happen. (Heb. 12:1-2; Rom. 8:17-18)

(2) We should not become bogged down in the everyday affairs of life so that we fail to keep our eye on the eternal goal.

(3) If you are not a child of God, become one today. (John 3:1-5)

QUESTIONS

1. How does Christ's example encourage us to endure persecution?
2. In what sense is that which we endure a part of an educational process?
3. Is reference made to the things common to saint and to sinner or to those things we suffer for Christ's sake?
4. Is the chastening a proof of sonship?
5. Is chastening profitable to everyone? If not, to whom is it profitable?
6. Does chastening mean that the experience is not painful?
7. What good fruits can chastening yield?
8. What can we learn from those experiences and ills which are common to mankind?
9. In view of the fact that chastening can yield good fruits, what are we to do? (12:12-13)

Root of Bitterness

(HEBREWS 12:14-17)

The writer has made numerous appeals to motivate Christians to run with patience the race set before them. (12:1) He has spoken of: (a) The cloud of witnesses. (12:1) (b) Christ. (12:2-4) (c) Their faith has not cost them their lives yet. (12:4) (d) God deals with them as sons whom He chastens. (12:5-9) (e) Chastening or discipline when endured yields fruit. (12:10-13) (f) Our aim should be to be at peace with men, although sometimes this is impossible. (Rom. 12:18) We must also remain sanctified or set apart for God's service, or we shall not see the Lord. (Heb. 12:14; John 17:17) (g) We must guard against falling short of God's grace. (12:15) (h) We must beware of any root of bitterness. (12:15) (i) Beware of fornicators or profane persons. (12:16) (j) There is a time when it is too late. (12:17)

In this lesson let us consider the root of bitterness. (12:15)

I. WHAT IS THE ROOT OF BITTERNESS?

(1) It is something which can spring up in their midst, trouble them and lead many to be defiled. (12:16) The "root of bitterness" is a "bitter root" and Narborough thought that the "meaning is a poisonous growth which spreads decay around it. The reference in Deut. 29:18 is to apostasy issuing in moral corruptness. For the moral corruptness in the present context see the next verse." (Narborough, 143) A rotten apple can spoil a barrel of apples if it remains long enough in the barrel. We are not apples and can repel the influence of evil people. (Rev. 2:12-17, 18:25)

(2) We must not only guard against the influence of evil, but if people persist in evil doing the church has to withdraw from them. (1 Cor. 5:1-13)

II. ROOT OF BITTERNESS WITHIN THE INDIVIDUAL

A root of bitterness which leads to corruption and the falling away from the faith can spring up in any of us. Corruption first springs up in the individual and then spreads to those whom the individual influences. A bitter root may arise in **our** lives which makes us bitter against God and humanity. What are some things which lead some to be bitter and turn from God's grace to corruption?

(1) When persecuted for righteousness' sake, there are those who

cannot see how a just God can allow such to happen to them. They become bitter and fall away in spite of all the encouragement mentioned in the introduction. (Heb. 12:1-13) They think that because they have done right, others ought to respond by doing good unto them. The cross shows us that doing good may result in people doing evil to us; especially when our stand for the good disturbs them in their sins which they do not want to forsake, or hurts their ungodly way of making money. We must not be bitter toward God or man. (Eph. 4:31)

(2) A root of bitterness can spring up when our love is met with indifference, or when people act as if it is deserved and take it for granted, or when it is met with hostility. Again, the cross shows us that love when demonstrated in the highest degree, may be met with indifference and with crucifixion at the hands of some. Parents must guard against bitterness when growing children may do things they know will hurt the parents. We must let them know we love them even though we disapprove of some things they do.

(3) Our good deeds may be met with ingratitude, or people may have misunderstood and misjudged our motives, and we may decide to quit.

(4) A missionary may become bitter because the people do not welcome him, or because brethren at home may let him down, or because they may not appreciate what he has been trying to do. The same thing can happen to a preacher or any other worker in God's vineyard.

(5) We may try to warn people of the danger of sin and its eternal consequences and they may be indifferent, make fun of us, or become hostile. We see this in matters wherein we tell people of the danger of their health in certain things which they are doing. Or in trying to warn people of the dangers of communism. Two men, one a former Communist, tried to get a businessman (who would lose both money and life if the Communists took over) to help in the fight against communism. He was not interested. He was apathetic, and thought they were excited about a remote or non-existent danger. As they left, one said he had worked for years against communism, and for his troubles he had often been attacked and it had cost him time, trouble, and money. Why not quit? The former Communist replied: We all stand to lose all that freedom means, the values that we prize, if communism wins. We who have seen the danger, we who know what is happening, we cannot be true to God, to ourselves, to our friends, to our country, and to the world, if we do not do what we can to warn others. We who have seen and understood must speak out as effectively as possible. In one of my conversations with Alexandra Tolstoy, Leo Tolstoy's daughter, she was discouraged both because of the internal moral decay in America, the growth of communism, and the apathy of many people. She saw parallels between the attitudes in Russia before the Communist takeover and the present attitudes in the U. S. She and I agreed, however, that regardless of the outcome it was our duty to warn others

about this menace which denies God, Christ, the moral law, the fact that man is made in God's image, and which seeks ultimately — although they will cooperate with religious people when it serves their purposes in one way or another—to build a godless world. We agreed that when it came to the right, we struggle because it is right and not because we are guaranteed to win.

This calls to mind the statements of another former Communist, Whittaker Chambers. He spoke concerning the dedicated collectivists — whether Communists or Fascists — and said "that it can be fought only by the force of an intelligence, a faith, a courage, a self-sacrifice, which must equal the revolutionary spirit. . . .Counter-revolution and conservatism have little in common. In the struggle against communism the conservative is all but helpless. For that struggle cannot be fought, much less won, or even understood, except in terms of total sacrifice. And the conservative is suspicious of sacrifice; he wishes first to conserve, above all what he is and what he has. You cannot fight against revolutions so." (*Witness Whittaker Chambers*, New York: Random House, Inc., 1952, 462) I do not think that Chambers was speaking of conservatism in the sense of the determination to conserve and to apply the basic moral, religious and constitutional values which have made our country great. For elsewhere he speaks out against liberalism, in the modern sense of the term. But he does have reference to those who wish to keep what they have, who are unwilling to risk putting anything into the struggle for freedom. Of course, if there are enough people who are not willing to risk something, to sacrifice something and to do something in this struggle against communism while we have a chance to win, they will lose all and perhaps struggle after it is too late. Even from their standpoint, it should appear better to give up something now than to have everything taken from one later on.

(6) Some have a root of bitterness spring up when they have tried, failed and fouled things up. They get so down on themselves that they become bitter and cease to try. What if Peter had quit because he had denied the Lord, or Saul had refused to do right when he learned that he had been persecuting Christ and was the chief of sinners? Every successful person has made many mistakes and failures, but they have learned from them and kept trying.

(7) Some have bitterness spring up because they have served, and others seem to get the public applause. Christ will not forget our work of faith and labor of love. We work for Him, and for man's salvation, and not for applause or gratitude. We should be grateful when someone manifests gratitude but we should not work for that.

(8) Some have a root of bitterness spring up because there are members of the church who are not doing anything. They may even feel that the church is doing nothing. As a matter of fact, far more is being done than they realize. Too many people are in the cult of the negative, and they can only speak of what is wrong with the church and not also what is right with it. Since we are members of Christ's

body, if the church is not doing much, let us start with ourselves and ask whether we are doing what we should be doing. Let us set an example. In this way we can encourage others to do more. And we may learn, as we do more, that more people are working in quiet ways — going about doing good — than we realized. There are some young people especially who may turn against Christ and the church because they feel that nothing is being done. They may expect the church to make dramatic and drastic changes in society in but a few days. They fail to realize that a Christian life itself cannot be grown in a day, a week, or a year, but there is always more room for growth regardless of how long we live.

(9) Let our devotion to Christ be so deep that regardless of how discouraged we may become at times, we shall be motivated by such appeals as were mentioned in the introduction. Instead of being cast down let us heed Heb. 12:12. As Narborough commented: "It is possible to translate 'make straight paths with your feet'. This rendering suits better the words which follow. 'If the community as a whole walks firmly straight ahead, the weaker brethren, the stragglers, will the more easily follow'.

"Be not turned out of the way. The marginal translation 'be not put out of joint' is certainly correct. The Greek word ... is the technical term for the dislocating of a joint.' 'But rather be healed' then follows naturally." (Narborough, 1415)

III. HAVE YOU ACCEPTED CHRIST?

(1) If you are a Christian who is growing bitter, tear out the root of bitterness and destroy it before it destroys you.

(2) Although you may be enjoying good things now, it does not mean that you are a Christian. If you are bitter now, it does not mean that you must remain this way. You can have all the blessings in Christ for this life, and heaven, too, if you accept and remain faithful to the Lord. (Acts 2:38-41; 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27; 1 Pet. 1:3-9)

QUESTIONS

1. What are some of the appeals which were made to motivate them to run the race?

2. What is a root of bitterness? What influence does it have? What can we do about it?

3. How can persecution lead a root of bitterness to spring up in some? How can indifference? ingratitude? mission work? How can this be illustrated with reference to warning people of the dangers of communism? of the dangers of sin? of dangers to their health?

4. Do we struggle against evil because we are bound to win each time, or because it is right that we struggle against evil?

5. How does failure lead some to become bitter?

6. Do some become bitter because they feel the church is not doing much? How can one deal with their condition?

7. How can we encourage ourselves and others to heed Heb. 12:12-13?

A Profane Person

(HEBREWS 12:16-17)

It is possible that some of us do not recognize a profane person when we see one. They may think that it is just the person who curses. It is possible for an individual to be a profane person and not realize it. In order to know what it is we must study the Bible. We are warned against being profane.

I. THE FORNICATOR

(1) Warned against especially in Heb. 13:4.

(2) Sometimes fornication is used to refer to those who were unfaithful to God. (Jas. 4:4)

(3) The fornicator would be sensual, abandoned, profligate, for this is his manner of life.

(4) He must repent or perish. (Rev. 21:8; Col. 3:5-6)

II. THE PROFANE PERSON

(1) *The Pulpit Commentary* says: "one outside the sphere of sanctity, and so debarred from sacred privileges." (Vol. 49, 358) Stuart comments: "one who scoffs at religion or sacred things, who disregards what is sacred in the view of heaven." (518)

(2) Esau had the wrong scale of values. There was nothing wrong with a meal, but his materialistic view of life counted it as more important than his birthright. We may permit things which are all right in their place and within proper proportion to rob us of the spiritual. "Esau lightly parting with . . . his patrimony for a present gratification is an appropriate warning to those who day by day were tempted to win comfort and escape suffering by parting with their hope in Christ."

(3) Stuart thinks that "His birthright was not, indeed, a thing of religion; but it was, in those days, a matter of great personal importance and advantage. The argument is from analogy. 'Let no one give up himself to the gratification of his lusts, as did Esau to the great grief of his father (Gen. 26:35); let no one despise the distinguished privileges which Christianity confers upon him, like Esau who despised the privileges of his birthright, and parted with them for a mere morsel of food.'" (Moses Stuart, 518-519)

(4) However, MacKnight maintains: "Before the law was given, the first-born in the family of Abraham had a right to the priesthood (Exod. xix. 22); and to a double portion. (Deut. xxi, 17) And in the family of Isaac, he was lord over his brethren. (Gen. xxvii., 29, 37; xlix, 3) Farther, in that family the first born, as the root of the people of God, conveyed to his posterity all the blessings promised in the covenant: such as a right to possess the land of Canaan, and to be the father of him in whom all nations were to be blessed, and to explain and confirm these promises to his children, in his dying blessing to them; of which we have a remarkable example in Jacob, Gen. xlix." (James MacKnight, Apostolical Epistles, 570)

Patrick enlarged on this: "(1) a double portion of his father's goods. (Deut. xxi: 17) (2) Power and dominion over the younger; for he succeeded in the government of the family, or kingdom: 'Reuben, thou art my first-born, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power.' Gen. xlix: 3) 'The kingdom gave he to Jehoram, because he was the first-born.' (2 Chron. xxi: 3) This Isaac gave to Jacob in these words, 'Be thou a master to thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee.' (Gen. xxvii: 29) (3) The honour of priesthood, in their own family at least: so Exod. xxiv: 5, 'He sent the young men' (Chald. 'the first-born') 'of the sons of Israel, and they offered burnt-offerings, and sacrifices to Jehovah.' Afterward the Levites were taken into the service of God, instead of all the first-born among the 'children of Israel' (Numb, iii: 41), consecrated before to God. (Exod. xxii: 29; Numb, viii: 17; Gen. xxv: 29) This birthright Esau sold. . . ." (933)

III. THERE IS A TIME THAT IS TOO LATE

(1) Esau. (Heb. 12:17) Some things cannot be changed. They are unalterable. This did not mean that Esau was unable to change his mind, for he did change it and sought the inheritance. He could not get his father to change his mind. (See Gen. 27:35, 38, 40) "The term 'repentance' is here used not strictly of mere change of mind, but of a change of mind undoing the effects of a former state of mind." (Davidson) The birthright had been sold, and it could not be recalled.

(2) Christians. It is possible for us to sell our birthright, and finally want it back. "We observe, further, that nothing is implied one way or the other as to Esau's own salvation: it is only the privilege of being the patriarch of the chosen seed that he is said to have thus irrecoverably forfeited. But his example is adduced as a warning to Christians with regard to their still more precious inheritance, which does involve their own eternal prospects. The warning to them is similar to those of ch. vi:4, etc., and ch. x:26, to the effect that sacred privileges, if persistently slighted, may be lost beyond recovery. And if the passage before us seems to imply, according to one view of it, what the former ones were found not to do, the possible inefficacy of a true repentance, however late — we may say that, even if this is implied of Esau with respect to his lost blessing, it is not therefore necessarily implied of Christians with respect to their personal salvation; or that, if it is

implied of them, it is not till their probation in this life is over that a 'place of repentance' in this sense can for them be found no more (cf. the parable of the ten virgins), (Matt. xxv:l, etc.); (also Matt. vii:22, etc.; Luke xiii:24, etc.) One of Dr. Newman's Parochial Sermons ('Life the Season of Repentance,' vi. 'Sermon' 2) strikingly sets forth this view. See also 'Christian Year' (Second Sunday in Lent), with the appended note: 'Esau's probation, as far as his birthright was concerned, was quite over when he uttered the cry of the text. His despondency, therefore, is not parallel to anything on this side of the grave.' " (*Pulpit*, 360)

That the *Pulpit Commentary* is right about this matter is seen from the fact that God has forgiven fornicators, and fornicators are mentioned in this connection. (Heb. 12:16; 1 Cor. 5:1-11; 6:9-11; 2 Cor. 2:6-11; 12:20-21) So it does not mean by one act of fornication, or profanity, that a Christian can so sell his birthright that he cannot receive it back even though in this life he repents and seeks forgiveness from the Lord. (2 Pet. 3:9; 1 John 2:1) Those who have fallen can be restored if they repent and do the right thing. (Rev. 2:5)

It is possible for us to live this life in fornication or in profanity and then when our life of probation is over to want eternal life, and be unable to get it. There is a time that is too late.

We, of course, should be careful as to how we walk. We should not be presumptuous and live in sin with the thought that some day we shall repent, (a) We may die unexpectedly, (b) We may become so hardened by the deceitfulness of sin that we refuse to repent.

IV. WHAT ABOUT YOUR LIFE?

(1) Is it profane? Does it put first things first? (Matt. 6:33)

(2) You cannot do this if you do not undergo the new birth (John 3:3-5); and live the new life. (Rom. 6:2-5, 12, 13, 17-18)

QUESTIONS

1. What sin are we warned against in 12:16; 13:4? What is their fate if they do not repent?

2. Is there more than one type of this sort of unfaithfulness? (Jas. 4:4)

3. What is the meaning of "profane"?

4. In what way was Esau's scale of values wrong?

5. Can things which are not wrong within themselves become wrong because of our attitude toward them?

6. What was involved in the birthright, according to some commentators?

7. How does Esau's case illustrate that there is a time when it is too late?

8. Does Heb. 12:17 refer to Esau's eternal condition?

9. Does 12:17 indicate that Esau tried to repent and could not?

10. How do we know fornicators can be forgiven?

11. Why is it folly to say that one will continue in sin for awhile but later repent?

12. Instead of being profane what should we do? (Matt. 6:33)

The Everlasting Kingdom

(HEBREWS 12:25-29; DANIEL 2:44)

"Among the world kingdoms the dominion goes from one people to another, from the Babylonians to the Persians, etc. On the contrary, 'the kingdom of God' will not pass into the hands of another people; of a people other than God's people." Furthermore, it was not to pass into the hands of another people since it was not to be followed by another covenant on earth. (Heb. 12:28; 13:20)

Christians are members of a kingdom which shall not be destroyed, or moved out of its place. This being true nothing is to take its place on earth. Thus it is Daniel's kingdom which was to stand forever. If it is not the prophesied kingdom, but is to give place to the kingdom of Daniel 2:44; then it is not true that our kingdom today is an unshakeable kingdom.

What proof is there that the kingdom of God's dear Son (Acts 2:34-36; Col. 1:13), will not be replaced by another kingdom on this earth?

The author of Hebrews warned Christians against evil, told them to what they had not come, and to what they had come, and told them of the one with whom they had to deal.

I. WE HAVE NOT COME TO THE OLD COVENANT (Heb. 12:18-21)

This refers to the old covenant, as the following shows:

(1) It was connected with the mount which burned with fire, etc (Ex. 19:1, 12, 13, 23; 19:18; 20:18; Deut. 4:11; 5:23, 24)

(2) Trumpet. (Ex. 19:16, 19; 20:18)

(3) Voice they feared and did not want to hear any more. (Ex. 20:1-20; Deut. 4:10, 12, 13; 5:1-27)

(4) Beast touching mountain killed. (Ex. 19:12, 13, 21, 23, 24)

(5) Moses present. (Ex. 19:19)

If we have not come to this covenant, then to what have we come? The author shows to what we are come, and then points out that which we have come to was made possible by the shaking and removing of

the old covenant. He then showed that the new covenant will not be removed.

II. TO WHAT HAVE WE COME? (Heb. 12:22-25)

(1) To the New Zion, the place of the rule of the heavenly king. (Psa. 2; Acts 4:24-28; Heb. 12:22; Acts 2:34-36)

(2) To the heavenly, not earthly (John 4:20-24), Jerusalem. (12:22; Gal. 4:21-31)

(3) Hosts of angels. (12:22) We no more see them than we see Zion or the heavenly Jerusalem, but we accept these all by faith.

(4) Church of the first born or first born ones. (12:23)

(5) To God, the Judge of all. (12:23)

(6) Spirits of just men made perfect. (12:23) Does this not refer to the saints of the Old Testament, and perhaps the departed ones of the New? For apart from us, from the gospel, they could not be made perfect. (Heb. 9:15; 11:40)

(7) Jesus the Mediator of a New Covenant. (12:24) He is now mediator so the New Covenant now exists.

(8) We would fear God as Judge if it were not for Christ's blood. Abel's blood cried up for vengeance or justice. (Gen. 4:10-15) Christ's speaks for mercy and forgiveness. (Heb. 12:24)

(9) However, this does not mean we can be indifferent to Him or repudiate His word. (12:25; 2:1-4)

III. THE ABOLITION OF THE OLD PROPHESED (12:26-27)

Hebrews has shown from several scriptures that the abolition of the Old Covenant was prophesied. An entire lesson was devoted to this fact earlier in these studies.

(1) New high priest and king. (5:5-6; 7:11; 8:4)

(2) Jeremiah 31:31-34; Heb. 8:6-13

(3) Haggai 2:6; Heb. 12:26-29. The "yet once more" referred to a time future from Haggai's time and not from the New Testament time. On this prophecy James MacKnight commented: "In the prophetic writings, the Jewish state and worship are called (at least on occasions) the heaven, either because they were appointed by heaven. . . . Here it is proper to observe, that in Haggai's prophecy, where the alteration which was to be made in the religious and political state of the world, is foretold, by calling it 'shaking of the heaven, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land,' and 'a shaking of all nations,' God alluded to Mount Sinai's 'quaking greatly' before he spoke the ten commandments (Exod. 19:18); consequently by this allusion he hath taught us, that his shaking of the earth, before he spake the law, was emblematical of his shaking the heathen idolatry by the introduction of the law of Moses into Canaan."

"Next, it is to be observed that Haggai, after foretelling the altera-

tion which was to be made in the religious and political state of the world, under the idea of 'shaking all nations', adds, 'For (so the Hebrew particle *vau* in this passage must be translated) the desire of all nations shall come.' This God mentioned to shew, that the great alteration in the state of the world which he foretold, was to be affected by the coming of the person whom he calls 'the desire of all nations.' And to this the fact agrees. For the destruction of the heathen idolatry, and the abolition of the Mosaic worship, and the change which took place in the political state of the nations of the earth, have all been brought to pass by the coming of Christ, and the setting up of his kingdom through the preaching of the gospel."

"That the destruction of the heathen idolatry, the abolition of the Levitical worship, and an alteration in the political state of the world, were foretold by Haggai under the idea of 'shaking the heavens and the earth,' etc., the apostle hath taught us in his comment on the speech, 'Yet once', etc." in verses twenty-seven and twenty-eight. (573)

The old things were shaken so that they might be taken out of the way so that permanent things could abide. (Heb. 12:27-28) The reference to the kingdom which we have received as being the thing which remains or cannot be moved, shows that he has been talking about kingdoms, covenants, and systems of worship which were associated with them. This is also shown by his reference to Mount Sinai (12:18-21), and the statement concerning Christ and his new covenant. (12:24)

The things that were *made* were removed. MacKnight observes that "since the heathen worship is likewise said to be shaken, I think the expression 'things that were made,' is an ellipsis for 'things that were made with hands,' which, according to the Hebrew idiom, denotes the things of an inferior and even imperfect nature; consequently might be applied, not only to the heathen rites, but to Mosaic form of worship, which was inferior to the Christian." In Hebrews 9:24 we are told that "Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figure of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." Chapters nine and ten of the book of Hebrews emphasize that the old covenant and its worship were imperfect since it was but the figure, or the shadow, of the new and not the express image.

It is not without significance that the kingdom of heaven, prophesied by Daniel, is a kingdom which was cut out of the mountain without hands. And it was to abide, or remain. Since in Heb. 12:27 he states that the shaken things are "as of things that are made" then it must be that the unshaken things, the kingdom which we have received, is not "as of things that are made." It was not made with hands, nor upheld by the power of men's might, as was the old covenant kingdom which was filled with things that were made (Heb. 9:24) and backed by the armed might of man, as well as by God's power. The kingdom which we have received is not filled with the "made" things of the

old covenant worship, and neither is it upheld by the armed might of men's hands.

When God said yet once more he would shake things it "implies that God would make but one alteration more in the religious worship of the world, it certainly follows, that the form to be substituted in the room of the things to be shaken and removed, shall be permanent. The gospel therefore will remain to the end of the world, as the only form of religion acceptable to God." (574)

This is indicated not only in the statement that He would shake things *once* more, but also in the fact that the kingdom which we have received cannot be moved or shaken. (Heb. 12:28) The old covenant and kingdom could be shaken and were shaken and removed. That which took its place could not be shaken or moved. Therefore, it was to be permanent. The old, however, was never meant to be permanent.

Since that which is not to be shaken is the covenant to which we have come (12:22-24), and the kingdom which they were then receiving, it is evident that no kingdom or covenant is to take the place of this kingdom and covenant. One must therefore conclude that this permanent kingdom which took the place of the old is the kingdom of Daniel 2:44. Otherwise, one must contradict Hebrews which shows that the present kingdom is not to be shaken or moved. But it would have to be moved if it is not the kingdom of Daniel 2:44 for that kingdom must be set up and not be destroyed or shaken. And to be set up it would have to take the place of the kingdom of God's dear Son which is now established on earth. (Col. 1:13; Eph. 5:5) The kingdom that the Hebrews (12:28) were receiving would thus have to be moved. *But it cannot be.* Therefore, we must not look beyond this kingdom to find the kingdom of Daniel 2:44.

One does not have to accept every point made by James McKnight in order to see that Paul is talking about the covenants or kingdoms, and that the old covenant was removed and the new established. But the new is permanent for it will not be shaken or taken out of the way as was the old covenant. This is in harmony with the statement in Heb. 13:20 that it is an everlasting covenant. "Everlasting, Heb. 13:20, because it is never to be *changed*, or *terminated in any* other; and is to endure endlessly itself." (Adam Clarke, 17)

(4) Christ is now reigning. (Col. 1:13; Acts 2:34, 36; 1 Cor. 15:24-28) How long will that reign continue? He will reign until the time or period of His coming. This will be the last day. (John 6:39, 40, 44, 54) The wicked will be judged the same day or period. (John 12:48) "Then cometh the end. ..." (1 Cor. 15:24) The next thing in order after the time of His coming is the end. What shall he do with the kingdom over which he now reigns: "Then cometh the end, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be abol-

ished is death." (1 Cor. 15:24-26; Rev. 20:11-21:5) He is now reigning and will continue his reign until the last enemy is destroyed. This last enemy is destroyed on the last day for that is the day when the dead shall come forth, the wicked unto judgment and the righteous unto life everlasting. (John 5:28, 29; 6:39, 40, 44, 54; 12:48; Rev. 20:11-15)

(5) The writer drops the symbolism and plainly speaks of the kingdom they were then receiving. Therefore, we do not look for its establishment in the future. (12:28; 13:20)

(6) God is Judge (12:23) and so is Christ. (12:25; John 12:48; Acts 17:30-31) He is the God of mercy, but we must not presume on His mercy but serve as directed in 12:28-29.

IV. IT SHALL STAND

(1) The kingdoms of the earth, and the men of earth, pass away. Christ's kingdom may suffer setbacks, and at times be driven underground, but it will not be destroyed. Communism may kill and otherwise persecute saints, but the kingdom will stand long after communism has fallen. This does not mean we should be complacent, for we should want our children to enjoy the freedom to work and worship without fear of molestation. The question is: Will we be faithful. It encourages us to know that we stand with the kingdom which is eternal.

(2) To be in this kingdom you must be born again. (John 3:1-5) To remain faithful, you must walk in the new life to which you were raised. (Rom. 6:2-5, 17-18)

QUESTIONS

1. Do the premillennialists believe that Christ's present kingdom will give way to another kingdom on earth? How does this fail to harmonize with Heb. 12:28?
2. How does the writer describe that to which we are not come?
3. How do we know this was the Old Covenant?
4. How does he describe that to which we have come?
5. How do we know that this is the New Covenant?
6. What are some of the prophecies of the removal of the Old and the bringing in of the New?
7. How do you interpret Haggai 2:6 and Heb. 12:26-29?
8. Does Haggai indicate that God was going to make only one more great change with reference to covenants?
9. What were the things that were made?
10. How do we know that he is speaking of kingdoms or covenants?
11. How do we know that Christ's present kingdom will not be removed? (12:28; 13:20)
12. How long must He reign? What happens then? When does this take place?
13. Since God is merciful are we to be presumptuous? (12:28-29)
14. What lessons can we learn from the fact that the kingdom will not be destroyed?

Faith and Everyday Conduct

(HEBREWS 13)

The Scriptures do not permit us to think that we can be religious without also being moral, concerned about others, and abounding in good works. Paul is just as clear about this as is James. (Jas. 2:14-26)

"In this chapter we find exhortations apparently springing out of a desire to arrest symptoms of a tendency to hide their Christian profession, disowning their teachers and fellow Christians and resenting the shame and hardship incident to the following of Christ." (*The Expositor's Greek Testament*, IV, 375)

I. BROTHERLY LOVE (Heb. 13:1)

- (1) Essential. (1 John 3:14-15)
- (2) This means a brother regardless of race or class.
- (3) Love has a new standard. (John 13:34-35)

II. HOSPITALITY

(1) "The strangers whom the apostle had chiefly in view were those who went from place to place on account of the gospel, either driven from home by persecution, or for the purpose of preaching Christ. In those days strangers were received into people's houses far more than in modern days, because places of public entertainment, at the traveller's own expense, were not so common. In ancient days hospitality was regarded as one of the highest virtues; but there is reason to fear that in modern days it is sadly decayed in many places. To encourage believers in the performance of this duty he told them that, in the practice of it, some entertained angels unaware, for instance Abraham and Lot, Gen. xviii., xix." (Cameron, 530)

(2) To what extent does your home express hospitality?

(3) Is the preacher the only one who speaks to strangers at your congregation? Do you ever invite them home for dinner?

III. SYMPATHY

(1) One member suffers, all suffer. (1 Cor. 12:26) This is true regardless of whatever part of the world the member is in.

(2) Christ stated that such is coming up for consideration at the time of judgment. (Matt. 25:35-46)

IV. PURITY

(1) Marriage is honorable, not dishonorable. Christ exalts marriage. (Eph. 5:22-32) Where the influence of Christ declines marriage begins to lose its sacredness.

(2) Men may not rebuke fornicators and adulterers but God will finally judge them.

V. CONTENTMENT, NOT COVETOUSNESS

(1) Covetousness is idolatry. (Col. 3:5) When a person covets he puts that thing first in his life. It becomes his god for it controls and directs his life.

(2) We must learn to be content (Phil. 4:11-13), because God is with us. This does not mean that we do not labor in order to have and to share. (Eph. 4:28; 2 Thess. 3:10-12)

VI. SUBMISSION TO THEIR RULERS

(1) Remember those who had the rule. (13:7) *Expositor's Greek Testament*: " 'Have in remembrance them who had the rule over you, especially as they are those who spoke to you the word of God.' . . . 'These deceased leading men were the persons alluded to in ii. 3 and iv. 2, who first 'spoke' the word of the gospel to the Hebrews and who were now no longer present." (IV, 376) These were the inspired men who delivered to them the word of the gospel.

(2) Obedience to elders. (13:17, 24; 1 Tim. 3) "Having exhorted the Hebrews to keep in mind their former rulers and adhere to their teaching, the writer now admonishes them, probably in view of a certain mutinous and separatist spirit (x. 25) encouraged by their reception of strange doctrines, to obey their present leaders and yield themselves trustfully to their teaching — an admonition which, as Weiss remarks, shows that these teachers held the same views as the writer. The reasonableness of this injunction is confirmed by the responsibility of the rulers and their anxious discharge of it. They watch, like wakeful shepherds, or those who are nursing a critical case, in the interest of your souls to which they may sometimes seem to sacrifice your other interests. They do this under the constant pressure of a consciousness that they must one day render to the Chief Shepherd (ver. 20) an account of the care they have taken of His sheep. (*Expositor's Greek Testament*, 338-339)

VII. "STABILITY IN THE FAITH"

(1) This was to be done because it is the gospel not meats and Judaism which establish the heart and profit us. (13:9)

(2) We have the benefits of the sacrifice of Christ. (13:10-12)

(3) We ought to be willing to bear reproach for Him. (13:12-13)

(4) We ought to realize that we have no continuing city here. (13:14)

VIII. THANKSGIVING (13:15)

Although we do not have the Old Testament sacrifices, we have spiritual sacrifices which we offer.

IX. BENEFICENCE (13:16)

We cannot discharge our sacrificial service simply by singing, but must also extend the helping hand to those in need.

PRAYER FOR OTHERS (13:18-19)

X. HIS HOPE FOR THEM (13:20-21)

(In the main I have followed Cameron's outline on this chapter.)

QUESTIONS

1. Does James stress the works of faith? (Jas. 2:14-26)
2. Does Hebrews 13?
3. What does Heb. 13:1 say about brotherly love? How important is it? What is the new standard of love of Christians for Christians?
4. What does hospitality include? Do some fail to invite people into their homes because they feel their home is not elegant enough?
5. How do we sympathize with others?
6. Will good works be brought up in Judgment? (Matt. 25:35-46) Will it be too late to do them then? When are we to do them?
7. What exalted view of marriage is taught in the Bible? (Eph. 5:22-32) How does this contrast with the world's view?
8. What is covetousness?
9. What does contentment mean?
10. Does it mean that we are not to work?
11. To whom do you think that 13:7 refers? 13:17? What responsibility did they have?
12. How can we be stable in the faith? What encourages us to do so?
13. How do we show thankfulness to God? to people?
14. What sacrifices do we offer? (13:15-16)
15. What is the writer's hope for them? (13:20-21)

We Have an Altar

(HEBREWS 13:9, 16, 20-21)

Jews could point to the temple, to its elaborate ritual, to their city, and by contrast view with disdain the simplicity of the New Covenant. They failed to recognize that these things were temporary (Heb. 9:9-10), and that even Abraham realized that he no more had a continuing country here than we do. (11:13-16; 13:14) We must not go back to the services of God's Old Testament house, or temple, or tabernacle. (2 Chron. 5:11-13; 29:25-35) There can be no more offering for sin. (Heb. 10:1)

I. WE HAVE AN ALTAR

(1) The apostle shows us that we have the one sufficient sin sacrifice. In commenting on Heb. 13:10 Milligan wrote: "To me it seems evident that the altar is here used by metonymy for Christ himself, who was sacrificed for us; so that to partake of this altar is simply to partake of the sacrifice of Christ. So Paul reasons in reference to the sacrifices of the Old Economy. 'Behold Israel,' he says, 'after the flesh: are not they who eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?' (1 Cor. x, 18) And again he says, 'Do ye not know that they who minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they who wait at the altar are partakers with the altar?' (1 Cor. ix. 13) To eat of the altar is therefore manifestly to eat of the sacrifice which is offered on the altar. And that the sacrifice in this case was .the sacrifice of Christ, is evident from the context, as well as from many parallel passages." (Milligan, 377, 378)

(2) "The Jews boasted of their exclusive right to partake of their own consecrated sacrifices. This doubtless made a strong and deep impression on the minds of some of the weaker brethren: and they were in this way in danger of being misled by the false teachings of the judaizing party. But as an offset to all their vain speculations about meats, and drinks, and carnal ordinances, Paul here reminds his brethren, that we Christians have also our exclusive rights and privileges; that we too have a sacrifice of which to partake as well as the

Jews; a sacrifice of infinite value, and which is quite sufficient to satisfy the desires of all who lawfully partake of it. From this, however, the unbelieving Jews were all debarred according to their own ritual, as our author now proceeds to show." (378)

(3) We have this sacrifice and through Jesus Christ we can have access to God. (13:15) Through Jesus Christ we offer our spiritual sacrifices.

II. OF WHICH THEY HAVE NO RIGHT TO PARTAKE (13:10)

(1) Those who returned to Judaism, or simply abide in it, are disqualified from partaking of the benefits of our altar, i.e. of the benefits of the one sufficient sacrifice for sin. They cannot participate of it, for they are continuing in the shadow after the substance has come. God's time of long-suffering with Israelitish Christians, as in evidence in Acts 21, was now over. Just as for a time the church had not understood the full truth about the Gentiles and the law (until Acts 10), just so Jewish Christians had not at first had revealed to them and had not fully understood that they must finally forsake the Old. God tolerated for a time their continuing in the law, as is clear from Acts 21, but that time was now over — just as after Acts 10 one could not go back to the previous attitude toward the Gentiles. Those who tried to serve the tabernacle cannot partake of our altar. (13:10) Soon God in His providence brought about the destruction of the temple, and even the Jew cannot serve that tabernacle.

(2) As Gordon Teel mentioned to me in a conversation on March 12, 1956, the Latter-day Saints claim to have the Levitical priesthood, which was of the tabernacle. What right do such have to our altar? This shows how confused they are, and yet they claim to have inspired men — including apostles and prophets!

(3) There are those today who want to go back to the temple system and pattern their worship after it, but we must not go back to the shadow.

(4) Judaism had to be abandoned. Christ suffered without the gate, without the camp, and we must go forth there to Him bearing His reproach. (13:12-13) Judaism must be abandoned. The one who burned the bodies outside the camp was rendered unclean; until he had purified himself. (Lev. 16:2-28) Judaism viewed Christ as unclean, but we realize that we are cleansed through Him and the entire Old Testament system has passed away. As Dawson Walker said: "They must make their choice between Christianity and Judaism, for the two cannot be amalgamated. Christ's death 'without the gate' was the symbol of His being cast out of the community and religious life of the Old Testament Israel. To realize the full power of His redeeming work, His followers must abandon 'the camp' — the sphere within which the religious life and ordinances of Israel prevail — and must go forth to Him. To be branded as a traitor and to be deprived of Jewish privileges

was 'the reproach of the Christ.' This His followers must share." (Hastings, II, 318) This had to be done not merely to realize the full power of His redeeming work, but to realize this power at all. (13:10) We must go outside the gate for He suffered outside the camp, i.e. outside Judaism. Therefore, no one has the right to say that New Testament worshippers have the right to keep the ceremonies and worship system of the tabernacle.

III. HOWEVER, WE DO HAVE SACRIFICES WHICH WE OFFER: WORD-SACRIFICE (13:15)

A fundamental New Testament doctrine is the priesthood of believers. We do not make a sacrifice for sins, but all of us must make our offerings unto God. (1 Pet. 2:5, 9) Our sacrifices are offered in a spirit of thanksgiving for God's bestowal of "his good will upon us through Christ who sacrificed himself to save us. We may, however, meditate with profit on the ceremonial sacrifices, as they help us to understand the nature of the Christian duty of praise. As the sacrifices for sin prepared the way for thanks-offerings, so did the sacrifice of Christ prepare the way for our thanksgiving. Indeed, without his sacrifice ours would be impossible. When we come to God to give him thanks we must have the broken heart of penitence, else we shall have no gratitude." (Cameron, II, 565-566)

(1) We can praise God in our talk and in our singing. (Eph. 5:19) Singing was and is a part of the worship which Christians offer to the Lord. When they came together (Acts 20:7), they did not have an elaborate ritual built on the traditions of men. Theirs was a simple service. Singing praised God and instructed men. (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16)

(2) Continually. We praise, however, not just in our services but elsewhere. "In New Testament worship we are not bound to particular seasons as they were in Old Testament days, except the public service of the Sabbath (the Lord's day, not the Sabbath, J. D. B.), the daily family exercises, and private devotions. The great annual festivals, the new moons, and jubilee of years of Israel are not binding on us; neither has pope nor prince any right to impose feasts or fasts upon us. . . . The words of our text more directly mean that we should cultivate a thankful spirit so as to be able to praise God always. 'Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks.' (1 Thes. v. 16-18) We should so cultivate a thankful disposition that we may praise God at all times. For this purpose we need to be always able to appreciate his goodness to us." (Cameron, 568, 569) We not only have word-sacrifice but also deed-sacrifices.

IV. DEED-SACRIFICES

(1) We are apt to forget it. "There is a reason for the apostles caution, 'Forget not.' We are prone to forget duties which are not congenial to us, because they demand self-denial. This forgetfulness is not innocent, because it willfully arises from a selfish inclination. Some

people, who are very devout in their way, may be so much engaged in religious duties that they hardly think of works of charity. It is possible for people to be so absorbed in revivalism that they forget perishing heathens far off, and shivering poverty at their door, and thus fail to contribute anything to enlighten the one or relieve the other. Such religion does not appear to be much, notwithstanding its noisy demonstrations. Men advance various pleas for their neglect of the duties of this practical department of religion, but this carelessness arises from the native unthankfulness of the heart through ignorance of the benevolent character of God. When we admire God's generosity to ourselves, kindness to others is awakened in our hearts." (Cameron, 569, 570)

(2) We are to do good. All of our sacrifice to God is not fruit of our lips, but also the deeds of our body as we minister to others. We must go about doing good.

"Observe that the sacrifices demanded from us are the various forms of well-doing. 'But to do good, forget not.'

"We ought, with constant attention to the matter, study how we may promote the welfare of others. Instead of this, there is reason to fear that we (sometimes, J. D. B.) do them injury. Some who cherish malice are so ignorant that they do not know it. The devil dwells in the hearts of such people without their suspecting it. Others can clearly see proofs of his presence in their affections in the contemptuous references to their neighbours which they freely make, and in the envy manifested at their superiority in business, learning, popularity, or personal appearance. To counteract these treacherous feelings let us cultivate a desire to promote the comfort of others." (Cameron, 570-571)

(3) Communicate: "That is, impart of one's substance, to minister to the necessities of those in want or in affliction. (Rom. xv. 26; 2 Cor. ix, 13; compare Heb. vi. 10) These are the sacrifices well-pleasing to God, through Jesus Christ, the sin-offering and High Priest — towards God continual thankfulness, towards men active benevolence in all its forms." (Davidson, 257)

(4) Congregations offered a sacrifice when they made their contributions. (Phil. 4:10-18)

(5) There are other passages which speak of such sacrifices as our bodies. (Rom. 6:12-13; 12:1-2)

(6) Christians do not have to wait for someone to tell them to offer their sacrifices to God. We can do so continually. So instead of criticizing the church for not doing more, each as a priest of God, as a member of His church, should start doing these things.

IV. THE MEANING OF SACRIFICE

(1) Some people think that a New Testament sacrifice is the doing of something which hurts you to do, or which it costs you more than

you can "afford". Sacrifices may cost, but this is not the meaning of the sacrifices we offer. A sacrifice is something offered to God. Under the Old Testament they had animal sacrifices, and various other types. Under the New Testament the term has been spiritualized in that it includes whatever we offer to God. We are to offer our bodies (Rom. 12:1; 6:13), and the various acts of service to God and to humanity.

(2) All Christians minister as priests in that they make these spiritual sacrifices. (1 Pet. 2:5, 9) There is no other priesthood, except the priesthood of Christ. And it is through Jesus Christ (Heb. 13:15, 11, 12), and not through any human priesthood that we approach God. And the sacrifices of the type which have been mentioned are the sacrifices we ourselves offer to God. Christ offered His sacrifice once for all, and we avail ourselves of its benefits when we approach God through Him.

(3) To be a priest of God, and to make these sacrifices, you must become a part of His spiritual house. (1 Pet. 2:5, 9) You must come into Christ. (Gal. 3:26-27) The making of the sacrifices is a part of our lives as Christians, and to be faithful in His house we must hold fast unto the end. (Heb. 3:6)

(4) If we reject His sacrifice, and His covenant, there is no other sacrifice for sins, and there is no other covenant into which we can enter with God. (Heb. 10:1-21; 13:20)

(5) Live for Him and know the meaning of Heb. 13:20-21.

QUESTIONS

1. To what could the Jews point?
2. How do we know these things were temporary?
3. How do we know that we cannot serve the tabernacle? How has its service been fulfilled and abolished?
4. Who is our altar? What does it mean to partake of the altar?
5. What else shows that we cannot, with God's approval, go into Judaism? (13:11-14)
6. How does Heb. 13:10 show that we could not do what Paul did in Acts 21:17-26. Could Gentiles do it even then? (Acts 21:25)
7. Do some want to copy today some aspects of the temple system? Is it for us? (Heb. 13:10-14; John 4:20-24)
8. What is the significance of suffering without the gate? (Heb. 13:11-14)
9. What is meant by the priesthood of believers?
10. What are the sacrifices which we offer? What does sacrifice mean?
11. Why do we sometimes forget our duties?
12. Do we have to wait until someone tells us to make a sacrifice or offering to God?
13. How do we become priests of God?
14. What blessings and assurances are found in Heb. 13:20-21?

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III. TIME AND FREQUENCY OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

(1) Supper in the Kingdom. (Lk. 22:29, 30) The Lord's table the supper. (1 Cor. 10:16, 21)

(2) There must be a time and frequency unless done just once in the Christian's life.

(3) If it is weekly service it has to come on a certain day of the week; once a week. A monthly or yearly service was not mentioned in connection with the Lord's Supper. "What is the statement with respect to time?" (Acts 20:7) Does it say "Every". Did the Old Testament command to keep Sabbath say "every"? (Porter, 123)

Do SDA partake of Lord's Supper? At what time? On what scripture do they base their practice?

(4) Partaken of frequently. (Acts 2:42; continued steadfastly)

IV. CORINTH. (1 Cor. 16:1, 2) (Porter, *op. cit.*, 124-128)

(1) Religious service on particular day.

(2) If a home duty, why specify the day it was to be performed? What "reason should there be for performing any home duty on any particular day? Why the first day of the week for a home duty?

(3) Not limited to one week. Why specify this day if was not a day of assembly? And doesn't this fit in beautifully with Acts 20:7? Strange, if the SDA are right, that the first day of the week should be so noticed. Was this a religious service? Could it be performed just as well any other day of the week? Why then did Paul specify the first day?

(4) It was an order given also to the churches of Galatia.

(5) Observed in early history of the church.

(6) Given to the churches everywhere. (1 Cor. 1:2; 14:37)

(7) Where is any instance of any apostle giving commandment to any Christian to perform any particular religious service on the seventh day of the week?

(8) Do you lay by in store on the first day of the week as Paul commanded in I Cor. 16:1, 2? (See 1:2; 14:37)

(9) "In store" — means in the treasury, or treasuring up. Putting it into the treasury. Excludes idea of home duty.

If laid by at home would defeat Paul's purpose. "On the first day of the week let each of you lay somewhat by itself, according as he may have prospered, putting it into the treasury, that when I come there may be then no collections." (MacKnight) Papyri reveal that word used here indicated church collection. "We may add ... (a church collection), hitherto found only in I Cor. 16:1, 2, but now known to have been a common term for collections ('offertories') made in pagan temples." (S. L. Caiger, 163-164)

(10) That there be no collection when he came; but there would be a gathering if they followed SDA interpretation, for how could contributing at home prevent a gathering when Paul came?

(11) Acts 20:7 shows why he mentioned first day of the week, for the church at Corinth engaged in breaking of bread then. (I Cor. 10:16) Thus no better time to make their contribution.

V. THE LORD'S DAY (Rev. 1:10)

(1) John never called the Sabbath the Lord's day. (John 5:10, 16, 18; 7:22, 23; 9:14, 16; 19:31) Here he used a term never used with reference to Sabbath. New term describing new institution.

(2) Kuriakos — twice in N. T. I Cor. 11:20; Rev. 1:10. The supper is not the Lord's passover (Ex. 12:11) which is called a supper in John 13:2. (Porter, 144)

(3) What day has special reference to Christ? Day on which He arose. (Mk. 16:9) (A good deal of the material in II, III, IV, V, VI drawn from W. Curtis Porter in the Porter-Dugger Debate).

VI. TESTIMONY OF EARLY HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

In all the writings of the early centuries the first day of the week is known as the Lord's day, and never was the Sabbath referred to as the Lord's day.

1. The Lord's day, Council of Nicaea, A.D. 325. They did not ordain it or defend it. Those gathered from all over the Roman Empire all took it for granted that the first day of the week was the Lord's day.

2. Emperor Constantine, A.D. 321. Calling it the venerable day of the sun would be a term that would not offend the heathen. Christians nowhere objected to worship on this day, the first day of the week. If such had not been their day of worship some protest would have been heard. Constantine offered no defense of this day; but assumed that it was recognized by the churches.

QUESTIONS

1. Why do some forsake the assembly?
2. Did this mean to miss it one time?
3. What are some of the things which took place on the first day of the week?
4. How do we know that the Lord's Supper was celebrated in connection with the assembly on the Lord's day?
5. What light does the meeting in Troas throw on this subject? (Acts 20:7)
6. What shows the frequency with which we should observe the Supper?
7. What light does 1 Corinthians throw on the subject of the Lord's day and the Lord's Supper?
8. What else did they do in the assembly on the first day of the week?
9. Since every day of the week belongs to the Lord, why do we call the first day of the week the Lord's day?
10. How do we know that the Sabbath day is not binding on us? (Col. 2:14-17; Heb. 1:2)