

1. CHRIST'S PRIESTHOOD IN THE BETTER COVENANT.

"We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens." Ver. 1.

The faithful Apostle introduced the sublime truth of the Son's exalted and eternal Priesthood, saying, "Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum." The Greek word translated "sum" means the chief, or the principle, or greatest of all truth.

These stimulating words of divine revelation give us an upward look. The Spirit enables us to behold the sunlit summit, towering pinnacle, and majestic peak of Christ's changeless Priesthood. The immaculate, immutable, and invincible Son, having fully, completely, and eternally expiated the guilt of a lost world by His own death on Calvary, and having triumphed over devils, diseases, and death by the power of His eternal life, is now seated at the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the highest Heaven, crowned High Priest to eternity, and immortal intercessor for all humanity, world without end.

(a) Jesus Is the Minister of the Covenant. "Now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry." Ver. 6.

The Greek word translated "minister" means to officiate as a prince, or to perform some public service at one's own expense, or to assist by giving aid and comfort.

The Apostle was speaking of the more excellent ministry of Jesus when he said, "A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man." Ver. 2.

Our great Redeemer and High Priest entered into the most holy place in Heaven to appear in the presence of God for us.

The Holy Scriptures support the affirmation that our great High Priest in Heaven is also the great High Priest of our hearts. Our loving Lord confirmed this amazing truth, saying, "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." John 14:23.

The Savior's immortal words enable us to perceive that the grand end of His redemptive work is achieved when the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit come to abide in our willing, waiting, and welcoming hearts for evermore.

(b) Jesus Is the Mediator of the New Covenant. "By how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant." Ver. 6.

The Greek word translated "mediator" denotes one who interposes to reconcile two adverse parties, or one who is the medium of communication between two parties.

The Bible affirms that Jesus is the only mediator between God and man. Jesus testified to this truth when He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." John 14:6.

Adam transmitted the evil propensity of his fallen nature to his hapless descendants, defiling them and alienating them from God the moment they are born. From what source can help be obtained to enfranchise these helpless victims and hopeless vessels of sin and Satan? Jesus, the mediator of the better covenant, is the answer to every man's pitiful plea for complete deliverance from the slavery of sin and the shackles of Satan.

We are informed that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. The vilest sinner on earth can be reconciled to God through faith in the sacrifice of Jesus, the minister and mediator of the new covenant of redeeming grace.

(c) Jesus Is the Message of the Covenant. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant." Ver. 8.

We are now living in the auspicious days of a fulfilled prophecy, a finished provision, and a faithful High Priest. Christ has abolished death, and has brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.

As Christ's called, commissioned, and consecrated servants, we do well to keep in mind that He said, "I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain." John 15:16..

May our love of Christ so constrain us that we can join Paul, saying, "Wherefore we labor, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." II Cor. 5:9, 10.

2. CHRIST'S PROMISES IN THE BETTER COVENANT.

"A better covenant, which was established upon better promises." Ver. 6.

The Greek word, which is here translated "established," means to legislate, or to sanction by law. The Holy Spirit would have us see that the better covenant has been legally based on God's enduring promises. This new and sacred covenant of grace has been sanctioned by the supreme law of God, verified by His word, and validated by His unfulfilling promises.

(a) The Nature of the Better Covenant. "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord." Ver. 10. Jer. 31:31-34.

The Greek word translated "covenant" means a contract, or an agreement, or a detailed and last will.

We understand the covenant to mean the agreement, or contract which God has made with mankind in regard to salvation by faith in Jesus. The certified covenant contains the system of laws, directions, precepts, and promises by which men become obedient to God in order to be saved to the uttermost.

The abundance of grace and riches of glory in Christ Jesus are made available to God's legal heirs by the death of the well beloved Son.

The new covenant of grace, dedicated by the blood of Jesus, pledged in His life, death, burial, and resurrection, and legally based on His promises, contains all the spiritual blessings, benefits, and heavenly gifts willed to us by our Heavenly Father.

(b) The Newness in the Better Covenant. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant." Ver. 8.

The Greek word, which is here translated "make," denotes completeness of purpose and fulfillment of promise. We find something very significant in the fact that the covenant is new. We receive a new birth, a new being, and a new behavior. "And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."

Eph. 4:23, 24.

A new heart, a new hope, a new heaven, and a new home are a glorious galaxy of glittering gems promised to us in the better covenant.

(c) The Necessity for a Better Covenant. "Every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer." Ver. 3.

We certainly cannot overlook the fact that our moral and spiritual needs have made it necessary for Jesus, our High Priest, to have somewhat to offer. We are confronted with the sobering fact that Almighty God must remain forever inaccessible and unapproachable unless a way can be provided to bring us into perfect accord with His sovereign will and Divine Nature.

There is startling reality in the statement, "It is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer." The faultless plan of eternal salvation was consummated when the obedient Son poured out His soul unto death in one supreme sacrifice on the bloody summit of Calvary.

Let us give this man, Christ Jesus, somewhat to offer before the throne of the Majesty in the heavens by presenting ourselves to Him to be sanctified wholly by faith in His meritorious sacrifice and shed blood.

3. CHRIST'S PROVISION IN THE BETTER COVENANT. "This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel." Ver. 10.

The Lord is saying, in effect, "This is the arrangement which I will make with the house of Israel." A covenant is something arranged between two parties. The Savior's arrangement, or agreement, or covenant contains certain provisions promised to His people.

The house of Israel mentioned in this illuminating prophecy includes all true believers in Christ Jesus. All the goodness, gifts, graces, and glories provided in the new covenant are made available to every trusting child of God..

(a) Christ's Principles in the Better Covenant. "I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts." Ver. 10.

God's convincing words clearly define and lucidly explain the rules, regulations, and requirements embraced in the governing principles of the new and better covenant.

The Holy Spirit has focused attention on God's affirmative statement, "I will." This positive assertion enables us to see that God's laws in the better covenant are in perfect accord with His sovereign will. His laws are evidently the inherent principles of His Divine Nature.

When the blessed Christ infixes His eternal principles in the center of our intellectual being, and inscribes His holy commandments on the spiritual tables of our hearts, all our pleasures, pursuits, purposes, and plans are motivated, ruled, and regulated by these inherent principles of His own Divine Person. He is the inner Master and the inner Might of the inner man.

Jesus Christ has made an ample provision to purge, purify, and perfect our affections, appetites, ambitions, and aspirations by the blood of His cross. Such a perfect plan of salvation is what every devout believer needs, and such a permanent plan of salvation can be received by simple faith in the superlative sacrifice of the peerless Christ.

(b) Christ's People in the Better Covenant. "I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." Ver. 10.

The Savior stated His part of the sacred agreement when He said, "I will be to them a God." He is willing to enter into a holy, honorable, and harmonious relationship with His purchased people. He has pledged His power and possessions to fulfill His part of the eternal covenant. He gives us peace of mind and calm contentment of soul in this world of trials, troubles, and tears.

The Savior revealed our part in the enduring covenant when He said, "And they shall be to me a people." The savants, and scholars in all ages have been mystified by God's predetermined purpose to have a people for Himself..

The mysteries, merits, and marvels of redeeming grace are revealed in Christ, "who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Tit. 2:14.

(c) Christ's Propitiation in the Better Covenant. "I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." Ver. 12.

This gracious promise of the new covenant shows that the propitiatory sacrifice of the Son has provided clemency, cleansing, completeness, and confirmation for His people.

LOOKING UNTO JESUS OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST!

THE OUTLINE ENLARGED

1. THE ETERNAL REDEMPTION ACQUIRED BY CHRIST. "Having obtained eternal redemption for us." Ver. 12.

The Greek term which is translated "redemption" in this verse denotes a ransom, or a liberation, or a deliverance.

The Spirit enabled the writer to take up the various symbols, sacrifices, and services of the Hebrew religion and use them as a firm foundation on which to build the doctrine of complete deliverance from indwelling sin through faith in the more excellent offering of the peerless Redeemer.

These adumbrating patterns enable us to perceive that Jesus, our great and infallible High Priest of the better covenant, having once offered His own bruised, broken, and bleeding body on a Roman gibbet ascended into the heavenly sanctuary with His precious blood and obtained eternal redemption for every human being beneath the shining sun.

[a] Christ Offered Himself by the Eternal Spirit. "Through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God." Ver. 14.

The Greek preposition, which is here translated "through," denotes the causation, or immediate agency, or the channel of an act. It is very evident that Christ offered Himself without spot to God through the immediate agency and extraordinary influence of the Holy Spirit. The Savior's suffering on the cross was the most trying time in His life. It is reasonable to believe that He would receive the richest grace in Heaven to sustain Him in the hour of His triumph over sin and death. The holy anointing of the Spirit which Jesus received at the beginning of His public ministry strengthened Him in the hour of His intense sufferings. The highest element of Christ's eternal Being was charged with the enabling power of the eternal Spirit.

(b) Christ Offered Himself to Emancipate Sinners. "For the redemption of the transgressions." Ver. 15.

The Greek word which is translated "redemption" in this verse denotes a deliverance procured by the payment of a ransom.

Our great Redeemer has paid the full price required to liberate mankind from the galling bondage of sin. It is written, "Ye are bought with a price." I Cor. 6:20.

The Savior's perfect plan of eternal redemption forever precludes the slightest necessity for any person to perish in sin.

(c) Christ Offered Himself to Eradicate Sin. "Once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Ver. 26.

The Greek word, which is here translated "put away," means to abolish, or to remove the guilt, pollution, and principle of sin.

A most momentous event occurred in human history when the only begotten Son of God appeared at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. This marvelous manifestation to redeem us will be equaled only by the supernal sunburst and ineffable glory of His second coming to receive us unto Himself at the climactic consummation of the age.

It is unquestionably true that God's immutable purpose in His Son will not be achieved in full measure until all sin has been removed from the earth, and all its evil effects in the bodies, minds, and souls of His ransomed people completely expunged. Christ's death on the cross gave Him the victor's diadem and the monarch's crown. The Holy Scriptures say, "He must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet." I Cor. 15:25.

The undeniable evidence contained in the infallible Word convinces us that the complete expurgation of all ungodliness will be accomplished in this present dispensation of abounding grace by the infinite merits and invincible might of Christ Jesus our Lord.

Our great, glorious, and gracious Redeemer stands ready, willing, and able this moment to deliver all men from the defilement, dominion, and destruction of indwelling iniquity.

2. THE EXPERIMENTAL REALITIES AVAILABLE IN CHRIST. "Christ being come an high priest of good things to come." Ver. 11.

The good things to come surpass all our expectations. It is difficult for us to comprehend the illimitable good mediated by Jesus, our High Priest of the better covenant. It is convincingly true that all the good things purchased for us by the propitiatory offering of Jesus are made immediately available to us through His changeless Priesthood.

(a) The Realities Received through the Priesthood of Jesus. "Now to appear in the presence of God for us." Ver. 24.

The Greek word which in this verse is translated "appear" means to make known, or be visible, or be face to face with God.

The beautiful vision of our holy, harmless, and undefiled High Priest appearing in His crucified body before the mercy seat in the Shekinah

glory of the Father's presence indicates that all is clear between us and God.

Christ's entrance into the presence of God has eternal efficacy. He entered in once into the holy place. His offering was perfect and complete for all time and eternity. It precludes forever any necessity for Him to offer Himself repeatedly. Our compassionate Christ and holy High Priest ever lives to make unceasing intercession for us at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.

(b) The Realities Received by the Purging of the Conscience. "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" Ver. 14.

The Greek word translated "purge" means to cleanse from sin, or to render pure, or to purify by an expiatory offering.

All men can behold the unblemished, undiminished, and undefeated Son of the unsparing God unveiled in the white light of the luminous Word.

The words "dead works" refer to the entire system of works embraced in the ceremonial law of Moses. When the phrase "dead works" refers to believers in Christ, as it does in this passage, it includes all the religious works performed without a vital relationship with the Savior.

The repetitious rituals, wearisome works, and lifeless liturgies belong to the Judaic dispensation abolished almost two thousand years ago by the superior sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

(c) The Realities Received in the Promise of Our Calling. "By means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance." Ver. 15.

The Greek word translated "called" means to invite, call into one's presence, or to identify by name. The Greek term translated inheritance denotes a possession, or a share, or a heritage.

Consider the significance of the words, "By means of death." It was by means of death that Jesus made the boundless blessings and benefits of the new covenant available to all His people.

3. THE EXPECTATION REWARDED AT THE APPEARING OF CHRIST.

"Unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Ver. 28.

All true Christians are expecting the return of the Redeemer. They pray without ceasing, watch constantly, and wait patiently for the hour of His

triumphant return. He appeared once to be humbled, crucified, and to suffer for the sins of the world, and there is a fitness that He should appear the second time to be honored, praised, and admired by His people.

(a) The Preparation for His Appearing. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Ver. 27.

The Greek word, which is here translated "appointed," means to keep in store for, or be preserved, or await.

There is a note of finality in the words, "It is appointed unto men once to die." No exceptions are made in rank, or riches, or Station, or talent. Neither virtue, nor valor, nor vocation can purchase freedom from death's demands.

Consider the unforgettable words, "After this the judgment." A state of changeless retribution will begin after death. If men, therefore, fail to avail themselves of the benefits of Christ's atonement here on earth the opportunity will be forever lost. The thing that makes death frightful, judgment dreadful, eternity awful, and hell horrible is a guilty conscience.

(b) The Promise of His Appearing. "Unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time." Ver. 28.

The Greek word translated "look" means to expect, wait, or look for. It is obvious that Christ's second coming with salvation is only for those who look for Him in faith. All true children of God are expecting Christ to appear the second time. Our Lord's preaching, parables, promises, and prophecies furnish a firm foundation on which to base our confidence in His second coming.

(c) The Purpose of His Appearing. "Without sin unto salvation." Ver. 28.

The words without sin mean without a sin offering. That is, when He comes again He will not make Himself an offering for sin, nor will He appear the second time to make atonement for sin. He was once offered to bear the sins of many. When He appears the second time it will be for the express purpose of receiving His people unto final salvation. He will appear to rapture the living saints, raise the sainted dead from their graves, place them at His right hand in glory, and give them the eternal inheritance which He has promised to all who love Him and look for His glorious revelation.

1. THE PRESENTATION OF THE SANCTIFIER

Christ as the Lamb of Genesis was provided when He was born in Bethlehem. However, the plan could not be finished until the Lamb had been presented.

{a} v. 10-11 THE TRAGEDY OF THE LAMB'S PRESENTATION

The Reality Of This Tragedy – The very phrases employed in these verses drive home the brutal nature of the death of Jesus Christ. Notice: “*offering of the body of Jesus Christ,*” v. 10; “*sacrifice for sins,*” v. 12. When the Lamb of God was presented as the perfect offering for sin, it was not some antiseptic, sanitary event. The death of the Lamb of God was horrible and brutal beyond belief.

The Reason For This Tragedy – Again, the words of our text tell us why this horrible event had to take place. “*By the which will we are sanctified,*” v. 10; “*one sacrifice for sins forever,*” v. 12. These two phrases make the point that Jesus was not dying for Himself, He was dying for others.

{b} v. 10-14 THE TESTIMONY OF THE LAMB'S PRESENTATION

v. 10 A Testimony Of Conversion – The word “*sanctified*” means “*to be holy; to be dedicated to God.*” The idea here is that through the death of Jesus Christ on the cross and through the shedding of His precious blood; all those who trust Him by faith are made holy

v. 11-12 A Testimony Of Conquest – As verse 11 tells us, for thousands of years, on the Day of Atonement, the Jewish priests had offered blood sacrifices to atone for the sins of Israel. These sacrifices had never cleansed away one single sin. All they had done was to cover them over for another year. When Jesus died on the cross everything changed; Jesus accomplished in His death what the deaths of millions of animals had failed to do: He finally and fully paid for sin for all who will trust Him for salvation!

v. 14 A Testimony Of Completion – The phrase, “*perfected for ever them that are sanctified,*” is a statement of completion! The death of Christ guarantees salvation to all those who come to Jesus by faith.

{c} v. 12-13 THE TRIUMPH OF THE LAMB'S PRESENTATION

v. 12 The Triumph Of His Resurrection – This is an interesting verses. It moves directly from picturing Jesus on the cross to showing Him seated at the right have of God

v. 13 The Triumph Of His Reigning – We are told that the risen Lamb sits at the right hand of God in heaven; waiting for the day when His enemies will be defeated.

2. THE PROVISION FOR OUR SANCTIFICATION. "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." Ver. 14.

The Greek word translated "sanctified" means to cleanse, separate, and consecrate. When this strong Greek term refers to the sanctification of God's purchased people, as it does in this particular passage of Scripture, it denotes complete cleansing from original sin.

(a) Christ's Offering Revealed in His Sanctifying Work. "We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." Ver. 10.

The anointed Apostle enables us to see the necessity of Christ's all-sufficient offering for the sanctification of His people as he points out the inherent weakness and inadequacy of the Mosaic law,. Verse 1

The inefficacious sacrifices offered under Levitical law were superseded by the superior offering of the body and blood of Jesus Christ. V 4 – 5 .

It is evident that the Son of God came forth from the Divine Presence for the express purpose of offering His unblemished and unstained body to provide the fitness of character necessary to enter into unbroken fellowship with God. Such a high and holy state of moral completeness fulfills all the requirements of God's sovereign will and satisfies the deepest desires of His ransomed people. Every man's hope of enjoying eternal fellowship with God and sharing the pleasures of the heavenly home with all holy beings depends on his faith in the efficacy of Christ's expiatory sacrifice.

The pretentious ceremonies instituted by men have neither hope, holiness, nor help to offer the bewildered and benighted multitudes living in moral defilement and mental darkness. The repetitious ritualism so prominent in Christendom today is nothing more than an elusive shadow of the essential spiritual realness which they are utterly incapable of imparting to the credulous people.

(b) Christ's Offering Recorded in the Sacred Writings. "Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me)." Ver. 7 (Psa. 40:7.)

Our Lord's immortal challenge confronts every person on earth that entertains the least doubt regarding the Scriptural doctrine of sanctification. The consoling doctrine of cleansing from hereditary evil is confirmed, certified, and corroborated by the absolute authority of the inerasable writings recorded in the volume of the Book. The indelible writings show us conclusively that the peerless Christ is ready and willing to cleanse His people from all unrighteousness.

(c) Christ's Offering Required by the Sovereign Will. "Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." Ver. 9 (Psa. 40:8.)

This revelatory statement quoted from the Messianic Psalm directs our attention to the Son's perfect submission to the Father's will. Jesus testified to His complete submission to the will of God / John 6:38.

The Apostle enlightened us concerning the perpetuity of Christ's adequate sacrifice in Ver. 12. This positive affirmation enables us to see that our perfect Savior and sympathetic High Priest has made one finished and final offering for sins for ever. He has made one perfect and perpetual provision which shall endure till the end of time. His one all-sufficient sacrifice has everlasting merit and eternal efficacy. The virtue of the Son's atoning blood remains ever available as long as the moral and spiritual needs of fallen humanity exist.

3. THE PERFECTING OF THE SANCTIFIED. "He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." Ver. 14.

The Greek word translated "for ever" means perpetual, uninterrupted, extended, and carried through to final consummation.

The Apostle used this Greek word to show us that no other sacrifice is required to obtain uninterrupted fellowship with God. In the finished and final offering of Jesus there is complete cleansing which fits His sanctified people to approach God, enter into pleasurable accord with Him, and abide in perpetual fellowship with Him throughout all ages, world without end.

(a) The Sin Cleansed Worshipers of God. "The worshipers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins." Ver. 2.

It is manifestly true that Christ's one offering is adequate to purge the hearts of the worshipers and qualify them to render praiseworthy service and due homage to God. Nothing less than a work of divine grace that purges and cleanses our being is in any sense acceptable in the sight of God.

Jesus witnessed to the nature-and necessity of true worship with His Words in..... John 4:23.

(b) The Sanctifying Will of God. "By the which will we are sanctified." Ver. 10.

The Son of God coming into the world to do the Father's will is convincing proof that the only sacrifice which we can offer to God is the unconditional submission of ourselves to His authoritative will.

He wills to purge our inmost being from all evil, take His rightful place on the throne of our yielded hearts, and rule in sovereign righteousness, regal splendor, and princely dignity for evermore. We see the dreadful consequences of Adam's willful disobedience manifested in the enmity of the carnal mind of man which is in constant revolt against the righteous law of God.

The teachings of Jesus reveal that a hapless horde of humanity will be denounced, disowned, and doomed in the day of judgment because they refused to submit themselves to the supreme will of God.

(c) The Supporting Witness of God. "The Holy Ghost also is a witness to us." Ver. 15.

The Holy Spirit witnesses to the obvious fact that sanctification is a work of Christ Himself, performed in the soul of a yielded believer. The Savior's action is personal in the application of His own perfect work of complete cleansing. He is the Sanctifier and His people are the sanctified. It is written, "For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one." Heb. 2:11. The Savior's marvelous work of regeneration and His mighty work of sanctification are masterpieces of His Divine workmanship.

The soulful satisfaction, calm contentment, and deep delight produced in the hearts of God's sanctified children constitute the firm foundation on which they base their unshakable faith and lively hope..

The Son's certain expectation of final victory is shared by all His worshipping people. The indwelling Spirit assures them that neither hatred of devils, nor the hostility of the depraved, nor the horrors of death, shall triumph over them. The witnessing Spirit enables us to perceive the tender mercy and profound concern the loving Lord has for His sanctified people. From the first hallowed hour they receive the boundless benefits of redeeming grace to the last victorious day of their earthly pilgrimage, they can retain the consoling witness of the Spirit with increasing pleasure and augmenting brilliancy by an unhesitating obedience to God's sovereign will.

3. THE PRIVILEGES OF THE SANCTIFIED.**Vers. 19, 20.**

After having consistently and convincingly presented the fundamental facts relating to Christ's one offering for the complete cleansing of His people, the Apostle is constrained by the Spirit to point out the privileges of the sanctified. He exhorts them to avail themselves fully of all their purchased possessions by entering into the holy place and enjoying to the greatest possible extent the riches of grace conferred upon them by their generous Heavenly Father.

(a) We Enter into the Holiest by the Blood of Jesus. "To enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." Ver. 19.

The Greek word translated "holiest" means the holy place. This most sacred place in the temple was called the Holiest of all. (Heb. 9:3.)

The Hebrew people always recognized the most holy place to be the dwelling place of God. Only the sanctified high priest was privileged to enter into this sacred place. To approach the Holiest of all signified an approach to God, and to dwell in this place beyond the veil meant to abide in the radiant glory of His Divine Presence.

It is by virtue of the shed blood of Jesus, our Redeemer and High Priest, that we have access to the Divine Presence in the most holy place. Jesus has by the sacrifice of Himself consecrated a new and living way by which His ransomed people are able to enter into the blessing of complete cleansing and enjoy constant communion and delightful fellowship with their merciful Lord in the holy place of tranquil rest.

(b) We Enter into the Holiest by Our Boldness in Jesus. "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest." Ver. 19.

The Greek word translated "boldness" denotes frankness, assurance, and confidence. The Christian's boldness to enter into the holiest is based on the changeless Priesthood of Jesus. The Apostle said "Having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith." Vers. 21, 22. The house of God includes the whole Christian community on earth.

When Jesus expired on the cross the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom by the unseen hand of Jehovah. The rending of the great veil by an astonishing manifestation of divine authority clearly symbolized the abolition of the veil of legalism which for nameless centuries had excluded the true worshipers from entering the Holiest of all, and resting their weary spirits in quiet repose beneath the Shekinah glory of Heaven's approving light.

The holy place portrayed the peace, purity, and perfection of an untroubled heart in a troubled world. The clatter, confusion, and conflicts of the teeming multitudes of restless humanity in the surrounding city could not disturb the eternal calmness and internal peacefulness dwelling in the Holiest of all.

(c) We Enter into the Holiest by Believing in Jesus. "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." Ver. 22.

This earnest exhortation gives us a clear description of the conditions of the personal approach to God. The conditions of our approach must in a very real way correspond with the priestly purification required under the Levitical law. Our hearts must be "sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water" when we draw near to Christ's mediatorial throne.

A true heart is a broken and contrite heart entirely consecrated to Christ to be made fit for the holy habitation of God. When we yield ourselves to Jesus to be purged from the evil conscience our faith will immediately appropriate the merits of His sacrifice and come to rest in His sanctifying will. We must approach Jesus in full assurance of faith, for without a personal belief we cannot enter into the secret place of the Most High and enjoy the unchanging tranquility of His Divine Presence. In the Holiest of all there are spiritual realities more precious than rubies, more to be desired than much fine gold, and sweeter to the soul than honey and the honeycomb.

4. THE PROFESSION OF THE SANCTIFIED. "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised)." Heb. 10:23.

The Greek word which in this verse is translated "profession" means to acknowledge, to consent, or to confess.

It has evidently been the paramount purpose of the wise Apostle from the beginning of this instructive Epistle to establish all true Christians in their faith and hope.

(a) The Promise of Christ. "For he is faithful that promised." Ver. 23.

The Christian's profession of faith and hope is based on the faithfulness of Jesus whose precious promises cannot fail because He cannot fail. All the inherent attributes of His Deity, all the Divine authority of His Lordship, and all the eternal verities of His unlimited atonement are included in His inviolable promises. Christ's intelligence, integrity, and infallibility constitute the immovable substructure on which we build

sturdy Christian character to endure the tensions of life's untried, unseen, and unpredictable deviations. In our profession of faith and hope we fully anticipate the fulfillment of every promise the Savior has made concerning complete victory over all tribulations and temptations incident to holy living in this world.

The true confession of faith is always motivated by a deep sense of our obligation to be holy in character and in conduct. With all lowliness of mind and humbleness of heart we give honor and glory to God for sending His Son to bring us into the goodly heritage promised to His believing people. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior." Tit. 3:5, 6.

(b) The Perils Of Christians. "After ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions." Vers. 32, 33.

A most powerful combination of social and ecclesiastical influences were brought to bear on the Christians to persuade them to renounce their faith in Jesus Christ. He has not lifted us out of our fallen condition, sanctified us by His blood, and inspired us with eternal hope without making the resources of His grace available to us in these perilous times.

There are many cults and false doctrines threatening us in this age of the Gospel of salvation.

We observe the perilous time of tribulations revealed in the words: "Ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions." Ver. 33. The astonishing Greek term translated "gazingstock" means a spectacle. God's faithful people are exposed to the public ridicule and scorn of the ungodly. Many were disowned, despised, and deserted.

The tides of time have not changed the attitude of the wicked' in this generation. We wrestle against the powers of darkness in this world, and against spiritual wickedness in high places. There is a price to be paid.

There is a very real and true sense in which the Savior has placed His intrepid saints on the stage of life's theater. They are His actors in the greatest drama ever witnessed by mankind. The world can behold moral character strengthened by persecutions and see achieving faith tried in the fierce fires of adversity.

These transfigured worthies endure hardships as seeing Him who is invisible. They are called to show forth the praises of Him who has called them out of darkness into His marvelous light.

(c) The Possession of Confidence. "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward." Ver. 35.

Our confidence is our liberty of access to God and our title and right to approach the throne of grace. To cast away our confidence would mean to abandon all hope in Christ and forfeit all the rights, claims, and privileges provided for us in His one vicarious sacrifice. Neither wicked men nor plotting devils can take away our confidence in the Savior, and He will not deprive us of it. The Apostle exhorts the persecuted believers to retain their confident hope in the Savior, to bear up manfully under all their difficulties, and to maintain a steadfast adherence to the knowledge of the truth embraced in their profession of faith.

The unswerving confidence of Christ's courageous people springs from the inner knowledge of the true value of the enduring substance of their spiritual possessions. The Apostle disclosed genuine Christian character in the crucible of life's flaming furnace of persecutions when he said, "Ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance." Ver. 34. The sufferings we must endure for the sake of Jesus reveal the significance of the statement, "Ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise." Ver. 36. Let us not cast away our confidence by compromising the fundamental principles of true forgiveness received through faith in the blood of Jesus. "For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.

Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul." Vers. 37-39.

LOOKING UNTO JESUS!

LOOKING UNTO JESUS # 18
HEBREWS, CHAPTER XI

1. THE FAITH IN GOD'S REDEMPTIVE PURPOSE. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Heb. 11:1.

The illuminating Greek word translated "substance" means basis, or structure, or title deed. The helpful Greek term translated "evidence" denotes proof, or firm conviction, or certain persuasion. The two inspired Greek words reveal the inherent nature and imperative necessity of the implicit faith by which God's people in all ages have approached Him to receive the assuring witness of the Holy Spirit.

A. We Expect the Things of Christ by Faith. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for." Ver. 1.

The Greek word translated "hoped for" denotes expectation, or anticipation, or confidence.

The Holy Spirit shows us that true faith means the putting of our full trust in Christ in order to receive from Him all things pertaining to spiritual life in this present world. In the closing part of the previous chapter the Holy Spirit focused attention on this essential truth, saying, "Now the just shall live by faith. Through faith His people are constantly strengthened in character, consistently sustained in conduct, and courageously supported in conflicts.

B. We Experience the Things of Christ by Faith. "The evidence of things not seen." Ver. 1.

The children of God cannot live consistent Christian lives in this unfriendly world unless the eternal things hoped for, and the vital spiritual things not seen by the natural eyes, become experimental realities in their hearts by faith in the atonement of Jesus Christ Savior. We do not have Heaven now in reality, but we do have the promise; and it is guaranteed. We do not have the literal presence of Christ, but we do have the Holy Spirit as confirmation of His presence with us. All of this is by faith.

C. We Exemplify the Things of Christ by Faith. "For by it the elders obtained a good report." Ver. 2.

It was through implicit faith in God's heartening promise of the coming Messiah that the forefathers in all ages past had the comforting witness of hope given to them by the faithful Holy Spirit. Their faith and hope swept onward through the shadows and types of legalism and brought them into the enjoyment of the personal experience of hope and life.

It is obviously true that a Christian is prospectively a citizen of Heaven, but actually, and at this present time, a Christian is a citizen of the world. We do well to remember this lest we think so much of what we are to be in Heaven as to overlook what we are to do for Christ on earth.

2. THE FAITH IN GOD'S REVEALED POWER. "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." Ver. 3.

The views commonly accepted by most are that these remarkable words of divine inspiration refer to God's wonderful works in creation. Some are firmly convinced that the Holy Spirit selected the Genesis account of creation because it is the first act of God revealed in the Scriptures in relation to which there is the exercise of simple faith.

A. Faith in God's Spoken Word in Creation. "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God." Ver. 3.

The Greek word which is here translated "word" means the spoken of God.

Our understanding of God's plan and purpose in His mighty works of creation is a matter of unshakable confidence in His unimpeachable testimony. It is utterly impossible for mortal man to prove conclusively that the vast universe with its innumerable suns, stars, and worlds was brought into existence by the spoken word of the Creator. There is no convincing record to be found in profane history that goes back to the origin of creation and informs us how the limitless universe was arranged in the perfect order in which it now exists in all its majestic glory.

The true Christian's faith rests unafraid and unashamed on the enduring truth which declares, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Gen. 1:1.

B. Faith in God's Spoken Word in Christ. "We understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." Ver. 3.

The Greek word which in this passage is translated "worlds" means ages, or the state of things marking an age, or a dispensation. The Greek word translated "framed" means to complete thoroughly, or to unite, or to prepare, or arrange.

When we place certain of these inspired words in the statement of Scripture under consideration we may read, "Through faith we understand that the ages past and the age present were completed thoroughly, or united by God's spoken word, so that the spiritual things seen in the sacrifice of Christ are made real to our hearts and minds by the Holy Spirit, and not by powers operating in the physical universe".

The Genesis account of God's wonderful works of creation reveals a complete pattern of Christ's marvelous works of redemption. It is obvious that light, life, and likeness were created by the spoken word of God. The Incarnate Christ is in His Divine Nature a clear revelation of eternal light, eternal life, and eternal likeness. The Scriptures show that the conscious realities of everlasting light, everlasting life, and everlasting likeness are produced in our trusting hearts by the Spirit of Christ.

C. Faith in God's Spoken Word of Command. "The worlds were framed by the word of God." Ver. 3.

One discovers it quite impossible to consider Christ without being profoundly impressed by the amazing power manifested in His spoken word of command. Helpless and hopeless human beings were emancipated instantly by the spoken word of the compassionate Christ. The inherent power of His Divine Nature was manifested when He cleansed the lepers, healed the sick, and raised the dead. At His word of command the blind were made to see, the deaf made to hear, and the lame made to leap. We experience His wonderful power to deliver broken, bound, and bewildered souls from the galling fetters of Satan, sin, and suffering.

3. THE FAITH OF GOD'S RIGHTEOUS PEOPLE. "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaks." Ver. 4

A. The Faith for the Witness of God. "He obtained witness that he was righteous." Ver. 4.

It was simple faith that brought to Abel's yielded heart the righteousness hoped for, and the confirmatory witness of God's pardoning mercy not seen by the evil eyes of the murderous Cain.

By the eye of faith Abel looked beyond the limitations of time and saw the more excellent sacrifice of the spotless Lamb of God and obtained the joyful experience of God's imparted righteousness.

When we open our hearts Heavenward and offer ourselves to Christ without the least semblance of reservation, we immediately obtain His testimony of righteousness. Our faith in Christ's expiatory sacrifice makes our future hope and final happiness a consoling possession by banishing every disturbing doubt relative to our acceptance with God.

B. The Faith to Walk with God. "Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him." Gen. 5:24. "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God." Ver. 5.

It is not difficult to see in Enoch's uninterrupted walk with God that faith is truly the title deed to the everlasting consolation and good hope of final victory over the power of sin and death in this world.

C. The Faith in the Warning of God. "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." Ver. 7.

Everything Noah did to prepare for the coming destruction was done because he firmly believed what God had revealed in His warning.

D. The Faith Well-pleasing to God. "Without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Ver. 6.

Enoch's delightful walk in holy oneness with God is evidently the norm of Christian life.

LOOKING UNTO JESUS.....

HEBREWS 11.....

4. THE FAITH OF GOD'S RENOWNED PATRIARCH. "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went." Ver. 8.

In Abraham, the friend of God and the father of the faithful, we have an illustrious example of sincere Christians led by the energizing Holy Spirit in perfect obedience to the heavenly calling.

There are many noble qualities of genuine Christianity revealed in the sterling character of the renowned patriarch that encourage us, in this age of the Gospel, to be obedient to the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

A. The Patient Obedience of Faith. "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out . . . obeyed." Ver. 8.

In Abraham's prompt response to the divine call we see the nature and necessity of the patient obedience of true faith. The patriarch's long and tiresome journey was exceeding difficult, dangerous, and dreary. Much of the direct route leading to the land of promise lay across a vast, harsh, and perilous desert. But the wearisome and waterless wilderness of pathless miles stretching monotonously before the undaunted traveler could neither overwhelm his courage nor overthrow his confidence in answering the call of Jehovah.

B. The Possession Obtained by Faith. "A place which he should after receive for an inheritance." Ver. 8.

The place which God promised to Abraham and his posterity for an everlasting inheritance was the fertile and flourishing land of Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey.

C. The Priceless Offering of Faith. "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son." Ver. 17.

The Greek word which is here translated "tried" means put to the proof, or to examine, or to discipline.

The Lord repeatedly assured the dauntless Abraham that Isaac was to be the progenitor of the Messiah, the promised Redeemer of lost mankind. He now wills to put Abraham's faith to the strongest possible test by ordering him to offer his only begotten son for a burnt offering on the rugged summit of Mount Moriah.

5. THE FAITH OF GOD'S RESOLUTE PILGRIMS. "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." Ver. 13.

The Greek word translated "strangers" means persons who are out of their own country, or persons who are in a foreign land. The Greek word translated "pilgrims" means a foreigner, or an alien, or one who lives among a people not his own, or sojourners for only a short period of time.

A. The Character of God's Resolute Pilgrims. "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them." Ver. 13.

The invincible company of resolute pilgrims are speaking to us concerning our faith in the promises we most surely expect to be fulfilled in this Gospel age of full redemption. We have the promise of our Lord's triumphant return, the promise of His millennial reign, the promise of the first resurrection, and the promise of the new heaven and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. (II Pet. 3:13) We see these exceeding great and precious promises, and are fully persuaded of them, and embrace them with the arms of our faith, and devoutly welcome them to our worshipping hearts with holy delight.

B. The Confession of God's Resolute Pilgrims. "And confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." Ver. 13.

Christ's worthy pilgrims are so completely separated from this present evil world that they evince no intentions of returning to partake of its folly and vanity. Ver. 15. They ignored the many inducements to return to their former manner of living. Their affections were set on heavenly things, and not on the perishing things of earth. To these resolute pilgrims of the most holy faith Heaven's attractions were stronger than the world's attachments. They lost sight of earth that they might keep Heaven in view. Their expectations were of the Lord who had called them to share eternal glory with Him in the city foursquare. Let us not be indifferent to the timely admonition regarding our pilgrim attitude toward the world. I Pet. 2:11.

C. The City of God's Resolute Pilgrims. "Now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city." Ver. 16.

The unerring teachings of Christ everywhere assure us that He has prepared a permanent dwelling place for His purchased and purified people. His infallible word encourages us to look for the foursquare city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, which the exiled Apostle saw "coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." (Rev. 21:2)

6. THE FAITH IN GOD'S REASSURING PRESENCE. "For he endured, as seeing him who is invisible." Ver. 27.

Moses, during the one hundred and twenty years of his noteworthy life, spent forty years at the magnificent court of an Egyptian king, forty years in a desert with the flocks of Jethro, and the last forty years in the divinely-appointed leadership of God's people and the inspired lawgiver for all the civilized nations of the world

A. The Crisis of Faith in the Invisible One. "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter." Ver. 24.

When he left the grandiose court of Pharaoh and identified himself with his enslaved countrymen, it was proof positive that he had rejected all the high honors and alluring prospects of Egypt's promised greatness and grandeur for ever.

God has apparently recorded these outstanding incidents in the life of Moses to impress us with the convincing truth that we are confronted with the crisis of our faith in this golden age of the Gospel of an uttermost salvation. We must refuse the pomp, pride, and proffers of this perishing world if we expect to obtain the unfading crown of life promised to them that forsake all to follow the unselfish Christ.

B. The Choice of Faith in the Invisible One. "Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." Ver. 25.

The clear light of divine revelation is here focused upon a distinguished man of great wisdom and prominence choosing to suffer hardships with God's downtrodden and oppressed people rather than enjoy the leisure, luxuries, and lavish style of living at the court of idolatrous Egypt. This eminent man of learning saw that if he cast his lot with the poor, despised, and crushed nation of abject slaves he must expect to share in their privations, persecutions, and perils which inevitably follow as a direct consequence of such a deliberate and momentous decision.

C. The Compensation of Faith in the Invisible One. "Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt." Ver. 26.

The Greek word here translated "esteeming" means to consider, or to regard, or to lead out. The Greek term translated "reproach" means censure, or reviling, or insult, or contempt.

All the censure, revilings, insults, and contempt that a Christian must endure for the sake of Christ are packed into the word "reproach." The reproach of Christ also includes the vexatious and disciplinary trials of persecution, privations, and perils all true Christians must suffer in this world

D. The Concern of Faith in the Invisible One. "Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them." Ver. 28.

It would be difficult to believe that any person could be a constant companion of the compassionate Christ without sharing His profound concern for the safety of His confiding people. Moses showed his deep concern for the welfare of God's trusting people by observing the passover, and the sprinkling of the blood of the lamb. Keeping the passover was the Lord's appointed means of preserving the Israelites preparatory to their exodus from the land of Egypt.

E. The Courage of Faith in the Invisible One. "By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land." Ver. 29.

From this remarkable miracle of deliverance recorded in Hebrew history we see that it was through an invincible courage and an implicit confidence in the reassuring presence of the invisible Lord that Moses, with uplifted rod and outstretched hand, received the power to divide the waters of the Red Sea for the children of Israel to pass from the perilous land of bondage to the promised land of Beulah.

7. THE FAITH IN GOD'S RICHEST PROVISION. "These all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." Vers. 39, 40.

The Greek word which is here translated "provided" means to determine beforehand, or to furnish in advance, or to foresee, or to provide.

A. Consider the Confidence of the Valiant Worthy. "These all . . . received not the promise." Ver. 39.

The spirit of truth has called our attention to "the promise." The great Messianic promise of the Lord's incarnation and the actual redemption of a lost world by the sacrifice of Christ is called "The Promise."

B. Consider the Confirmation of the Victorious Worthy. "These all, having obtained a good report through faith." Ver. 39.

The words "these all" include all the patriarchs, all the prophets, and all the devout worshipers mentioned in Holy Writ. The victorious worthies obtained a good reputation through faith, and all had the assuring witness given to them by the Holy Spirit confirming their acceptance in the sight of the Lord.

C. Consider the Completion of the Venerable Worthy. "God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." Ver. 40.

The Greek word translated "perfect" means completed, or consummated, or accomplished, or finished, or provided.

TEXT: Heb. 11:1-2. Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report --

INTRODUCTION: The word "faith" is used 242 times in the Scriptures; yet it is one of the most neglected doctrines of the Bible.

It is one thing to believe that God CAN; it is quite another to believe that God WILL. This principle is the real test of spiritual faith. Yes, we say we believe God CAN because God is God - and God can do anything. However, to believe that God WILL is faith in practice -

Doubt is of the mind, unbelief is of the will, but faith is of the heart. Someone has said, "if your faith fizzles out before the finish, in all probability it had a flaw from the first."

The wealth of faith involves the --

I. PRINCIPLE OF FAITH "Now faith" .. .Heb. 11:1

A. THE DESCRIPTION OF FAITH Dr. A. B. Simpson says, "the eleventh chapter of Hebrews is a star cluster in the firmament of inspired biography. it is a whole Milky Way crowded with constellations of light and glory." For spiritual profit, we should come here often and linger long. The first verse is generally regarded as the classic definition of faith.

However, it is not so much a definition of faith, but a description of its effects. For faith accepts what God declares, and puts it to the proof.

CHICKEN DINNER: A description of faith may be illustrated by the story that is told of an old- time preacher who was invited for Sunday dinner in the home of one of his members. Unavoidably detained, after the service, he was delayed and was late arriving. In the meantime, the children became so hungry, the mother allowed them to go ahead and eat. The chicken and dumplings disappeared quickly. The children did a good job. Later, as the preacher began to eat, he found just a few bones floating around in a bowl of gravy. He exclaimed, "well, it is the substance of things hoped for - the evidence of things not seen."

LUTHER: "The just shall live by faith," is the verse of Scripture that led to the conversion of Martin Luther - This statement of the believer's principle of life is found four times in God's Word: Habakkuk 2:4, Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11, and Hebrews 10:38. Luther got it from Paul. Paul got it from Habakkuk. We might say of the Reformation that Luther was the father, Paul the grandfather, and Habakkuk the great- grand-father.

TITLE DEED: "Now faith is the substance This word "substance" really means "title deed." As a title deed is evidence of real estate ownership -- faith is our title deed to everlasting life, and the evidence of our eternal estate in heaven.

"For the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (11 Cor. 4:18). Faith is more than just a philosophy of life; it is the very principle of life itself.

B. THE DESCERMENT OF FAITH The Christian should live his entire life by faith. He is saved by faith. It is not faith and works - but faith that works.

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ...." (Acts 16:31).

He will, also, find that his faith will be put to the test many times and in many ways -- "That the trial of your faith.. be tried with fire..." (I Peter 1:7).

Faith knows how to wait on God. It always comes out in victory. Faith is more than equal to any and all occasions. It will always be vindicated."All things work together for good to them that love God...." (Rom. 8:28). Faith does not limit the power of God. It believes beyond the reasonable, and never allows facts to stand in its way. For faith is simply taking God at His word -- and asking no questions. As an Associational Missionary, it is still by faith that I go to various churches to preach. Believe me, when I tell you it is strictly by faith. God is good. He supplies the needs. He is never too early, never too late, but always on time. The principle of faith leads us to consider the --

II. POWER OF FAITH Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God -Heb. 11:3 The power of faith is not so much a question of "do we believe," but "whom do we believe." It is not a case of sincerity of belief, but the truth in what is believed. Faith moves mountains. "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, remove hence to yonder place...."(Matt. 17:20). It does not take a huge amount of faith to have great power with God. Just a mustard seed size of faith will remove a mountain of unbelief. Trust the Lord for mountain moving faith. The power of saving faith has three sides. The salvation experience always involves the intellect, the will, and the emotions. The intellect says that Jesus Christ is God --"I accept Christ." The will makes a submission to Him as Master and Lord -- "I will follow Christ." The emotions are the outward expression of the heart's inward response to God's love -- The heart responds to the love of God; The will submits to the demands of God; The life obeys in the service of God. Together we witness the power of saving faith.

I. PRINCIPLE OF FAITH

II. POWER OF FAITH

III. PRACTICE OF FAITH If you learn the principle of faith and see its power you will practice it... Things which are seen were not made of things which do appear Heb. 11:3. FAITH IS A PARADOX: Faith believes beyond reason. Faith believes without understanding why it believes.

A. FAITH SAYS IN PRACTICE: The way to find life is to lose it -- Matt. 10:39. The way to live is to die -- John 12:24. The way to gain is to lose-- Matt. 19:21.

The way to be first is to be last -- Mark 9:35. The way to win is to lose -- Phil. 3:8. The way to become rich is to become poor --Matt. 19:21. The way to become strong is to become weak --II Cor. 12:10. The way to become wise is to become a fool -I Cor. 1:27.

B. FAITH SINGS IN PRISON: We think of Paul and Silas. Someone has observed that when Paul arrived in a new city to preach Jesus Christ, he did not inquire as to the best hotel or motel. Rather he asked which was the best jail. He had such faith in and power with God, that when leaving town he left with a convert under one arm and a jail door under the other. Such was their experience at Philippi. Beaten within an inch of their lives, we find them at midnight in a deep, dark, damp, dreary, dingy, dirty dungeon. I think a conversation took place between Paul and Silas. I think they gave glory and praise to the Lord for being counted worthy to suffer for Christ and the gospel. Then, Silas said, "Paul do you feel like singing?"

SAYS A SON OF HIS MOTHER Caught in the prison house of dire need during the great depression of the thirties, she never lost faith in God. It grieved her that she could not give her boy material advantages. As she prepared supper in the little side-room kitchen, over the old wood burning cook stove - and as a little boy, he heard her at times weeping. Yet, at the same time she sang - sang through her tears. Some of the old songs were her favorites --such as: "Footsteps of Jesus," "Oh they tell me of an unCloudy Day," "All the Way my Saviour Leads me," and "Beautiful Lights Along the Shore." What an example depicting the practice of faith! What living above circumstances! What singing through adversities!

C.FAITH SHINES IN PROBLEMS: Have you ever prayed for patience - yet it seemed that you received tribulation instead? Perhaps this is biblical.

"Tribulation worketh patience; and patience experience, and experience hope" (Rom. 5:3,4).

AUGUSTINE said, "Faith is to believe what we do not see, and the reward is to see what we believe.

CHARLES KINGSLEY said, "I do not want merely to possess a faith; I want a faith that possesses me."

WILLIAM NEWTON CLARK said, "Faith is the daring of the heart to go farther than it can see." "Faith sees the invisible, believes the incredible, and receives the impossible."

It takes Faith to live and faith to die,

Faith that asks not why

Faith to learn and faith to teach,

Faith to practice what we preach.

Faith to work and faith to pray,

Faith to trust and obey.

Topic: Faith Luther adds comments on the interior character of faith: Faith is a

living well-founded confidence in the grace of God, so perfectly certain that it would die a thousand times rather than surrender its conviction. Such confidence and personal knowledge of divine grace makes its possessor joyful, bold, and full of warm affection toward God and all created things -- all of which the Holy Spirit works in faith. Hence, such a man becomes without constraint willing and eager to do good to everyone, to serve everyone, to suffer all manner of ills, in order to please and glorify God, who has shown toward him such grace.

Topic: Faith When a man hath liberty to go into the treasure-house of a king, to enrich himself, he will first seek the keys wherewith to open the doors; so, if we desire to be enriched with God's grace, we must first labor to have faith, which is the only key of God's treasure-house, and secures us all graces needful both for body and soul.

Worship of Faith

TEXT: By faith Abel -- Heb. 11:4.

INTRODUCTION: In the physical realm, higher life (man) is sustained by the death of lower life -- animal and vegetable. In the spiritual realm, lower life (man) is sustained by the death of higher life - God.

We see, one lamb for ONE MAN -- Abel. He worshipped God with an offering -- a lamb sacrifice. We see, one lamb for ONE FAMILY -- the Passover Night. This lamb was to be -- "without spot or blemish, a male...a lamb for a house" (Exo. 12:3). We see, one lamb for ONE NATION -- the Great Day of Atonement. This was the day the high priest went into the Holy of Holies once a year. A scarlet rope was tied to his ankle. or so we have been told If he should die while in there, he could be extracted. When he had concluded with the sprinkling of the blood, and came out, he shouted -- "it is finished!"

We see, one Lamb for ONE WORLD -- John the Baptist first saw Jesus. When He shed His blood a sacrifice for sins on the Cross, He shouted -- "it is finished!" Abel knew that day that faith was the instrument by which he would receive salvation even as faith is an important aspect of the gospel for us today. Faith trusts God's will in spite of circumstances; for it is not based on feelings, logic, or reason. Abel knew this. Faith looks into the future and does not tremble at present difficulties; Faith draws the hurt from every grief, and takes the sting from every loss. God often has to knock all our props out before we will fall down upon His promises of faith.

He is rich in fact who is rich in faith; for it is impossible to get faith into a disobedient heart. A man may be at his wit's end, but he need not be at his faith's end.

For the promises of faith are more certain than the conclusions of logic; Faith knows that it is impossible to overdraw its account in God's bank.

Faith is letting down our nets into the depths at divine command, not knowing what we shall bring up.

Faith is a higher attribute than reason. If we want God to honor us, then, we must get into the habit of taking Him at His word.

Faith never comes to a wall too high for it to surmount; for faith either removes mountains or tunnels through. It is faith that binds our nothingness to Almightyness.

Faith lights our way through the dark to Deity; for faith is the subtle chain that binds us to the Infinite.

Faith is a higher faculty than guessing; it is the hero of the intellect. If we desire an increase of faith, we must consent to its testings; for our greatest strength is often shown in our ability to stand still and trust God. Sometimes the faith that bears and suffers is greater than the faith that triumphs. We should rest upon God's promises though He seem to forsake us; for faith triumphs when it brings us into union with His power. By faith, Abel's worship recognized his --

I. SIN Abel offered unto God -- Heb. 11:4. The heroes of faith are Abel, Enoch, and Noah. One was murdered, one never died, and one preserved life. They show the faith of one worshipping God, of one walking with God, and of one working for God. The heroes of faith begin with a martyr. He is a picture of the true worshipper. Rightly understood, the worship of Abel describes the beginning of the life of faith. He acted by faith, and not by fancy or by feeling. Abel is the first recorded act of worship. Though "worship" is not used of his action.

A. IT SHOWED IN HIS RECOGNITION Abel's faith recognized his sin. He came as a guilty sinner, needing salvation, and bringing a sacrifice. Cain came as a gentleman to exchange compliments with God and present some fruits and flowers as a visitor on equal terms. God would not have this. Faith always takes the sinner's place and then claims the sinner's Saviour.

B. IT SHOWED IN HIS REMORSE Abel began at the beginning. This is more than a great many are willing to do today. Most are willing to begin at the top. Many are trying to climb up some other way and get into the life of Christ a little beyond the Cross. BATH OF BLOOD: Not long ago, a certain minister flung aside a hymnbook with a gesture of impatience because the hymn, "There Is a Fountain Filled With Blood," was included. He said it was coarse and unfit for refined ears. The idea of a bath of blood was an outrage on good taste. Another minister was present at the meeting. He was brave enough to get up and read a passage in Zachariah speaking of a -- "fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness" (Zech. 13:1).

Abel's faith testifies that one who is to worship God acceptably must come in faith, presenting the offering which God requires, and expecting the pardon and

peace which God provides.

TERRIBLE SINNER: The incident is told of a young lady who came forward following the invitation service, and said to the evangelist, "you said that I am a terrible sinner. I resent that. I have never done anything wrong in my entire life. I don't need a Saviour. "Young lady," the evangelist replied, "do you love your mother?" "Yes, of course." "Well," said the evangelist, "if you refused to recognize her, and spurned her love and goodness to you, would you consider yourself a good person?" "No, of course not." "Well, that is exactly what you have done with God. He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to die for you on the Cross that you might be saved. NeverThe less, you are not only ungrateful, you have spurned God's love and thrown it back into His face. I insist that you are a sinner. Your sin is worse than all other sins -- the sin of rejecting the Lord Jesus Christ."

The first step to salvation is to call sin -- SIN. For the trouble with a little sin is that it will not stay little. And to love a small sin is a great sin. It is the little sins who are the pioneers of hell. History begins in the sin of man and will come to an end in the "man of sin." Sin's worst, when taken to God, is no match for His grace. The devil's chloroform is the denial of sin. For sin deceives, then defiles, then deadens. by faith, Abel's worship recognized his --

I. SIN By faith, worship offered a --

II. SACRIFICE More excellent sacrifice -- Heb. 11:4. Abel brought an offering. He was a shepherd, but he did not spare his flock. His sacrifice must have been a lamb -- for it consisted of the "firstlings of his flock" (Gen. 4:4). No doubt Abel loved his flock of sheep and their lambs. However, nothing was too good for his Lord. God did not spare the Lamb of God, His only begotten Son -- but gave Him a ransom for ruined sinners.

FACING TRAGEDY: The pastor of a church visited a family whose son had been killed in an auto accident. The boy's mother, bitter in heart, railed on him: "where was your God when my son died?" The pastor kindly answered, "the same place He was when His Son died."

RAZOR-EDGE RELIGION: A certain evangelist, burdened for the souls of men, was sitting in a barber's chair waiting for a shave. While the barber was sharpening his razor, the evangelist asked, "Sir, are you saved?" The barber shot back the stock answer, "I am doing my best, and that's enough isn't it?" The evangelist was silent until he was shaven and the next customer was in the chair for a shave. Then the evangelist arose, grabbed a razor, and said, "let me shave this one." "Oh, no," said the barber, "not you. You are not good enough to do that." "But I will do my best," replied the evangelist. "Isn't that good enough?" The evangelist made his point. The sacrifice for salvation is not to make bad men good, or good men better, but to make dead men alive. By faith, Abel's worship recognized his

I. SIN By faith, Able's worship offered a --

II. SACRIFICE By Faith Able's worship obtained--

III. SALVATION That he was righteous -- Heb. 11:4. Faith, such as was exercised by Abel enables man to approach God for salvation. By faith, he is made righteous before God.

A. Abel was justified. He was declared righteous. He received all this by faith. He did not guess about it. He simply claimed it because it was God's prescribed way. He counted upon it. He took his stand upon it by faith. God gave it to him. He was saved in exactly the same way as every poor sinner is today. We come in simple faith as a sinner, claiming the promises, placing ourselves upon the mercy of God and going out to act as if it were true.

B. God is satisfied. It is faith that links the seeker with God who gives salvation. Faith has to do with Christ's eternally enduring sacrifice for salvation. For if we could merit our own salvation, Faith places the death of Christ between the sinner and God's judgment. For man cannot be saved by perfect obedience because he cannot produce it. He cannot be saved by imperfect obedience because God cannot accept it. Calvary is the only solution.

WHO HOLDS THE ROPE: it is told of a party of scientists and botanists who were exploring almost inaccessible regions of a mountain searching for new species of flowers. One day, they discovered, through field glasses, a flower of such rarity and beauty that its value to science was almost incalculable. However, it lay deep in a ravine which had cliffs straight up and down on both sides. In order to reach this rare plant, someone would have to be lowered over the sheer drop-off by means of a rope a very dangerous undertaking. A small boy, watching nearby, was approached by the men. They offered him some money if he would consent to be lowered over the cliff and get the flower for them. The little boy took a long look at the dizzy depths, and then replied, "just a minute I'll be right back." Sometime later, the boy returned, followed by an older man. Approaching one of the botanists, he said, "I'll go over that cliff and get that flower for you if THIS MAN HOLDS THE ROPE. He's my father."

Walk of
Faith



TEXT: By faith Enoch...Hebrews 11:5,6.

INTRODUCTION: Someone has described Enoch's relationship with God thus:

God and Enoch often walked together. One day, in the cool of the evening, they walked a little farther than usual. Enoch said to God, "Lord don't you think we had better be getting back home? It is beginning to get a little dark." God turned to Enoch and said, "Enoch, you are right. Yes, it is getting dusky dark. But you know, Enoch, today it is closer to my home than it is back to yours. Why don't you just come on and go home with me?" Enoch did as God suggested -- went to God's home without going through the natural process of death. "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death" (Heb. 11:5). Up until the time of Enoch's translation into Heaven, pleasure and pain, living and dieing, birth and burial was the commentary on life. "AND he died -- and HE died -- and he DIED," signified life's ending. Only once in 1,500 years did this not happen. "And he died," could not be said of Enoch. By faith Enoch -

I. ENOCH WALKED WITH GOD And Enoch walked with God-- Gen. 5:24. Enoch walked with God by faith for 300 years. what a long time to walk and fellowship with the Lord! What a contrast between Enoch and Methuselah. Nothing is said of Methuselah and his relationship with God. He has the distinction as living 969 years -- longer than any man. However, nothing is recorded as to his life. The Bible just says, "he lived and he died." This is the epitome of so many today. They live and they die. Nothing can be said of their walk with, faith in, or service to the Lord. IN ORDER TO WALK WITH GOD YOU MUST BE

A. IN THE SAME STEP: To walk with God means that, by faith, Enoch stayed in step with God. He did not run ahead, nor did he lag behind God. Neither did God run ahead of Enoch. They walked one step at a time -- Sometimes zeal outruns our knowledge. Other times zeal is absent, but knowledge is present. The person who walks with God should not, will not, undertake to work for God until he knows the will of God.

PETER: The classic example of rushing ahead and lagging behind is seen in the experience of Peter the night of Jesus' betrayal. In the garden he rushed ahead. He drew out his sword and sliced off the ear of Malchus. Jesus said to him, "put up again thy sword into its place" (Matt. 26:52).

BY THE FIRE -- "and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself" (John 18:18).

UNDER FIRE -- "art thou also one of this man's disciples" (John 18:17).

IN THE FIRE -- "he denied, and said, I am not" (John 18:25).

OUT OF THE FIRE -- "yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee" (John 21:17).

ON FIRE -- (Later at Pentecost) -- "but Peter, lifted up his voice and said unto them...." (Acts 2:14). Rushing ahead led to rebuke and failure, that led to lagging behind and denial, that produced bitter weeping and remorse. It always does!

B. IN THE SAME DIRECTION: To walk with God means that by faith Enoch

and God were going the same direction - the divine direction. You cannot walk with God and this world at the same time. They are going in different directions. DEMAS: Paul said of his friend, "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world" (II Tim. 4:10). This seems to be the characterization of the spiritual dilemma we find ourselves in today. Church attendance is at a very low ebb -- and still going down. We must go God's way -- if we go at all!

C. IN THE SAME AGREEMENT: To walk with God means that by faith Enoch agreed with God. There can be no peace with God when there is disunity with Him. Agreement leads to the end of controversy. Amos said, "can two walk together except they be agreed" (Amos 3:3). Jesus advised that you should not hook up a mule and an ox together and try to plow. Their natures are such that they do not agree. Dogs and cats do not generally agree. They have different natures. Sheep and hogs have contrasting natures and are not in agreement as to their preference of living quarters.

I. ENOCH WALKED WITH GOD

II. ENOCH WITNESSED FOR GOD He had this testimony that he pleased God-- Heb. 11:5. In one sense, our testimony is what others say about us. A faith life is a life of testimony. And it takes faith to have a testimony. THE BIBLE SAID ENOCH HE PLEASSED GOD HE PLEASSED HIM BY HIS FAITH

A. IN GODS PLAN....

B. IN GOD'S PURPOSE...

C. IN GOD'S PRECEPTS... . God does not call preachers to please but to preach -- declaring the whole council of God. Personal experience has shown that as some disagree, they can be very disagreeable in disagreement. Faith always pleases God -- and God is honored when we have faith. By faith, the Christian looks forward to the time he stands before his Saviour and hears Him say, "well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things" (Matt. 25:21).

I. ENOCH WALKED WITH GOD

II. ENOCH WITNESSED FOR GOD

III. ENOCH WITNESSED GOD HE BELIEVED GOD For he that cometh to God must believe that he is - Heb. 11:6 By faith we believe that God is. The Bible nowhere attempts to prove the existence of God. His existence is presupposed by the writers of both the Old and New Testament. The Bible opens by announcing the sublime fact of God -- "In the beginning God...."

(Gen. 1:1). Five sciences are found in the very first verse of God's Word:

TIME -- "In the beginning."

WISDOM -- "God."

ENGINEERING -- "created."

SPACE -- "the heavens."

MATTER -- "and the earth." Some believe their doubts; some doubt their beliefs. By faith we can doubt our doubts, and believe our beliefs. Some say, I believe only what I can see, understand, or explain. Is that so. The following I picked up somewhere along the way. How do you explain them -- except by faith.

COW: How is it that a black cow eats green grass, gives white milk, churns yellow butter, and grows red hair. GRASS: How is it that when grass is eaten by a cow it produces milk; by a sheep it produces wool; or by a goose it produces feathers.

ELEPHANT: Interesting, also, it is to note that the hind legs of an elephant bend forward, while the hind legs of all other quadrupeds bend backwards. Why this? Because of the elephant's great weight, he cannot raise his body on just two legs. He must use all four at the same time. Faith believes God.

HATCHING OF EGGS: Notice the accuracy in the hatching of eggs - all in multiple of seven days. The potato bug egg hatches in 7 days, the canary egg in 14 days, the hen egg in 21 days, duck and geese eggs in 28 days, the eagle egg in 35 days, parrott and ostrich in 42 days, and a snake egg in 49 days.

DANDELIONS -- will grow above their surroundings, whether the grass be two, ten, or twenty inches tall -- because they must get up into the sunlight.

BEANS --grow up a pole from left to right, while the morning glory grows up a pole from right to left.

SEEDS -- of all kinds, when placed in the ground upside down, or sideways, always sprout and come up.

WATERMELONS -- always have an even number of strips -- sometimes ten, twelve, or sixteen, etc., depending on their size.

CORN: An ear of corn always has an even number of grains.

WHEAT: A head of wheat always has an even number of grains. A light crop produces approximately 30 grains; a good crop produces 60 grains; and a bumper crop produces 100 grains.

By faith, we learn that God has a perfect plan for our lives. He supplies all our needs. Through faith we receive strength to rise above circumstances. Faith accepts the unusual -- when God is in it.

TREE SAP: Unusual it is how water, over coming the law of gravity, can travel from the roots to the top of trees -- some as much as 300 feet tall.

EELS -- have two hearts. One heart beats 60 times per minute; the other over 160 times per minute.

ELECTRICITY -- when turned into one box, freezes ice; turned into another, it cooks corn bread.

FLEAS -- can jump 100 times their height - man maybe one time.

A BOY -- compared to a grasshopper could leap over a barn.
 IODINE -- will color 7,000 times its weight in water.
 HYDROCYNIC ACID -- one of the most poisonous substances known, is found in kernels of cherries, peaches, and plums.
 THE EARTH -- moves in 8 different directions at the same time.
 THE HUMMING BIRD -- is the only bird with reverse flight, and that while its wings vibrate over 200 times per second.
 BUMBLE BEE: According to the science of aerodynamical engineering, the bumble bee is earthbound and is completely impossible for it to fly. This is because its wing span is so much out of proportion to its body weight. However, the lonely little bumble bee has never heard of this science, and in defiance of logic, ignores this theory, spreads its stubby little wings, and flies anyway. it is funny how we never question these things we accept them by faith but when it comes to God's word we begin to question every thing By faith, we understand that God's works are seen in the small things, "for who hath despised the day of small things" (Zech. 4:10). By faith, "Lord I believe -- help thou my unbelief" (Mark 9:24).

Work of Faith

TEXT: By faith Noah -- Heb. 11:7.

INTRODUCTION: Faith is to trust God without terms. For when God has a big job to be done, faith gets the contract. A person can never be a hero unless he is first a hero in faith. For we do not test the resources of God until we try the impossible. Even faith can stifle science. It is faith that expects from God that which is beyond all expectations.

Noah knew that there was no better way to show his trust in God than to bury himself in the thing God had asked him to do. For he found that faith was the key that unlocked the cabinet of God's promises, and emptied the content of its treasures into his soul. Noah walked with God in a day and age when "all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth" (Gen. 6:12). This verse should be of special interest to all of us living in these days. Jesus told us, "As the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be" (Matt. 24:37). God said a flood was coming. Noah's faith was demonstrated by his building of the ark. As the hammers echoed, they were preaching a warning of coming judgment. The unsaved world had ample evidence of Noah's faith by his daily testimony that he believed God, in a coming flood, and in the need for a refuge. We see first the --

I. FOUNDATION OF NOAH'S FAITH Being warned of God -- Heb. 11:7.

A. A WORD FROM GOD: Noah's faith rested upon the truth of God's Word.

God had spoken! Could God lie! It never occurred to him to doubt the authority of divine revelation. In all probability, the people of that day told Noah he was mistaken in thinking God would send a flood. Some probably reminded him that God was a God of love, and would not do such a thing. Still others insisted that the flood was just figurative language, and could not mean literal water. Nevertheless, by faith, Noah believed God, and in the literal fulfillment of the predicted flood. NOT ONLY A WORD FROM

B.A WARNING FROM GOD... THE FLOOD -- TYPE OF GOD'S JUDGMENT:

Noah had warned the people of the coming judgment even to the very day. "For yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights" (Gen. 7:4). God kept His word. Judgment came. Jesus said, "they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark" (Luke 17:27).

C.A WAY FROM GOD... ARK -- TYPE OF SALVATION: God directed Noah in

the construction of the ark -- even to the minute details. Interesting it is to note the dimensions. It was engineered to be 6 times longer than its width.

Incidentally, we are told that even today, all ocean going ships are engineered, designed, and built in the same proportions.

The ark became the salvation of Noah and his family. Our salvation is in Christ - the Ark of Salvation.

PITCH: By faith, Noah followed God's instruction to -- "pitch it within and without with pitch" (Gen. 6:14). The pitch was necessary to keep out the water -- water of God's judgment. "Pitch" means "atonement." The ark of safety our salvation is "pitched" within and without with the "atonement" of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Next we see the --

I. FOUNDATION OF NOAH'S FAITH

II.FOUNTAIN OF NOAH'S FAITH Things not seen as yet -- Heb. 11:7.

History was against the flood. Natural law had remained unbroken for centuries. There had been no divine intervention, no spectacular interruption, or violent arrest of this natural law. The sky was clear. The heavens were silent. Present appearances were contrary to a flood. Nothing Noah could observe with the natural eye could confirm his faith in a promised deluge.

Yet, he believed God. All evidence was that up until now it had never rained upon the earth. "But there went up a MIST from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground" (Gen. 2:6). Strong faith was necessary to accept the seemingly contrary evidences. This Noah did. His acceptance of the unseen became the strength of his faith. How strong is your faith?

HE HAD FOUNTAIN OF FAITH TO DRAW FROM ON THE INSIDE...REMEMBER
OUT YOUR BELLY SHALL FLOW RIVERS OF LIVING WATER

I. FOUNDATION OF NOAH'S FAITH

II.FOUNTAIN OF NOAH'S FAITH

III.FORCE OF NOAH'S FAITH Moved with fear - Heb. 11:7.

A. NOTICE WHAT THIS FORCE BROUGHT... CONVICTION His was the kind of faith that brought deep conviction. This conviction moved him to action. Self-preservation is the first law of nature and Noah obeyed it.

B. NOTICE WHAT THIS FORCE TAUGHT... FEAR Fearing destruction in the flood, he resolved to save his life. He was motivated and moved by this fear. Why should we not be moved by fear? It is natural and wise. The greatest danger sinful man can face is the wrath and judgment of God upon unbelievers. Subsequently, wise is the person who will fear God.

C. NOTICE WHAT THIS FORCE WROUGHT... A WAY OUT Noah would have been among the drowned ones, if he had not built an ark through fear. Wise and urgent it is, today, for us to let the fear of judgment lead us to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ the Ark of Safety. Demonstrated to us are the

I. FOUNDATION OF NOAH'S FAITH

II.FOUNTAIN OF NOAH'S FAITH

III. FORCE OF NOAH'S FAITH

IV. FRUIT OF NOAH'S FAITH Prepared an ark -- Heb. 11:7.

BUILDING: Noah's faith was demonstrated by the actual constructing of the ark. The ungodly world saw concrete evidence of his faith by his daily activity. Every sound of the saw and every blow of the hammer preached a warning of
NO PUMPS: Another evidence of Noah's faith was the absence of pumps aboard the ark. No need for them though. It was prepared under the explicit directive of God Himself. It could not - it would not leak. Neither will the Ark of Salvation.

NO RUDDER: Additional evidence of Noah's faith was that there was no rudder to guide the ark during its floating journey. God was its pilot. As to the Ark of Salvation, we can sing, "Jesus Saviour Pilot Me." Does anyone see the evidence of your faith?

WINDOW: At the end of the forty days, Noah opened the window of the ark. Some think this window was in the top -- and opened toward Heaven. It is surmized that Noah opened it often to look up and talk with God in prayer
Noah built a boat of refuge that was to carry him across to his inheritance on

the shores of a new world. He accepted by faith the great fact God had told him of the new age that was to follow the flood. He landed safely. IT IS VERY SIMPLE AS TO THE FRUIT OF THE FAITH OF NOAH HE WON HIS FAMILY BECAUSE OF HIS FAITH

The Wonder of
Faith

TEXT: Heb. 11:8-19

Intro: Abraham is one of the great men of the Bible. When we think of men like him, we tend to see them as being larger than life. We seem to imagine that they started off at the top of the game and then just stayed there. Then, if we are foolish enough to compare ourselves with them, we feel like we are always struggling, always failing, and always facing some obstacle or another. We may begin to think that we will never succeed spiritually, but that we are doomed to a life of struggles and defeat. Well, I want to let you in on a little secret. Abraham didn't start off as a man of God! Neither did Moses, Joshua, Caleb, Elijah, John the Baptist, the Apostle Paul, etc., etc. They started off just like you and me! In fact, Abraham started off as an idolater, a sinner a million miles away from the Lord. But one day, God did for Abraham what He did for you and me, if you are saved. He called Abraham to follow Him. Abraham did and by that simple, small step of faith, he began a new life with God. Don't think for a minute that it was any easier for him than it is for you. Abraham had to overcome some very real obstacles before he became the spiritual giant we read about in the Bible. He had some very high mountains to climb before he earned the title "Friend of God", James 2:23. Allow me to share some of the obstacles that Abraham had to overcome and you may find that you have more in common with him than you thought. Because, there are several obstacles that we must overcome before we can become the men God wants us to be! (Ill. The need for FAITH! At home, at church, in the community!)

I. WHEN DEALING WITH FAMILY (Gen. 11:31-12:5)

A. NOTICE THE TRUST His family, her family, Sarah. How many women would be pleased to follow their husbands under those circumstances?) Many times, our families don't understand us, but we must serve God in spite of the wishes of others. Matt. 10:34-37; Luke 14:26.

B. NOTICE THE TRIUMPH God will help you to overcome your family and serve Him. (Ill. Thank God for those who serve in the face of opposition!) (Always consider family!!)

I. WHEN DEALING WITH FAMILY

II. WHEN DEALING WITH FACTS (Gen. 12:4) So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.

A. HE BELIEVED INSPITE OF NO SIGNS So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him;

B. HE BELIEVED INSPITE OF HIS SEVENTIES and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran. Abraham had to face the fact of his limitations. He was 75 years old when God called him to service! We all have feelings of being inadequate, or of being unable to do the Lord's will. BUT ACCEPT IT BY FAITH AND LET HIM DO IT

LISTEN TO THIS HUNTER Sam was my best dog, ever. Often we'd share together lazy lunches in an abandoned apple orchard, and the snooze that followed. Late one afternoon, Sam and I became separated. Neither of us was familiar with the area. I called and whistled. No sign of Sam. I had to get back. But how could I leave Sam? If he finally came back and I wasn't there, would I lose him for good? Then I remembered a trick an old dog trainer had passed on. I unbuttoned my jacket, removed my shirt and laid it on the ground under the branches of a small bush. I worried all night. But when I returned the next morning there was Sam curled up with his nose under the sleeve of my shirt. He looked up and wagged his tail. "Where've you been friend?" his eyes seemed to say. "I've been waiting for you all night. But I knew you'd come back." Later I wondered. When I get confused, do I have the faith to look for some part of God's word and curl up in it? To wait patiently, knowing that my Friend will find me if I just have faith in him?

I.WHEN DEALING WITH FAMILY

II. WHEN DEALING WITH FACTS

III. WHEN DEALING WITH FEAR (Heb. 11:8) By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

A.FEAR OF THE UNKNOWN Abraham had to overcome the fear of facing the unknown.

Topic: Fear During World War II, a military governor met with General George Patton in Sicily. When he praised Patton highly for his courage and bravery, the general replied, "Sir, I am not a brave man - the truth is, I am an utter craven coward. I have never been within the sound of gunshot or in sight of battle in my whole life that I wasn't so scared that I had sweat in the palms of my hands." Years later, when Patton's autobiography was published, it contained this significant statement by the general: "I learned very early in my life never

to take counsel of my fears therefore they do not conquer me.

B. FEAR OF THE UNCERTAIN fearing that God will not do what he said is the worst fear of all. Fear will steal your motivation and will defeat you spiritually. Whether it's fear of some service to God, or fear of something in life, it must be overcome! Everyone is afraid at times, but you do not have to allow fear to defeat you.

"Fear is the darkroom where negatives are developed." Sometimes our fears are quite profound, complicated, and deep. At other times, they're very simple. God will help you to overcome your fears, 2 Tim. 1:7

1. Know that God is with you - Heb. 13:5

2. Know that God is only interested in your best interests - Rom. 8:28

3. Know that you can trust in God - Psa. 56:3; Isa. 12:2

I. WHEN DEALING WITH FAMILY

II. WHEN DEALING WITH FACTS

III. WHEN DEALING WITH FEAR

IV. WHEN DEALING WITH FAILURES

A. SIN Abraham had to overcome sin in his life.

1. Gen. 12:11-20; 20:1-18 - Lying, deception, fearfulness,

2. Gen. 16:1-16 - Faithlessness

B. Sin often defeats the Christian in this life - Heb. 12:1

C. God will help us to overcome our failures!

God allows fresh starts!

V. WHEN DEALING WITH FLESH

A. SELF

A. THIS DEALS WITH THE WILL Abraham had to overcome the desires of the flesh.

1. When God promised him Isaac after the birth of Ishmael - Gen. 17:15-19.

2. When God commanded him to send Ishmael away - Gen. 21.

3. When God asked for Isaac - Gen. 22.

B. THIS BRINGS A WARFARE Our flesh is in constant warfare with the will of God! Gal. 5:17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

C. THIS BRINGS THE WONDER God will allow us to have victory over our flesh - Gal. 5:16 This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the

lust of the flesh. How much trouble does God have with you getting you to do what He wants you to do?

Conc: Abraham came to be called, "The Friend of God" and "The Father Of The Faithful", because he WALKED BY FAITH. do you constantly find yourself being overcome by circumstances and the trials of life? If you fall into that group of people who struggle, I want to give you some encouragement. You can overcome whatever you face today! It will require some action on your part. It will require faith - Our families deserve it, our church and our communities deserve it.

The Witness of Faith

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TEXT: By faith Moses -- Heb. 11:23-29

INTRODUCTION: Moses' life can be divided into three forties: He was 40 years in the court as a prince, 40 years in the field as a shepherd, and 40 years in the wilderness as a leader of a nation. Faith is expensive. At the beginning of Moses' life some would say he was a fool at the end a failure. But in between he was a man of faith. We see three things in the faith life of Moses: FAITH'S VISION is pronounced as he saw through the temporal things and penetrated to eternal realities -- because he saw God. FAITH'S VALUE is seen as he chose to separate himself and determined to do the will of God. FAITH'S VICTORY is reflected as he overcame the world as represented by Egypt and Pharaoh. By faith, we see Moses --

I. REFUSING

Refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter -- Heb. 11:24. It takes faith to say NO-- even more than to say YES. Moses refused to remain the son of Pharaoh's daughter. This meant refusing the wealth, fame, and position of Egypt. He said no! [ILLUSTRATION] Once a beautiful young Christian girl had a crush on a certain handsome and popular young man. For weeks she hoped he would ask her for a date. One day he did. He suggested that they go to a night club. She thought of her Christian convictions about such matters. Yet, if she did not accept, he might never ask her again. What should she do. Reasoning thus, she accepted the date. She said to herself I will go to the club, but I will witness to him about Christ So, as they danced, she asked, "are you a Christian?" "Are you," replied her friend? "Yes, I am a Christian." "Then, what are you doing in a place like this with me?" It takes faith real genuine faith to say NO in times of testing and temptations of compromise. MOSES REFUSED

A. POSITION

B. POPULARITY

C. POWER

By faith, we see Moses --

I. REFUSING.....THIS IS CONVICTION

II. RESOLVE....THIS IS CHOOSING

Choosing rather to suffer affliction -- Heb. 11:25.

Moses chose to suffer affliction with the people of God. This took faith. It always does. Sin offers pleasure but for just a short season. Behind the "pleasure of sin," there is always the "deceitfulness of sin" (Heb. 3:13). Moses made his choice; he made a definite decision; and a man is known by his choice.

Moses was tempted, as all are tempted, by the lust of the flesh "the pleasures of sin for a season, the lust of the eye"the riches of Egypt," the pride of life "to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter."

There is both a negative and a positive side to faith refusing, then choosing. This sequence is unchanging. There must be a "ceasing to do evil" before there can be a "learning to do well" (Isa.1:16).

There must be a "hating the evil" before a "loving the good" (Amos 5:15).

There must be a "confessing and forsaking" before "mercy" (Prov. 28:13).

Moses considered the WORST of the people of God, and the BEST of the world but preferred the worst to the best. He did it by faith.

Faith must prove itself in choosing. The reward will then be sure and large.

Faith must not hesitate or halt. It looks at everything in the light of eternity.

I. REFUSING.....THIS IS CONVICTION

II. RESOLVE....THIS IS CHOOSING

III. REASONING...THIS IS COUNTING

Esteeming the reproach of Christ -- Heb. 11:26.

This Moses did. We must sometimes bear the reproach of Christ if we are to serve Him.

A. HE KNEW HE WOULD SUFFER... Esteem means to "count" or "estimate" or "evaluate."

B. HE KNEW HE WOULD BE IDENTIFIED.....reproach of Christ By faith, we see Moses

I. REFUSING.....THIS IS CONVICTION

II. RESOLVE....THIS IS CHOOSING

III. REASONING...THIS IS COUNTING

Iv. RESPONSE ...THIS IS CHARACTER Forsook Egypt -- Heb. 11:27.

A. LOOK AT HIS DECISION He walked off and left Egypt with all its luxury, entertainment, and popularity. Egypt is a type of the world. It takes faith to walk away from the allurements of this present world. By faith Moses forsook. He went through with the decision of this faith. Forsaking is always the first step. It is the coming out, being separate, parting with sin, bidding farewell to Egypt, the land of our birth, and not fearing the wrath of Satan or the world.

B. LOOK AT HIS DELIGHT...GOD CALLED HIME THEN USED God calls men who are willing to forsake all and endure all. Such was Martin Luther for the Reformation; such was William Carey for the modern missionary movement; such was David Livingstone for the opening of Africa; such was Roger Williams for religious liberty.

I. REFUSING.....THIS IS CONVICTION

II. RESOLVE....THIS IS CHOOSING

III. REASONING...THIS IS COUNTING

Iv. RESPONSE...THIS IS CHARACTER.

V. REWARD...THIS IS CONFIDENCE

As seeing him who is invisible-- Heb. 11:27. The faith of Moses did not find immediate response from the people. Instead he met with resentment and suspicion. Yet, he had strength for endurance.

A. HE WAS DISCIPLINED Disciplined faith is irresistible. Moses' faith made him strong and fearless. He saw Him who is invisible, and left Egypt with courage and certainty. For others to take courage, our faith must remain steadfast through all testings, radiant despite disappointments, and triumphant in all conflicts.

B. HE WAS DARING...VRS 28&29 Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them. By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.

O for a faith that will not shrink,
Though pressed by many a foe,
That will not tremble on the brink
Of poverty or woe;

A faith that will not murmur nor complain, Beneath the chastening rod, But, in the hour of grief or pain, Can lean upon its God;
A faith that shines more bright and clear, When tempests rage without, That when in danger knows no fear, In darkness feels no doubt.

The Winners of the Faith

TEXT:HEB 11:30-40

INTRODUCTION: Faith is the heart's intake, and love is its outlet. For real faith never comes away from God's well with an empty vessel. Faith believes only that which is true. Faith has an understanding. For the beginning of doubt is the end of faith, and the beginning of real faith is the end of doubt. Someone has said, "give me faith that will not worry, whine or wrangle, but watch, work, wait, and warble, AND A WINNING FAITH

Faith can go no further than the Word of God, but must always be limited by this phrase "It is written." For faith is merely saying amen to God. And a firm faith in the promises of God is the very best theology. With this in mind lets look at our text and see how these people became winners in the faith.

1. NOTICE THE PEOPLE SHARING FAITH vrs 30-32 as we read this passage we find there are a mixture of different kinds from different walks of life yet God used these folks because of their FAITH. Men and women young and old common people just like you and me, farmers-sheperds-soliders-preists-son of a harolt-a prostitute-liars-swindelers- HOW CAN THIS HAPPEN?

A. THE HARMONY.....what brought these people together was their faith it was a harmonious faith...different in heredity, different in taste, different interests, different skills we are not alike, but there must be a common bond and that is our faith in the WORD OF GOD.

B. THE HISTORY... There are three periods mentioned here

1. the judges....Gideon, barak, Samson jephthah

2. the kings....david

3. the prophets...Samuel and the prophets the reason we bring this out is to let you know that faith is ageless and timeless no matter what time frame it is faith works. FAITH IS NOT LIMITED BY TIME OR AGE OR CIRCUMSTANCES whether it is Gideon with three hundred or Samson by himself - FAITH is the key to it all

1. NOTICE THE PEOPLE SHARING FAITH

2. NOTICE THE PROBLEMS SOLVED BY FAITH

vrs 33- 33 Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, 34 Quenched the violence of

fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. 35 Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection:

A. SUBDUED KINGDOMS.....The meaning is, that some of them subdued kingdoms, Joshua subdued the nations of Canaan; Gideon the Midianites; Jephtha the Ammonites; David the Philistines, Amalekites, Jebusites, Edomites, there is one kingdom we must subdue it is SATAN'S

B. STAYED RIGHT.... wrought righteousness, Carried the laws of justice into execution, particularly on guilty nations. They executed the great purposes of God in punishing the wicked, and in cutting off his foes.

C. SHARED PROMISES.... obtained promises, as a result of their faith, promises of blessings on their posterity in future times.

D. STOPPED LIONS... Samson, Jg 14:6; David, 1Sa 17:34, and particularly Daniel, Da 6:7. To be able to subdue and render harmless the king of the forest--the animal most dreaded in early times--was regarded as an eminent achievement.

E. STRENGTHENED IN WEAKNESS.... out of weakness were made strong,

F. STOOD FIRM IN THE FIGHT... waxed valiant in fight, in such a way as must have proved that God was with them.

1. NOTICE THE PEOPLE SHARING FAITH

2. NOTICE THE PROBLEMS SOLVED BY FAITH

3. NOTICE THE POSSIBILITIES SHOWN BY FAITH

D.L. Moody described three kinds of faith: STRUGGLING FAITH - is as a man in deep water, barely able to swim, and struggling to stay afloat. These are those who, struggling in the sea of life, head barely above water, but never gaining faith's victory. CLINGING FAITH -- is depicted as one in deep water, clinging to the side of the boat with one hand, and just barely holding on. These are those, spiritual immature, barely clinging to the promises and great adventures of faith. RESTING FAITH -- is portrayed as the faith of a person safely secured in the boat - but able to reach out and assist those struggling or clinging. You see unbelief will lock up our potential while faith releases it.

PRAYING FOR RAIN: A drought was having devastating effect on a certain section of the country. The little country church announced a special prayer meeting to pray for rain. The members began to gather. Aunt Martha, carrying her umbrella, was encountered by an old skeptic on her way to the church. "Aunt Martha, where are you going?" He knew, but thought he would chide her

a little. "Why, to prayer meeting," answered Aunt Martha. "Prayer meeting, huh, bunk," retorted the skeptic. "Yes, we are meeting tonight to pray for rain."

FIVE FACES OF FAITH

Our faith in the Lord is the staff of life for the believer. Without faith, we cannot grow in the Lord, and we certainly cannot please Him, Heb.11:6; Rom.14:23.

Faith is essential! Faith is the assurance that God will do what He has said He will do - Rom.4:21. Faith, then, is best summed up by Heb.11:1; "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

I. CONVERTING FAITH This is the type of faith that saves the soul - it is all that is required - Acts 16:31 This is eternal faith -

II.CHANGING FAITH This type of faith helps us to live holy lives - This faith helps us to trust in Jesus for direction And helps us walk each day in His will -

III.CONTENDING FAITH This type of faith makes us seek God for others and believe God will move in their lives.

IV.COMFORTING FAITH This type of faith reminds us that God is still in control - Rom.8:28 This faith deals a death blow to our fears -

V.CONQUERING FAITH This type of faith destroys any obstacle that arises in our lives it reminds us that God is still the Lord! This faith gives us the victory in any situation -

HEBREWS, CHAPTER XII

1. THE POSITION OF CHRISTIANS IN THE RACE.

"Let us run with patience the race that is set before us." Heb. 12:1.

It is evident that the Writer of the Hebrew Epistle has drawn his gospel metaphor from the Grecian games. The historians inform us that during the apostolic age the Olympic games celebrated in the great stadium attracted world-wide attention. We are told that the spacious amphitheater had a seating capacity for one hundred thousand cheering spectators and excited onlookers drawn from many nations. The contestants in these famous games labored diligently and passed through various forms of strenuous exercises for four years in preparing for the great contest. The weights they carried and the encumbrances of dress were laid aside before they entered the difficult contest to compete for the grand prizes given to the winners.

(a) A Trying Contest to Win. "The race that is set before us." Ver. 1.

The Word of God makes it unmistakably clear that all real Christians must run a hard race. This trying contest is of infinite importance to all sincere believers. The prizes for the winners are infinitely great and the pleasures of Heaven are ineffably glorious. If we fail to win the contest in life we fail to win the crown of life. If we lose the race, it is not a small loss, for the whole of the immortal soul perishes in the tragic failure. Jesus uttered a startling truth when He said, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."

Luke 13:24. The faithful Paul said, "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain." I Cor. 9:24.

(b) The Triumphant Company of Witnesses. "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses." Ver. 1.

The renowned pilgrims of faith whose notable achievements have been summarized in the previous chapter compose the encircling cloud of competent witnesses summoned to give encouragement to all true Christians running the race set before them by the Captain of their salvation. The unimpeachable testimonies which these noble persons bear, both as conquerors and as sufferers, are testimonies relating to God's infinite mercy and might which wrought efficaciously in them and effectually for them in life. All Christians who regard the imperishable truth revealed in these confirmatory testimonies will most assuredly be encouraged to run the appointed race with unfaltering purpose and unflinching patience.

2. THE PREPARATION OF CONTESTANTS IN THE RACE.

**"Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us."
Heb. 12:1.**

The solemnity of our unique position as Christians engaged in a contest to win a prize should lead us to ponder seriously the twofold condition so clearly stated in the words of divine revelation. We can ill afford to overlook the necessity of making a complete preparation for the decisive efforts we must put forth to persevere in the struggle until Heaven's gates open wide to welcome us home. We may properly consider that Heaven is still a long way off, and that the path leading to the celestial city is fraught with distress, difficulties, and dangers. If we ever reach the blissful homeland of the soul we must run the race under the inspection of the loving Lord, the applauding angels, and the shouting saints of all ages.

**(a) A Complete Consecration Is Required. "Let us lay aside every weight."
Ver. 1.**

The Greek word translated "weight" means a burden, or a bulk, or a hindrance, or a weight, or an impediment.

When the Apostle said, "Let us lay aside every weight," he was obviously speaking of our complete consecration. In our consecration we turn over to God everything we possess in life. We yield our whole spirit, soul, and body to God in our consecration. In making such a full consecration we separate ourselves from all encumbrances, hindrances, and impediments which tend to defeat us in running the appointed race. It is our solemn

duty to free ourselves from the associations, attachments, and affairs which, however innocent in themselves, hinder and hamper our freedom of action in life's strenuous efforts to win the priceless prize promised to Christ's obedient overcomers.

It is necessary for believers to disburden their hearts of all weights in order to give Christ the first place in their lives. The things of earth and sense which prevent regenerated persons from according Christ the exclusive right to dwell in their inmost being will weight them down to earth and defeat them in the contest for the immortal prize. A people whose love for worldly possessions and pleasures prevents them from consecrating all to Christ for time and eternity will never enter the holy habitation of Almighty God and enjoy the blessedness of life everlasting.

(b) A Complete Cleansing Is Required. "Let us lay aside . . . the sin which doth so easily beset us." Ver. 1.

The Greek word translated "beset" means entangling, or encircling, or close clinging.

The Holy Spirit gave us this significant Greek word to show us the true nature of inborn depravity. This entangling, encircling, and close clinging sin lurking in the souls of the unsanctified believers is the direct cause of all failures in running the race set before them.

It is certainly not the will of God to let His believing children struggle with the besetting sin all the days of their lives on earth. The Holy Spirit focused attention of the efficacious sacrifice of Christ when He appealed to all believers to look unto Jesus the author and finisher of their faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. Christ's supreme joy was the work of redemption accomplished by the sacrifice of Himself on the cross. Every man honest with himself should be able to see that the sufferings of Christ on the cross provided a free pardon for our actual transgressions and a complete cleansing from our besetting sin of inherited depravity.

3. THE PATIENCE OF CHRISTIANS IN THE RACE.

"Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith." Heb. 12:1, 2,

The Greek word translated "patience" means perseverance, or endurance, or constancy.

We must continue to look unto Jesus who, in His Eternal Person, is the Efficient Cause, the Eternal Center, and the Effectual Consummator of our most holy faith.

Jesus is revealed to be the author and finisher of our faith. The Greek word which is here translated "author" means an efficient cause, or a captain, or a leader, or a prince. The Greek word translated "finisher" means a completor, or a consummator

(a) The Faith to Endure the Contradiction of Sinners. "Consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds." Ver. 3.

The Greek word translated "contradiction" means disobedience, or rebellion, or strife, or gainsaying. The Holy Spirit evidently used this strong Greek word for the express purpose of exposing the lawless nature of original sin.

The words, "such contradiction of sinners against himself," show conclusively that all the bitter opposition to Christ manifested in this world springs from the innate depravity dwelling in the heart of a rebellious, gainsaying, and disobedient humanity.

Real faith looks away from all that distracts, disturbs, and discourages us in this passing world. True faith looks unto Jesus in life's sore conflicts and sees that He is always near and always in sight. A people of strong faith are willing to strive and suffer in order to win the royal crown. Such stalwart saints seek no easy way to Heaven, neither do they follow the lines of least resistance. "They looked unto him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed." Psa. 34:5.

(b) The Faith to Endure the Chastening of Sons. "Ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of

him: for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." Vers. 5, 6.

The Greek word rendered "chastening" means instruction, or correction, or discipline. The encouraging words of this seasonable exhortation are found in the Proverbs of Solomon. (Prov. 3:11, 12.) The obvious purpose of the Apostle in introducing the exhortation here is to show that afflictions and adversities are designed on the part of the Heavenly Father to produce some desirable results in the lives of His children, and that they ought, therefore, to endure them patiently. God would have His children see that trials are necessary to their welfare, and that they are, in fact, a comforting evidence of His parental concern.

The fact that we suffer severe trials in this life does not in any sense prove that God is displeased and regards us as if we were in no way related to Him.

The persecutions, privations, and pressures endured for the sake of Jesus are not always pleasant, but they are profitable. Ver. 11.

There is much truth packed into the words "nevertheless afterward" as they relate to the peaceable fruit of righteousness. We do not see the peaceable fruit of righteousness while enduring the contradiction of sinners, but we shall see the fruit afterward. We discover later in life that the effect of such opposition resulted in deepening our devotion to Christ.

Subject: CONSISTENT CHRISTIAN CONDUCT

1. THE PURSUIT OF HOLINESS IN LIFE. "Follow peace with all men, and holiness,

without which no man shall see the Lord." Heb. 12:14.

The Greek word which is here translated "follow" means to pursue, or press forward.

We understand the word pursuit to mean that which is followed as a continued employment with a view to some end.

(a) The Pursuit of Peace Required to See the Lord. "Follow peace with all men." Ver. 14.

The Greek word rendered "peace" means tranquility, or concord, or unity.

It is apparent that Jesus imparts a measure of His own divine peace to His confiding people.

"No member of Christ's redeemed family will insist on having his way when it disturbs the peace of the church and destroys the harmony of the body of believers. A Christian will always consider that the peace of the entire church is more important than his own personal views or private opinions. A true Christian can surrender his opinions without compromising his convictions. It is written, "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves." Phil. 2:3.

(b) The Pursuit of Purity Required to See the Lord. "And holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." Ver. 14.

According to the original Greek the word here rendered "holiness" can be translated, " sanctification."

We may have things which are desirable in life such as great learning, vast wealth, many friends, comfortable homes, and delightful families, but if we are without holiness of heart we have nothing to commend us to God in the day of Judgment. It was the importance and the certainty that holiness of heart is prerequisite to seeing the Lord that motivated the Apostle to stress the necessity of pursuing peace with all men, and the sanctification, without which no man shall behold the face of the Lord. Therefore it behooves us to pray, strive, and labor to "follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."

2. THE PRESERVATION IN HOLINESS OF LIFE. "Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God." Heb. 12:15.

The Greek word which is here translated "fail" means to be wanting, to be in default, to be below standards, to come short of a privilege. The Greek word here rendered "looking" means to be heedful, to be watchful, to oversee, to supervise.

The Apostle's earnest exhortation addressed to the church is convincing proof that each member is in a very real sense his brother's keeper. The evident purpose of the supervision is to prevent any one of their number from suffering a serious spiritual defection. It was also the responsibility of the church to urge every man to obtain the measure of divine grace necessary to make him acceptable in the sight of the Lord."

(a) Watching Lest the Believers Be Defiled. "Lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled." Ver. 15.

The righteous Lord that admonished His people in old time regarding the root that produced gall and wormwood is the same holy Lord that speaks to us in these last days concerning any root of bitterness that springs up and causes trouble in the church, and contaminates many of the believers. When the Apostle speaks of the root of bitterness springing up he is evidently referring to the evil deeds that spring from an unholy heart. The defiling, destroying, and defeating root of bitterness springs from that center and cesspool of indwelling corruption called the carnal mind and the body of sin

(b) Watching Lest the Birthright Be Disregarded. "Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright." Ver. 16.

The Holy Scriptures reveal that the birthright contained many desirable privileges. The first-born son was consecrated to the Lord and given the right of the priesthood, a double portion of the Father's estate, and kingly dignity and authority over his brethren. (See Gen. 27:28. Exod. 22: 29. Deut. 21:17.)

In the solemn covenant which God made with Abraham was the promise that from his loins the Messiah and Redeemer of the world should spring. This gracious prerogative which descended to Abraham's posterity was regarded as being among the most sacred, honorable, and spiritual in the patriarchal age.

Esau is called a profane person because he sold his birthright. He represents the class of deluded individuals who see nothing in Christianity as being higher and more desirable than sinful pleasures and earthly possessions. To such worldlings in the church the blessings and benefits of a purged conscience and a pure heart are not important.

It was regarded as an unpardonable offense for a son to disesteem his birthright as Esau did when he bartered it away for one morsel of meat.

We learn from the example of Esau that no tears of sorrow and self condemnation, however sincere, can restore to any man the blessings forfeited by undervaluing the worth of his spiritual birthright.

3. THE PRIVILEGES OF HOLINESS IN LIFE.

"Ye are come . . . to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." Heb. 12:22-24.

The descriptive language contained in verses 18-21 presents the terrifying scene at Mount Sinai.

Apparently the inspired Writer intends to show us that the thunders, the lighting, the thick cloud and fire were material sign of the nature of God. The smoking mountain was a manifestation of the Divine Majesty and the Divine Presence. It is written, "The Lord came down upon mount Sinai." Exod. 19:20.

(a) The Privileges Revealed in Jesus. "Ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched . . . but ye are come . . . to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant." Vers. 18-24.

A striking contrast is disclosed to us in these remarkable words of divine revelation. We are not come to Mount Sinai, we are come to Mount Sion. We are not come to Moses, the mediator of the old covenant, we are come to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant. We are not come to a human lawgiver, we are come to the divine Lawgiver.

In the holy commandments inscribed on tables of enduring stone by the hand of God are embodied the eternal principles of the sanctification without which no man shall behold the beauty of the Lord. These principles of holy law are embraced in the terms of the new covenant mediated to us by the Savior. These inherent principles of the Divine Nature are placed in the center of our being by the Holy Spirit. (Heb. 8:9-13.)

The Spirit of Truth has said, "Ye are come to Jesus." These are convincing, challenging, and compelling words that reveal the privileges of every man on earth. The weary can come and find rest, the wicked can come and find remission, and the wanderers can come and find restoration. Jesus, the root and offspring of David and the bright and morning star, revealed the universal, unrestricted, and understandable Gospel appeal when He said, "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Rev. 22:17. The precious blood of Jesus that ratified the new covenant has joined in the universal appeal of the Gospel. The shed blood is not only vicarious but it is vocal in that it speaks better things than the blood of Abel, the first Christian

martyr.

All faithful children of God are united in hope, holiness, and honor with the eminent saints of all ages past, with the excellent of all the earth, and

with the triumphant throng singing the song of deliverance in the heavenly Jerusalem.

(b) The Privileges in Jesus Received. "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire." Vers. 28, 29.

These consoling words of divine truth make it quite clear that Christ's holy people are the worthy recipients of all the privileges contained in His unshakable kingdom. The prophet was speaking of the permanency of Christ's enduring kingdom when he said, "Thus saith the Lord of hosts: Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts." Hag. 2:6, 7.

Doubtless the universal agitation foretold by the inspired prophet refers to the final catastrophe foreseen by Peter who said, "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." II Pet. 3:10.

However for all of God's people we do not need fear, we can find comfort in...

"LOOKING UNTO JESUS"

Subject: CHRIST SUFFERED TO SANCTIFY CHRISTIANS

1. THE CLEANSING OF GOD'S PEOPLE. "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate." Heb. 13:12.

The closing chapter of the Epistle contains several solemn exhortations relating to the performance of various practical duties. The spirit in which these duties are performed and the spiritual strength to observe them spring from a sanctified heart.

(a) Christ's Sanctified People. "He might sanctify the people with his own blood." Ver. 12.

Throughout the entire Epistle the Savior's anointed Apostle has emphasized the fact that the Son of God spontaneously gave Himself that He might sanctify the people with His own precious blood. The marvel of the atonement is disclosed in the fact that the Immaculate Son was made a sin offering for sinful human beings. II Cor. 5:21.

The fact that the redemptive work of Christ was consummated outside the walls of the capitol city of the chosen people speaks much to us in this Gospel age. It is apparent that the greatness of His vicarious sufferings had a meaning and a message which could not be confined within such limited boundaries. The efficacy of His cross was for all men, and His sufferings and death outside the walls of Jerusalem illustrated His accessibility to all nations of the earth. Jesus disclosed the unrestricted extent of His atonement when He said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." John 12:32.

The Spirit of Truth shows us that Jesus, the changeless High Priest and deathless Intercessor, entered the sanctuary in Heaven and offered His own precious blood to emancipate His people from the besetting sin, and eradicate the root of bitterness from their humble hearts.

The word "sanctify," as here used by the Holy Spirit, refers to the cleansing of God's people. When the word "sanctify" is used with reference to a place of worship, or to a vessel used in worship service, it can only be construed as meaning to consecrate, or to dedicate, or to set

apart. The sanctifying of places and things is merely ceremonial because such things are unmoral in the sense that they cannot commit sin. But when the Apostle affirms that Jesus suffered to sanctify the people he is speaking of a work of divine grace that means immeasurably more than mere ceremonial dedication. When any man speaks of the sanctification of Christ's people as meaning nothing more than consecration, he obviously overlooks his own need of deliverance from original sin.

(b) Christ's Separated People. "Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach." Ver. 13.

The real meaning of the cross of Christ can be obscured by a pompous system of ritualism. In many modern churches in Christendom today the cross is considered as being nothing more than an outward symbol of the profession of Christianity. We have reason to fear that many nominal Christians purporting to be cross-bearers know nothing about the true meaning of the cross of Christ. Doubtless they have never perceived that the cross signals the crucifixion of the body of sin. Paul confirmed this fundamental fact of the cross, saying, "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." Rom. 6:6.

They were instructed to look beyond the shadow and behold the substance. When they saw the superior sacrifice of the crucified Christ they were moved by the Holy Spirit to reject a vain religion and receive a victorious Redeemer.

We in this age of the Gospel need to hear the Apostle say, "Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach." Multitudes are now bound -- soul, mind, and body -by doctrines and dogmas that offer no hope of deliverance from original sin.

It has been God's immutable purpose in all ages to have a separated and a sanctified people. He requires His people to separate themselves from all unholy persons, pursuits, and pleasures in order to be acceptable unto Him.

2. THE CONTENTMENT OF GOD'S PEOPLE.

"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Heb. 13:5.

The Greek word rendered "conversation" means manner of living, or turn of mind, or character, or disposition. The Greek word translated "content" denotes satisfaction.

(a) The Presence of the Lord Gives Contentment. "For he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Ver. 5.

These immortal words of promise reveal the unshakable foundation on which the contentment of God's people rests. The valiant Joshua was supported throughout all the days of his eventful life by these assuring words of the Lord. (Josh. 1:5.) Seeing that the intrepid successor of Moses placed his implicit confidence in the Lord, surely we can place our solid trust in God's certified promise to sustain us in the struggles of life. When the faithful Lord said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee," He fully intended to show His people that their restful contentment springs from a conscious sense of His abiding presence.

(b) The Possessions of the Lord Give Contentment. "Be content with such things as ye have." Ver. 5.

Nothing less than the grace of entire sanctification can free the heart of mortal man from his greed for earthly gain and give him complete contentment with his lot in life.

We do well to consider the deeper meaning of the words "such things as ye have." Let us look beyond the transitory things of life and fix our gaze upon eternal possessions. Perhaps we have been so preoccupied with things of least importance that we have failed to consider the things of greatest importance. An inventory of our spiritual possessions reveals that we have Christ's promises, His power, and His peace to comfort us in this world. We have His fullness, His faithfulness, His favor, His faith, and His fellowship to satisfy the desires of our yearning hearts.

We have an honorable heritage, a hallowed hope, a holy heart, and a heavenly home.

3. THE COURAGE OF GOD'S PEOPLE.

"So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me." Heb. 13:6.

The interesting word "helper" is derived from a Greek word which means to run to the aid of those who cry for help, or to advance to the assistance of anyone in trouble.

{a} The Undaunted Christians. "I will not fear what man shall do unto me." Ver. 6.

The amazing word "helper" presents the Lord as One who runs hurriedly to aid those who cry to Him for help. The import of the word "helper" emphasizes the fact that our loving Lord does not hesitate one moment to advance to the assistance of any trusting saint.

The fact that the Lord is our helper, or that the Lord is on our side, does not in any way imply that He will prevent evil men from troubling us in this unfriendly world. Our Lord said, "It is impossible but that offenses will come." Luke 17:1. Paul said to Timothy, "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." II Tim. 3:12. The persecutions, rebuffs, and insults of ungodly persons can be expected as long as we live in full obedience to the will of God in Christ Jesus. The Lord's messengers of the good news of full salvation will discover that evil men can do many things to hinder the message of saving truth. "The time cometh," said Jesus, "that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service." John 16:2.

(b) The Unchangeable Christ. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." Ver. 8.

The words of the text support the truths relating to every phase of Christian character and conduct mentioned in the chapter. The clear affirmation, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever," expresses the absolute confidence of God's trustworthy children. The fact that He abides unchanged for all time and eternity is the unshakable rock on which the children of the Most High base their hope for life everlasting. He who in the yesterdays of life stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, and turned to flight the armies of the aliens, is the same Christ who is our Almighty Helper today, and shall continue to be

our strength, our shield, our song, and our salvation until our earthly sojourn is ended and we enter the Father's house of many mansions.

"Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." Heb. 13:20, 21.