

**CHAPTER 11**  
**The Epistle to the Hebrews**  
**THE SANCTUARIES AND SERVICES OF THE TWO COVENANTS**  
**(Hebrews 9:1-28)**  
by G. H. Lang

**Chapter 9:1-28**

1. Now even the first covenant had ordinances of divine service, and its sanctuary, a sanctuary of this world.
2. For there was a tabernacle prepared, the first, wherein were the lamp stand, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the Holy place.
3. And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holy of holies;
4. having a golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was a golden pot holding the manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant;
5. and above it cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy-seat; of which things we cannot now speak severally.
6. Now these things having been thus prepared, the priests go in continually into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the services;
7. but into the second the high priest alone, once in the year, not without blood, which he offereth for himself, and for the errors of the people:
8. the Holy Spirit this signifying, that the way into the holy place [Gr. places] hath not yet been made manifest, while as the first tabernacle is yet standing;
9. which is a parable for the time now present; according to which are offered both gifts and sacrifices that cannot, as touching the conscience, make the worshipper perfect;
10. being only (with meats and drinks and divers washings) carnal ordinances, imposed until a time of reformation.
11. But Christ having come (a) high priest of the good things to come, through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation;
12. nor yet through the blood of goats and calves, but through his own blood, entered in once for all into the holy place [Gr. places], having obtained eternal redemption.
13. For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling them that have been defiled, sanctify unto the cleanness of the flesh:
14. how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit [Gr. through spirit eternal] offered himself without blemish unto God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?
15. And for this cause he is the mediator of a new covenant, that a death having taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, they that have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

16. For where a testament is, there must of necessity be the death of him that made it.
17. For a testament is of force where there hath been death: for doth it ever avail while he that made it liveth?
18. Wherefore even the first *covenant* hath not been dedicated without blood.
19. For when every commandment had been spoken by Moses unto all the people according to the law, he took the blood of the calves and the goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself, and all the people;
20. saying, This is the blood of the covenant which God commanded to you-ward.
21. Moreover the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry he sprinkled in like manner with the blood.
22. And according to the law, I may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and apart from shedding of blood there is no remission.
23. It was necessary therefore that the copies of the things in the heavens should be cleansed with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.
24. For Christ entered not into a holy place made with hands, like in pattern to the true; but into [Gr., the] heaven itself, now to appear before the face of God for us:
25. nor yet that he should offer himself often; as the high priest entereth into the holy place year by year with blood not his own;
26. else must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world; but now once at the end [consummation] of the ages hath lie been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.
27. And inasmuch as it is appointed unto [Gr. laid up for] men once to die, and after this *cometh* judgment;
28. so Christ also, having been once offered to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for him, unto salvation.

**RECAPITULATION.** Before enlarging upon the excellence and sufficiency of the new covenant, the Writer reviews briefly the external features of the former covenant. This forms a background to throw into bright relief the superior benefits of the new covenant. And although he does not dwell upon several details he mentions, it will not be without profit at least to notice them.

i. They were items *ordained* for the service of God (*dikaionata latreias*). As before noted, nothing was left to human skill or preference, not even that of Moses: all was by Divine direction and appointment.

ii. The sanctuary to be constructed was *suitable to this world*, the system of things existing in this material earth (*kosmikon*). It was a copy, but only a copy, of what is suitable to the *spiritual* world, where the spirit transcends the external.

iii. The tent then prepared was divided into two parts, the outer the holy place, the inner the most holy place, the holy of holies. It is not here mentioned, but we know that around the whole building was a courtyard, surrounded by a white linen screen, with a single entrance, to which entrance the worshippers could approach, and in which courtyard the Levites and priests served.

It is worthy to be noted and investigated by the student that this triple division obtained generally in the ancient world and persists even till now. The visitor to the ruined temples of Egypt can trace it there; a vast outer court, leading to an inner realm, at the rear of which was the sanctuary where stood the image of the god. Sometimes this inner shrine was itself triple, as in the temple near the Sphinx.

I once wandered alone through the vast temple of the goddess Menachi at Madura, South India. One passed through the outer court where worshippers brought sacrifices and where was the tank of water where they washed their persons and clothing, reminiscent of the brazen altar and the laver in the tabernacle. Then came a second region, the outer halls; and last came an inner room, where stood the statues of the great goddess. She had her infant son at her breast, obviously the Hindu example of that most ancient Babylonian cult of the Queen of heaven and her son, the original of the Catholic Madonna and child.

Even in remote regions and uncivilized tribes this triple sanctuary is found. On the Nilgiri hills, south India, are wild tribes, Irulas, Badagas, Todas. The last named have a religious cult which centers around their buffaloes. The chief dairyman of a clan is its chief priest. They have burial huts in solitary places, one of which I investigated. The wattle hut was surrounded by a yard with a rude wall of stone, corresponding to the outer court of the tabernacle. Crawling in through a very low opening one found that the hut was in two sections, divided by a palisade. Into the outer part mourners could bring the corpse, into the inner portion only the chief dairyman was permitted to pass.

The most ancient temples go back prior to Moses and therefore cannot have been derived from Jewish practice or tradition, nor have Todas been influenced by Jewish thought. Must not the persistence of this feature, going back into the earliest days of human life, point to knowledge of Divine realities originally given to man?

Nor does the symbolism seem obscure. In the outer court of the tabernacle stood the altar of sacrifice and the layer of cleansing. These pointed respectively to Calvary and the Lamb of God, and to Pentecost and sanctification by the Holy Spirit. But atonement and sanctification take place on earth, so that this earth is the outer court of the heavenly places. In the outer heavens the angels minister to God and man, and into the true tabernacle on high the High Priest has already entered.

To the tabernacle in Israel belonged three veils; the veil at the entrance gate, beyond which only Levites and priests might pass; the veil to the holy place, beyond which only priests might pass, and the second veil before the holy of holies, beyond which only the high priest might pass, and he only once in the year, and then not without blood of atonement.

By all this the Holy Spirit was signifying a solemn fact, even that the way into the holy places was not thrown open at that time; access to the immediate presence of God was debarred.

Let any who treat lightly or neglect this ancient symbolism reflect upon the fact that in all these details the *Holy Spirit* was declaring beforehand weighty facts and truths, which it is therefore profane and perilous to ignore.

The great and happy fact which our Writer next explains and enforces is, that by the work of our Priest the way into the true holy places is now thrown open, so that the believer who has been to the altar, and who goes regularly to the layer (Exod. 30:17-21), may now enter with boldness into the very presence of God in the true tabernacle. If he sees this blood-bought liberty he may, in real heart-consciousness, in real experience in his spirit, go where his Priestly Forerunner has gone in body; and if he does in this life thus follow the Forerunner as to spiritual experience, then he may confidently expect to follow Hun later in a glorified body like unto that of the Forerunner, and enter actually into the presence of God in the heavenly holy place.

On the other hand, such as cling to the legal, the carnal, the external, the old, seeking in that realm to have dealings with God, must rest assured that their conscience can never enjoy boldness before the Holy One; for those arrangements were only "imposed until a time of reformation" (ver. 10), that is, a certain season, foreseen by

God, when all that which was formerly faulty and incomplete should be put right and supplied (*diorthosis*), which season has been already brought in by the incarnation, death, and ascension of the true High Priest, the Son of God. He who would enjoy the sunshine must leave the shadow.

iv. Some other details are mentioned. In the holy place there were (1) a lampstand and (2) a table with bread. In the life of the spirit to which these point there is (1) heavenly light on all matters, in place of the murky darkness of the human understanding at a distance from God. Christ is the light (John 8:12). (2) There is also heavenly sustenance to strengthen the heart in service to God. Christ is the bread of life (John 6). Even of old there had been a suggestion that these heavenly realities were to be available to all, not only, as then, to priests, for David and his men had eaten of the shewbread without penalty (1 Sam. 21; Matt. 12:3, 4). Then it was exceptional, but the exception pointed to the coming rule.

Further; in the holy of holies there were (1) a golden censer; (2) the golden ark of the covenant; (3) a golden pot with manna (Exod. 16:32-34); (4) Aaron's rod that budded (Num. 17); (5) the tables of the covenant (Deut. 10:5; 1 Kings 8:9); (6) the cherubim of glory above (7) the propitiatory, both the one and the other of gold.

That five of these seven articles were of gold, the most suitable, precious, and durable metal then known to man, points to the heavenly glory of the realities they represented, which may be inferred from the fact that the vision of the heavenly city represents that city and its street as of pure gold, as was also the heavenly measuring rod of the heavenly being who showed the city to John (Rev. 21:15, 18, 21).

We pass from the general to the particular.

(1) The incense which made the most holy place fragrant speaks of the sweetness and acceptability of Christ to God (Eph. 5:2), which merit of Christ must be added to the prayers of even saints if these are to be acceptable to God (Rev. 8:3, 4).

(2) The ark spoke of the person of Christ as, among other things, the center of the glory of God (Heb. 1:3, "the effulgence of His glory"; see chapter 1, p. 26, 3; Col. 1:19).

(3) The pot of manna in that Holiest of places foretold that Christ would be the heavenly food of an overcoming and heavenly people (Rev. 2:17), as He had been the food of His earthly people (1 Cor. 10:3).

This bread that feeds us through eternal years  
We ate on earth, oft moistened with our tears.

(4) Aaron's rod that in one night budded and bore fruit in the holy place spoke of the resurrection, vitality, and fruitfulness of Christ in the true tabernacle on high, by which it is settled that He is the true High Priest, even as that budded rod was God's testimony in Israel that Aaron and no other man was His chosen priest at that time. It is the lesson of Rom. 1:4, that the resurrection "determined" (*horisthentos*), that is, settled the point beyond further discussion, that Christ is the Son of God.

(5) The tables of the covenant (which man had broken) were put into the ark, a symbol of Christ Who could say without reserve "I delight to do Thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is *within my heart*" (Ps. 40:8).

(6) The cherubim of glory, of one piece with the mercy seat, declare that, finally, a company wholly one with Christ in heavenly glory and nearness, connected indivisibly with His propitiatory work, will with Him be the central point where the glory of God will dwell and shine forth (John 17:22; 2 Thess. 1:12). Hence the heavenly city, by another picture, is the dwelling place of God and radiates the glory of God (Rev. 21:3, 11, 23, 24).

In far back ages "the anointed cherub that covereth" held a similar station and honour (Ezek. 28:14); but he fell thence by rebellion. The cherubim that overshadowed the glory in the tabernacle were a prophecy of the eternal ages, when that older office that the cherub lost shall be more than revived in the supernal and eternal glory of Christ and His heavenly people from earth.

(7) The mercy seat, the propitiatory, has been explained above (ch. 10, 6).

The scientific exegete may think it irregular to comment thus upon details which the Writer merely mentioned and expressly left unexplained; but the practical end of enabling plain readers of to-day to feel the force of these things makes it desirable to explain what the first readers of the Epistle would most probably understand sufficiently. They had had instruction by teachers who labored to illuminate their converts, an art and practice too little known to-day.

2. *But Christ* (9: 11). The subject now reaches full expansion with the great contrast "BUT CHRIST."

i. Yet there is some further recapitulation, this time as to the Priest Himself. (1) He is Chief Priest. (2) He has now come and has superseded Aaron. (3) The good things promised have also now come. The old are obsolete. (4) The tent where He acts is greater and more complete than that of old. (5) It is not made by hands, but by God, which means it is not part of this transitory lower realm.

ii. *His Sacrifices*. It is before emphasized (5:1; 8:3) that the priest must have gifts and sacrifices to offer to God; gifts, because such are due from the creature to the Creator, the subject to the Sovereign; sacrifices, because the offerer is under condemnation for sin, has forfeited the right even to live, and must be redeemed and made acceptable, must acquire anew the right to approach the Most High.

(1) *What Christ offers.*

What then, has this High Priest to offer? He made Himself responsible for the sins of men; He thereby surrendered His own right to draw near to the Majesty on high; how shall He re-acquire it? The blood of bulls and goats, though they were offered in thousands, could not put away sins (10:4). What availed it that perhaps fourteen hundreds of times the goat had been banished to the desert with the sins of the people imputed to it (Lev. 16)? The goat had never returned in peace to the camp to show that it had left those sins in the distance, that they were really put away.

BUT CHRIST! Christ has come, the Lamb of God that does actually, legally, effectively, "bear away the sin of the world" (John 1:29, 36). Now, once, at the point where the ages came to a head (*sunteleia*), hath He been manifested (on earth) really to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself (ver. 26). Jehovah made "to light upon Him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. 53:6). "He Himself bare our sins in His body on the tree" (1 Pet. 2:24), and bare them *away*. He went into the distance and darkness, crying out in the bitterness of His soul, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Ps. 22:1; Matt. 27:46); He went into the desert of death, heft behind Him there our sins, and returned in resurrection without them, free to enter the true sanctuary and seat Himself at the right hand of God.

Should one of old have challenged the right of a lately cleansed leper to present himself before God at the gate of the tabernacle, instead of remaining in the place of banishment, he would have pointed to the stains of the atoning blood that had been sprinkled upon his garments and put upon his ear and hand and foot, the proof that he had been healed and cleansed (Lev. 14). Should anyone doubt the right of Jesus to be in the glory of God He could point to the marks on His body of the wounds whence flowed on the cross the blood by which He atoned for sin. It was not *with* His blood (the

Greek here would not mean this), but *through*, by virtue of, in the title and power of His own blood that He entered there (ver. 12), where nought that defileth can be tolerated (Rev. 21:27).

Such as deny the atoning virtue of the precious blood of Christ challenge His right to be in the presence of God. They thus cut themselves off from all benefit of His priestly service as Substitute and High Priest, and deny themselves all right of access to God.

(2) *Christ's entry is permanent.* The high priest of old entered the holiest but had to leave it again, because the sins of the people required his constant service outside and because the blood of bulls and goats could not lastingly guarantee his personal safety or title to be within the veil. But Christ entered on high "once for all" because His perfect sacrifice obtained *eternal* redemption.

iii. The *gift* Christ brought to God.

For the gift which Christ offered unto God was nothing less than *Himself*. Nor was this offered in the energy of His human nature only, though that nature and its devotion to the will of God were perfect. With sincere and unreserved submission He said, "not my will but thine be done" (Luke 22:42). But He gave Himself up to God "through spirit eternal" (*dia pneumatos aoniou*), that is, His divine nature co-operated wholly with His human nature and energized it for this supreme, infinite, infinitely perfect, eternally effective sacrifice of Himself.

It was not simply a man dying as a martyr or an example; it was the God-man, the Son of God, God manifest in flesh, "offering Himself without blemish unto God."

How just, then, is the conclusion drawn, that if in Israel the blood of animals procured a certain external, ceremonial cleansing, *how much more* shall the blood of Christ cleanse the inner man, the conscience, and set the believer free from the dead drag of the load of sin to serve the living God!

iv. *The benefits obtained.*

Let us seek to measure the vastness of the benefits obtained by Christ and received by the repentant and believing sinner, though in truth they are immeasurable.

(1) *A cleansed conscience.* A seared conscience will let a sinner sin without distress, a most appalling and fatal condition. But how disabling is a defiled yet still active conscience. The memory of wrongs done is an ever increasing burden. The

thought of those wronged becomes a distress, one dreads to meet them, may even come to detest them. [The fear of detection and punishment may become paralyzing. David owned that while he kept silence, while he would not confess his sin to God, his “bones waxed old through his roaring all the day long.” But what sensible relief is indicated in his words, “I acknowledged my sin . . . and Thou forgavest” (Ps. 32:3-5). This lifting of the burden from the spirit is the joy of him who sees the virtue of the atoning death of Christ and relies upon it as regards his own sins.

And what a dread burden the sinner carries until he sees that Christ bore that burden on the cross. Observe the contrast here (ver. 14) between “*dead works*” and “the *living God*.” God does only living work, for all His works partake of the health, purity, beauty, eternity of His divine life. And only God does living work. All that a creature without the life of God does is devoid of life, he is dead, and his every work partakes of the disease, unhealthiness, deformity, and transitoriness of his sin-blighted nature. His works may seem unto men to be fair, yet is it but as the deceitful glow often seen on the face of the death-marked consumptive.

It can be a wretched hour to the complacent sinner when he sees that the whole output of his efforts forms but a load of *dead works*. But how correspondingly blissful is the relief when he repents, denounces and renounces his own works, and humbly accepts the benefit of Christ and His work, relying entirely upon Him as his righteousness before God. The relief obtained when a thorn is removed from the flesh or grit from the eye is slight as compared with the ease of a conscience cleansed from *dead works*.

(2) The second benefit gained is *the capacity to serve the living God*. Hitherto nothing the man did was service to God or served any permanent end at all. All human schemes and efforts are vain and vanishing; “the world passeth away”— the whole system within the bounds of which unregenerate men strive and toil is passing away and will disappear entirely: only “he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever” (1 John 2:17). How happy indeed is he who has entered the sphere and system where the life of God works out in him the will of God; he knows that his labor is not in vain, being wrought in the energy of the Lord 1 Cor. 15:58).

(3) *The eternal inheritance* (ver. 15). The old covenant offered real but temporal blessings. Violation of its terms involved death. Christ suffered that penalty in order that the defaulter might be forgiven, might receive the gift of eternal life, and the promise of an eternal inheritance. Such as have heard God’s call to enter into this new covenant with Him (see Isa. 55:1-3), and have responded, have the prospect of an

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eternal “inheritance, incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven” until the last time (1 Pet. 1:3-5).

How joyful is that prospect in a world which offers one nothing for the future. Men say that a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush; they seek their portion in this life. Such find no true satisfaction even here, and when this life fails they are without hope or prospect.

“My days are in the yellow leaf,  
The flowers and fruits of life are gone;  
The worm, the canker, and the grief  
Are mine alone.”

But the child of God rejoices in the hope of the glory of God. (Rom. 5:1, 2).

In Christ we are introduced into the realm of things eternal. The Spirit of that kingdom is eternal, the redemption that the King of that realm obtained for His subjects is eternal, their portion therein is eternal. Let no one say that the adjective *aionios* does not properly denote the everlasting. In all these three connections it certainly has this meaning.

3. *The Testament* (ver. 16, 17). The word *diatheke* hitherto rendered by “covenant” has also the meaning of “testament” or will. It seems necessary to understand this as its meaning in these verses. For

(1) The thought of an inheritance has just been brought in, and ver. 16 is connected with this by the word “For.” Now under Roman law (which we may justly assume would be known to our Writer, seeing that it prevailed throughout the Roman empire in which he lived),<sup>1</sup> a child could inherit under the will or testament of the father. There was no *inheriting* by covenant. Property taken under a *covenant* was not, strictly speaking, *inherited*.

(2) It was not necessary that death should take place in order to establish a *covenant*. In the case in question death was necessary because it was necessary to cancel former transgressions before a new covenant could be arranged; the necessity did not lie in the nature of the new covenant itself. As the Writer truly says, no *testament*

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<sup>1</sup> In the NT there are various references to Roman law. They affect such widely separated regions as Palestine, Galatia, and the city of Rome. John 18:31; Acts 22:24-29; 25:11, 16; Rom. 7:1 (“men who know law,” i.e. the law of Rome, in which city they lived); 8:23 (“adoption,” a Roman legal term); Gal. 4:1, 2.

availed while the testator lived; but on the other hand, covenants did avail while the parties were alive.

(3) The instrument in view in these two verses was one which could be made by one party: "doth it ever avail while *he* that made it liveth?" This was true of a will (testament), but not of a covenant.

For these reasons we take the Writer as turning for a moment from the idea of a covenant to that of a testament, because this serves better the point he wishes to press; which point is that it was necessary that Christ should die in order to effect His heart's desire to bring rebels into such a relation with God that they can become His children, His heirs. The Son of God is, as it were, pictured as having put this bequest in His will; as having died to render His will operative; and now, it may be added, risen from the dead He is executor of His own will. What greater security can heirs have than that the testator should himself carry out his own directions? The law at Sinai could produce no such situation, so eminently satisfactory both to the heirs and the Testator.

#### 4. *The Blood of the Covenant* (ver. 18-22).

Men usually ratify covenants by signature and seal, but both the old and the new covenants between God and man have been attested by blood, the former by the blood of calves and goats, the latter by the blood of Christ.

The penalty which the transgressor of the law of God has to discharge is death, he must forfeit his life for his sin; and the covenant between God and man, on the ground of which God shall undertake to bless man, must show that the liability of man to die has been discharged and that this has been done in accordance with the law. This means that the law of God shall have been satisfied in respect of its claim on the life of the sinner. In other words, there must be proof that death, the penalty of sin, has taken place, so that the former and unsatisfactory transactions have been disposed of and cancelled according to law, the law of God.

What now is proof of death? A person may seem to have died, though actually having only swooned. But if a sufficient quantity of his blood be produced death will be taken for granted. For "the life of the flesh is *in* the blood., as to the life of all flesh, the blood, thereof is *all one with* the life thereof . . . the life of all flesh *is* the blood thereof" (Lev. 17:10-16).

The Passover night in Egypt exhibited this. Death was to enter every house. But if a sufficient quantity of blood had been taken to smear the lintel and sideposts of the door it was certain that death must already have entered that house, and it was deemed that the penalty had been duly paid and could not righteously be exacted again.

“God will not payment twice demand,  
First at my bleeding Surety’s hand  
And then again at mine.”

Thus the blood which Moses sprinkled upon the book of the covenant, the tabernacle and its utensils, and the people, attested that the penalty due in respect of the sins of the people had been met by death and discharged.

Similarly, the blood that poured from the pierced side of Christ was the visible proof that He was veritably dead and had discharged the full penalty of the sins He bore on the cross. It was the outward evidence that a full satisfaction had been rendered to the law of God in respect of its just claims against sin, and that so no obstacle remained to the establishing of a new covenant between God and man. The blood of Christ ratifies this covenant as being a legal, righteous transaction.

ii. *Substitution.* On this account there was no remission of sins a part from the shedding of blood (ver. 22), because without death the law had received no satisfaction which would warrant the remission of the penalty. Of course, the law does not inquire *whose* money, property, or life, as the case may be, satisfies its demands and cancels the debt. If the actual debtor can do this well and good, but to the law it is all one whether it is done by the debtor or his surety. See Note.

It is thus when life is the forfeit in question. In the very rare event of a miscarriage of justice and of the execution of the wrong party, it would be held in law that the real culprit must escape the death to which he had been sentenced, for the demand of the law had been already met.

But what justice does most strictly require is that the substitutionary act, whether by the surrender of property or life, must be a non-compulsory act by the surety. The miscarriage of justice above supposed is wholly exceptional, though effective for the benefit of the culprit, and in the execution of justice by God is impossible. The rule is that no property or life shall be seized or taken by fraud or force to meet the liability of a defaulter. That were but to multiply crime. The surety or substitute must act of his own free will, that is, without constraint.

This essential requirement Christ fulfilled. In His death on the tree it was most prominent, and is powerfully stressed in Scripture. He “offered Himself unto God” (ver. 14). He *offered*; there was no outward constraint: He offered *Himself*; it was His own person and life that He willingly surrendered. So Paul wrote that “the Son of God loved me and *gave Himself up* for me,” that is, surrendered Himself to justice on my account (Gal. 2:20). Yet more emphatically our Divine Substitute said of Himself: “Therefore doth the Father love me, because *I lay down* my life, that I may take it again. No one taketh it away from me, but *I lay it down of myself*” (John 10:17, 18).

5. *Added Details* (9:19).

In connection with the sprinkling of blood at the attesting of the covenant at Sinai there were added, as the Writer tells us, three articles, (1) water, (2) scarlet wool, and (3) hyssop.

i. *The water* points to the activity of the Holy Spirit in association with the atonement of Christ. John testifies as to the crucifixion that, when the side of Christ was pierced, “straightway there came out blood and water” (John 19:34). This he stresses heavily in his epistle (1 John 5:6-8).

The conjunction of blood and water is frequent in types and histories. In the cleansing of the leper (Lev. 14), the purifying of one ceremonially defiled (Num. 19), and the consecrating of a priest (Lev. 8), both blood and water were equally indispensable. It emphasizes the indissoluble connection between justification in Christ and sanctification in the Spirit, imputed righteousness and practical righteousness, the altar and the laver. Both are indispensable to communion with God, to life among His sanctified people, and to service in the holy place now and hereafter. Study 1 Pet. 1:2; Eph. 1:7 with 13, 14; 5:25-27; Titus 2:11-14; 3:3-8; and indeed the whole Bible. The matter will be considered again at chapter 10:22.

ii. *The scarlet wool* is not so easy to interpret. It is associated with the blood, the water, the hyssop in the cleansing of the leper (Lev. 13:4-7), and again in the case of one to be cleansed from lesser defilement than leprosy (Num. 14:6). In the one case it was dipped into the blood-stained water, in the other it was burned in the purging fire. In both cases it is thus associated with the purifying judgment on sin and the consequent restoration to fellowship with God and His people.

Perhaps the most illuminating passage is Isaiah 1:18, where God calls to His backslidden people and says: “Come now, and let us reason together, saith Jehovah: though your sins be as *scarlet*, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like

crimson, they shall be as *wool*.” In this passage scarlet represents the intensity, the glaring offensiveness of sin, and its indelible stain on the character, while wool is parallel to snow as a symbol of the purity that can be produced by the blood and water of cleansing. It would seem to be the whiteness of Palestinian wool that caused it to be chosen as a symbol of a cleansed sinner. Comp. Ps. 147:16; Ezek. 27:18; Dan. 7:9; Rev. 1:14, for this feature.

iii. *Hyssop* was a plant of which a bunch was used as the instrument for sprinkling the defiled who was being cleansed (Num. 19:18). Perhaps this lowly plant represents the humility of heart requisite in one who is to benefit by the blood. Hence David’s prayer, “Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean,” which means give me the benefit of the blood and water of cleansing. He added: “Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow” (Ps. 51:7). The hyssop is connected with the sprinkling of blood, or water stained with blood; the washing connects with the use of water to bathe the person and cleanse the clothing, that is the outer, visible life. The one is the altar, the other the layer.

The Bible knows nothing of the offensive idea of a fountain of blood and of sinners plunging therein.<sup>2</sup> The grosser of heathen religious customs included such a ceremony, the *taurobolium*. But the Divinely appointed ceremonies excluded this. Blood was *sprinkled*, washing was always with water. Pardon could be gained through the blood alone, as in the case of the tax-gatherer (Luke 18): he “went down to *his* house justified,” but he could not go up into *God’s* house and have the privilege of priestly communion and service; for that the water of the layer was equally as indispensable as the blood of the altar (Exod. 30:17-21); and only priests and Levites could reach the layer. The cross assures pardon to faith: the daily sanctified walk in the power of the Spirit is necessary to fellowship and service.

iv. *The Tabernacle and vessels sprinkled with blood* (9:21). This is not mentioned in the account of the erection of the Tabernacle (Exod. 40). Only the anointing with oil is specified. But it could be justly inferred from the feature that in the associated ceremony of the consecrating of Aaron and his sons as priests the blood was applied to them before the oil was applied (Lev. 8:23, 24, 30). This was the case in the cleansing of the defiled. The blood was applied to the leper, and it is particularly ordered that the oil shall be “put *upon the blood* of the guilt offering” (Lev. 14:14-17).

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<sup>2</sup> The one text which countenanced the idea was Rev. 1:5: “Unto Him that loved us and *washed* us from our sins by His blood.” But the true Greek text is *luo* not *louo* and reads “*loosed* us from our sins in His blood” (see R.V.). It is the liberating power of redemption, not the cleansing virtue.

It means that the Spirit is given only to such as have first accepted the blood of Christ. Pentecost cannot precede Calvary. The order is invariable. "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of sins; and [and then] ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). "Every one of you"—"each of you" individually (*hekastos humon*); there is no exception to the rule and the appointed order. And so Eph. 1:13: "In whom [Christ] having also believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise" First belief in Christ, afterward the sealing with the Spirit.

6. *The Necessity of Sacrifice* (9:23). "Necessary [strong and emphatic] therefore it was that the copies of the things in the heavens with these should be made pure, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these."

i. The necessity arises from the holiness of God. He is of purer eyes than to behold evil and cannot look on perverseness (Hab. 1:13). It is impossible that Divine holiness shall sanction its own opposite. God would cease to be God did He tolerate uncleanness and compromise with evil. Whatever persons or regions He is to honour with His presence must be holy, as He is holy. Therefore where evil has defiled purification must be effected by atoning sacrifice

ii. The temporary copies of the heavenly things could be so purged by temporary sacrifices. But whence arises the necessity that the heavenly things themselves must be made pure? It arises from the defiling of those upper realms by the sin of Satan and his angels. In very ancient days pious men understood this. "His angels He chargeth with folly [or error]. He putteth no trust in His holy ones; yea, the heavens are not clean in His sight" (Job 4:18; 15:15). This defilement commenced in that high realm where the anointed cherub at first walked in honour and it descended with him to the lower realms to which he was cast out (Ezek. 28:16). It affects also the lower heaven of the stars: "Behold, even the moon hath no brightness, And the stars are not pure in His sight" (Job 25:5).

How shall these upper regions be purged? By the better sacrifices of the new covenant. The work of the cross has universal virtue. The sacrifice made by Christ extends its cleansing energy throughout the heavens. Truly His sacrifice was better, far, far better than the best which Aaron could offer!

iii. But why is this work spoken of in the plural, "better sacrifices"? No work or sacrifice by any other person can be added to His. Can it be because His one entire work as Mediator involved several distinct acts of sacrifice? He surrendered His original form as God and took the form of a bondservant (Phil. 2:5-8). He gave up His position

and glory as equal with God. He sacrificed His enjoyment of the immediate presence of His Father and came out into this remote earth. He left the worship of holy angels and became one of a race lower than they in power and glory. In manhood He sacrificed comforts, pleasures, rights, even the right to live. And at last He made the supreme sacrifice of Himself on the cross, without which there would have been no atonement and His vast earlier sacrifices would have left heaven and earth still defiled. For these were but preparation for His atoning work; they proved His entire suitability to make atonement; but atonement itself He effected by the death of the cross alone. Yet the virtue of this, as it were, threw its radiance backward over all the preparation, as well as forward into all His intercession on high, and combines His entire priestly activities into one whole service.

But with this explanation of the plural "sacrifices" I do not feel perfectly satisfied. Westcott thought that it is used because "the single sacrifice of Christ fulfilled perfectly the ideas presented by the different forms of the Levitical sacrifices." Perhaps the plural may be one of dignity or emphasis like the plural "deaths" in Isa. 53:9 (R.V. mgn, and reference to Ezek. 28:8, 10), as is suggested by Mr. F. F. Bruce.

#### 7. *Summary* (9:24-28).

i. The reason why those Aaronic sacrifices did not suffice is that they did not affect the true tabernacle where Christ was to minister. Better sacrifices were needed to cleanse that heavenly sphere whither the High Priest was to enter. Aaron appeared annually before God on behalf of Israel only, and then in a merely typical place and manner. But it is necessary that the saving intercession of Christ for all men should be exercised in the immediate presence of God, for there are reached judgments and decisions affecting all men everywhere and for ever.

ii. Moreover those sacrifices were of only animal blood, failing of adequate moral or legal value, and they had to be presented frequently, by a fallible priest. Such sacrifices offered by such priests could never secure eternal redemption. If Christ were no more than Aaron, and His body and His blood of no richer worth than those of beasts, then would it be incumbent upon Him to have suffered unto death in perpetual recurrence ever since the world began.

iii. But what are the glorious facts? These: (1) that once, not at, or many times since, the foundation of the world, but once, that is, only once; and (2) at the point of time to which all the ages since the world began led up and out of which all succeeding ages develop; (3) the Son of God has been manifested on this earth.

Let us pause and ask, *Why* has this small earth become the pivotal point of eternity? in the depths of the wisdom and counsel of God it was determined that man should become the ruler of the universe (Gen. 1:26; Ps. 8; see Chapter 5 above). The fallen cherub, who aspired to this sovereignty (Isa. 14:13, 14), promptly attacked this new heir to the throne on which he himself fain would sit, and thus he attacked also the final purpose of God concerning heaven and earth. By this means the ancient conflict between the Sovereign and the Rebel became concentrated on this earth. Hither therefore the Son of God came to destroy the works of the Devil by putting away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, and hither He will return to finish the fight, as is shown in Rev. 19.

“By the sacrifice of Himself.” Again the Writer returns to this most stupendous fact. Oh, what a majestic Person made the sacrifice: oh, what a sacrifice He made! Nothing less were sufficient, nothing more was possible, nothing else is required. He *put away* sin: judicially as before God the Judge of all; progressively in the lives of men of faith; completely when the full outcome has been reached in heaven and earth.

iv. *The Coming Again of Christ.* To this *full development* the Writer now advances. He will open the theme more fully in chapter 12).

(1) “It is laid up for men once to die” (ver. 27). Justice demands it, or anarchy will triumph in endless destruction; mercy requires it, or earth’s misery will accumulate beyond endurance; experience confirms it, “we must needs all die.” And then what?

(2) “*After this judgment*” (ver. 27), that is, *krisis*, arraignment, examination before a competent tribunal. What the verdict and outcome will be is not here indicated. Nor is it here stated how long or how soon after death this examination will be. But the judgment seat of God is always in session. The great white throne (Rev. 20) is only its final session, when the *eternal* state of angels and men will be announced.

But in the ordering of His kingdom of righteousness God leaves nothing unarranged, nor are prisoners left to languish long in prison without trial. Luke 16 pictures events shortly after death, for the brothers of Dives are still living on earth. Some competent authority must have determined that Lazarus should go into bliss and Dives into torment. See my *Firstfruits and Harvest*, 67 ff.

(3) “*Of many*” (ver. 28). Man dies once; Christ died once; but there is a great distinction: each man dies for his own sin, but Christ died for the sins of others, yea, many others. This many is reminiscent of the words of the Lord as at Matt. 20:28, and during the last Passover; “this is My blood of the covenant which is shed for many unto

the remission of sins” (Matt. 26:28; Mark 14:24). For how many? Some contend that it was for the elect only and refuse the extension of the atonement to the human race entire. Yet certain passages seem unequivocally to assert this last, as Heb. 2:15, R.V.; 1 Tim. 2:3-6; 1 John 2:2.

The parallel with the old covenant will settle the question. That covenant applied to Israel, the new covenant is open to all mankind. When the high priest of Israel entered the holy of holies with the blood he did so on behalf of “all the assembly of Israel” (Lev. 16:17). No Israelite was excluded. One man acted for many, not only for himself or for a portion of Israel. So with Christ and His sacrifice. He took away the sin of *the world* (John 1:29), not only of Israel. Yet in the one case and the other, only the repentant and believing actually benefit by the atonement available for all.

This avoids putting on the rack (2 Pet. 3:16 *streboo*) such passages as those mentioned above. They mean just what they say; “all” means *all*.

(4) (a) Even as for man a certain other event follows upon death, so a certain other event follows the death of Christ— He will “*appear the second time*” (ver. 28). Christ Who had been hidden in heaven was manifested (*phaneroo*) to men on earth (ver. 26). He next presented Himself (*emphanizo*) in the presence of God (ver. 24), somewhat as one who returns to the sovereign after discharging some duty abroad. Service at the throne for our benefit now occupies Him; but at the time appointed by the Father He will be sent forth again and will be seen with the eyes by men on earth (ver. 28, *ophthesetai*). So it is stated in Rev. 1:7: “Behold, lie cometh with the clouds, and every eye [*ophthalmos*] shall see [*opselai*] Him.”

A visible coming of the Lord that can be seen by human sight on earth is the inescapable teaching of Scripture. That will be His *second* appearing on earth, which excludes the possibility of *any* such “coming” between His ascension and that future visible coming.

(b) His ‘former coming was that He might deal with sin. He dealt with that matter, said to His Father “I have accomplished the work which thou hast given me to do” (John 17:4), and announced before men that “It is finished” (John 19:30). His future coming will be “*apart from sin*” (ver. 28). He will not take up that question again, for He has already solved and settled it.

(c) When He appears again it will be “*unto salvation*” (ver. 28), salvation in its largest sense, the sense of Peter’s words “salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1 Pet. 1:5). At His former coming He *provided* salvation, and by the Spirit the

believer has already the earnest and foretaste of this (Eph. 1:13, 14): when He comes again He will make this fully effective in the spirit, soul, and body of His own, even as Paul writes: "And the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body without blame in the parousia of our Lord Jesus Christ be preserved entire. Faithful is the One calling you, who will also do it" (1 Thess. 5:24). This comprehensive desire will be fulfilled in those who share in the first resurrection or the rapture that are to take place at the coming of Christ (1 Cor. 15; 1 Thess. 4; Rev. 20).

(d) "*Them that expect Him.*" No secrecy will mark His parousia (coming); it will be an *apocalypse*, an unveiling of a person now hidden, an *epiphany*, the out-shining of a glory now concealed. The parallel with the day of atonement shows this. Israel's high priest was concealed from men while in the holy place before God; but when he came forth to bless the people all could see him.

Thus will Christ also be seen of all: every eye shall see Him, including those who pierced Him, His enemies (Rev. 1:7). But for these last His coming will be unto *destruction* (2 Thess. 1:5-12), "all the tribes of the earth shall mourn over Him." As to this prospect has the reader's heart learned to say with John "Even so, Amen"? (Rev. 1:7).

But to those who "wait for Him," that is, eagerly expect Him, He "will appear unto *salvation.*" The worshippers were expecting (*prosdokon*) Zacharias the priest to appear, and they wondered that he tarried in the sanctuary (Luke 1:21). Simeon was expecting (*Prosdechomenos*) the consolation of Israel (Luke 2:25), Anna, and others were expecting (*prodechomenos*) the redemption of Jerusalem (Luke 2:38), and Joseph of Arimathea "was expecting the kingdom of God" (*prosdecheto*, Luke 23:51). These cases illustrate the expression "them that wait for Him," where the cognate word *apekdechomenois* is used. They were expecting the fulfillment of the prophecies which promised the coming of Messiah. They could not tell just when or how He would come, even though Simeon had been specially informed it would be in his lifetime. But the uncertainty did not hinder their hearts from being set upon the coming of Messiah as their hope.

Thus it is in this age. In Preliminary Dissertation 2 of my book on the *Revelation* it has been shown that the apostles did not expect the return of Christ in their days; but that did not hinder their hearts from being set upon His coming as their hope and desire (1 Pet. 1:13). So it has been with godly men ever since, and thus John Labadie, dying in 1573—4, said: "I believe the end is near and the beginning of the reign of God and His Son Jesus Christ, for Whom I have waited, Whom I have known, for Whom I now wait, Whom I now know" (*The Quiet in the Land*, p. 174). His notion that the event was near

was mistaken, but the expectant attitude of his heart was right; and to all those who have so waited expectantly, whether they shall have died or have been left alive until His coming, "He shall appear, apart from sin, unto salvation."

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