

## PART 5: CONCLUSION (Hebrews 13:1-25)

### CHAPTER 19

#### The Epistle to the Hebrews

#### CONSEQUENT AND CONCLUDING EXHORTATIONS

(Hebrews 13:1-25)

by G. H. Lang

#### Chapter 13:1-25

1. Let love of the brethren continue.
2. Forget not to show love to strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.
3. Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; them that are evil entreated, as being yourselves also in the body.
4. *Let* marriage *be* had in honour among all, and *let* the bed *be* undefiled: for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.
5. Be ye free from the love of money; content with such things as ye have; for himself hath said, I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee.
6. So that with good courage we say, The Lord is my helper; I will not fear: what shall man do unto me?
7. Remember them that had the rule over you, which spake unto you the word of God; and considering the issue of their life [Gr. manner of life], imitate their faith.
8. Jesus Christ *is* the same yesterday and to-day, yea and for ever.
9. Be not carried away with divers and strange teachings: for it is good that the heart be established by grace; not by meats, wherein they that occupied themselves were not profited.
10. We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat who serve the tabernacle.
11. For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the holy place by the high priest *as an offering* for sin, are burned without the camp.
12. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people through his own blood, suffered without the gate.
13. Let us therefore go forth unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.
14. For we have not here an abiding city, but we seek after *the city* which is to come.
15. Through him then let us offer up a sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of lips which make confession to his name.
16. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.
17. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit *to them*: for they watch in behalf of your souls, as they that shall give account; that they may do this with joy, and not with grief: for this *were* unprofitable for you.

18. Pray for us: for we are persuaded that we have a good conscience, desiring to live honestly in all things.
19. And I exhort *you* the more exceedingly to do this, that I may be restored you the sooner.
20. Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep with the blood of the eternal covenant, *even* our Lord Jesus,
21. make you perfect in every good thing to do his will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be the glory for ever and ever, Amen.
22. But I exhort you, brethren, bear with the word of exhortation; for I have written unto you in few words.
23. Know ye that our brother Timothy hath been set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you.
24. Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you.
25. Grace be with you all. Amen.

This chapter has been regarded as “a kind of appendix to the Epistle.” But the connection is much more intimate. It illustrates the feature of the Word of God that there is an underlying and unexpressed *spiritual* connection between parts or phrases. This feature is very pronounced in the first epistle of John, but exists everywhere in Scripture, the full sense of which is not known until this undeclared connection is perceived.

Here follows a series of exhortations which show the child of God how to live so that he may not learn by experience that God is a consuming fire (12:29).

i. Ver. 1. “Let *love of the brethren* continue” (abide). For “God is love; and he that abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him” (1 John 4:16). Now love does not consume itself; its fire feeds upon its opposite, all that is not of love. Therefore in the measure that the child of God walks in love he will not experience that consuming fire of God’s jealousy just before emphasized.

Another underlying principle is that our real relationship with God is shown in our actual intercourse with our brethren; for “he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen cannot love God whom he hath not seen . . . and whosoever loveth Him that begat [the Father] loveth him also that is begotten of Him” [his brother] (1 John 4:20; 5:1). To walk in love to my brother is indispensable to a walk in fellowship with his and my Father Who loves us both.

2. Ver. 2. *Hospitality*. Under the uncertain conditions of travel of those times and lands free hospitality was a need, a boon, and a Christian privilege. The neglect of it is recorded as a reproach on the men of Gibeah (Judges 19:15), and on a certain village in Samaria where racial animosity smothered hospitality (Luke 9:52, 53). By onset of darkness a traveler might be forced "out of his way" (*ex hodon*) and be compelled to seek shelter with a friend (Luke 11:5, 6).

The need of hospitality would be specially urgent when persecution suddenly drove Christians far and wide (Acts 8:1), and, because the exercise of it would then involve risk the temptation to refuse it would arise. Those addressed' had hitherto resisted this temptation (6:10; 10:33); they are exhorted to continue their fellowship and to extend it to even strangers who may seek it.

Now to open one's home to a stranger requires no small measure of trust and grace. Hence here again the cultivating of such kindness must needs develop in the heart that love which promotes fellowship with God, and will thus preserve the soul from decline and from the perils incurred in "falling away from the living God" (3:12).

The reason advanced for receiving strangers is noteworthy. The father of all men of faith was sitting in his tent door when three strangers came in sight (Gen. 18:2). Abraham hastened to show them hospitality and presently learned that two of these "men" were angels and the third the Lord of angels. The Writer's exhortation must surely imply that this experience may be repeated still. One of Abraham's German children in faith, whose name I do not know, wrote lines which may be rendered as follows:

ANGELS UNAWARES (Heb. 13:2)

Whene'er a guest draws near thy house  
Then take him warmly by the hand,  
And welcome him, at morn or late,  
And see if Christ before thy gate  
Doth make an angel stand.  
So many all unknown have had  
An angel sent as guest by God;  
But minds were blind from other things,  
And as they saw no pair of wings  
They deemed him but a load.  
Nay, should a guest draw near thy door,  
And though but meanly he be dressed.  
Survey him closely, he may be  
An angel sent of God to thee,  
And all thy house be blessed.  
So comes a guest, then lay to heart

That welcome warm he has from thee:  
May grace suffuse thy countenance,  
Nor rob thou him of confidence;  
He may an angel be!<sup>1</sup>

3. Ver. 3. *Espousing the cause of prisoners* for Christ's sake follows the same lines and yields the same spiritual results. It will be the test by which the Lord at His coming will determine the heart attitude of men to Himself (Matt. 25:31-36). In the two great modern wars many servants of Christ, for conscience toward God, went to prison, or endured lesser terms of "bonds," rather than destroy their fellows. It was painful that but comparatively few of their brethren were ready to visit them or otherwise support them, while some openly repudiated them. The believers here addressed had acted more courageously and kindly (10:33, 34). There was, however, danger that they might lose that first love. It is our danger also.

4. Ver. 4. *Sexual Purity*. The exhortation passes from the heavenly family to the natural family. The marriage relationship is the origin of all human relationships. Its purity is therefore indispensable to all social well-being and decay here breeds corruption in all spheres of life. A man who will be unfaithful to his wife, or a woman to her husband, will easily be untrustworthy in all other relationships and transactions. The fornicator dishonors his own body and will be ready to dishonour every other person or obligation.

This wickedness has been universally prevalent in all times: it has lately increased most alarmingly in western lands, which is a sure sign of inescapable deterioration and ruin. The Christian is always liable to be infected by the poisoned atmosphere of the world and to sink to its moral level. Hence the solemn charge to the Thessalonian believers to "abstain from fornication" and in no wise to give way to "lust, even as the Gentiles who know not God; that no man transgress, and wrong his brother in the matter," that is, by defiling the wife of a fellow-Christian. This is enforced by the stern warning, "because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we forewarned you and solemnly testified" (1 Thess. 4:1-8).

This strong passage shows that it is impossible to please God and indulge an illicit passion, and that he who rejects the call to purity rejects not man, but God, and acts in defiance of the Holy Spirit. Marriage is honorable, fornication is abominable, whether it be in the married (adultery) or the unmarried.

Paul's assurance to Christians that "the Lord is an avenger" ought to press on the conscience more heavily than is often the case. He taught so fully the truth of salvation by grace that it is the more striking that he balanced this by the fact that the

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<sup>1</sup> See my short collection *The King and other Verses*, p. 45, for full text.

Lord personally acts as an Avenger, an *ekdikos*, one who carries out a legal sentence. See this word Rom. 13:4, its one other occurrence in New Testament, where it refers to the magistrate as the bearer of the sword of justice, that is, as inflicting capital punishment.

Now this same Apostle of grace knew well that there operates ceaselessly an angelic system of government, to which all men are amenable, and through which in part God avenges evils not otherwise to be reached and punished. Thus Israel was warned that, if the people of the land did not execute the law upon an evil-doer, God would Himself act and would set His face against that man and cut him off (Lev. 20:4, 5). In accord with this Paul committed to Satan (the executioner-in-chief of that angelic government), for the cutting short of his bodily life, a Christian who was living in fornication and whom the church was failing to judge (1 Cor. 5:1-5). Thus also our Writer says that “fornicators and adulterers God will judge.” It is indeed “a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” for “our God is a consuming *fire*” (10:31; 12: 29).

Nobly and faithfully did Bishop Latimer act when to the licentious and adulterous Henry VIII he presented a Bible, wrapped in a napkin bearing the solemn sentence “fornicators and adulterers God will judge” (*Hugh Latimer*, by Demaus, p. 213).

God as the Creator has shown His abhorrence of these vices, and that He is an avenger, by attaching to them the loathsome diseases that attend promiscuous intercourse. Was it, then, anything less than a sheer mocking of God that, in the late war, chaplains to the forces, of all men, supposedly His servants among the troops, should have been required by the authorities of a certain State to instruct men how to avoid these consequences though indulging in sin habitually? Shall not God avenge such defiance of His laws? Let all His children, at least, serve Him in this matter with reverence and awe lest we too feel His holy consuming vengeance.

#### 5. Vers. 5, 6. *Covetousness or Contentment.*

The central secret of the fellowship of the Son of God with His Father has been given at 10:7: “Lo, I am come. . . to do Thy will, O God.” This is from the Septuagint. The English rendering of the Hebrew reads, “I delight to do Thy will, O my God; yea, Thy law is within my heart” (Ps. 40:7, 8).

For Him that will of God included renouncing the infinite riches of the Creator and becoming poor (2 Cor. 8:9). Having learned from Him His secret His servant Paul could say, “Having food and covering we shall be therewith content,” and he solemnly warned that those who meant to be rich (that is, to have more than these necessities for living) “fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and hurtful lusts, such as drown men in destruction and perdition” (1 Tim. 6:8, 9). God may sometimes permit one of His

people to hold more, even much more, but the *intention* to get more is the deadly evil, for it implies discontent with the present ordering of God and becomes a root of all evils.

This discontent is the almost universal state of mind of men of the world and one of the chief causes of their miseries. The Christian is to watch carefully that *his* "turn of mind is free from the love of money." Covetousness is simply the desire to have more, how much more is not the material point. By the very fact of being covetous the heart is cursed with discontent; by being discontented it is cursed with covetousness.

The times when our Writer wrote were hard. The vast majority were perpetually poor, and Christians often had the aggravating circumstance of being deliberately robbed. These addressed had learned to take "joyfully the spoiling of their goods" (10:34). This was because, being poor, they knew they were rich (2 Cor. 6:10). Did a highwayman take the traveler's purse and coin but leave his pocket-book and bank-notes, the robbed would not feel poor or fear for a night's lodging at the inn. Thus may the Christian when poor feel assured as to future need, for he holds the *promises of God, Who*

"Himself hath said, I will in no wise fail thee,  
neither will I in any wise forsake thee:  
So that with good courage we say,  
The Lord is my helper; I will not fear:  
What shall man do unto me?"

What indeed I He shall do no more than God sees to be for my good. The vast promise quoted, guaranteeing the perpetual presence and unfailing provision of God, was given to a soldier for fighting the battles of the Lord (Deut. 31:7, 8; Josh. 1:5) and to a king for building the house of the Lord (1 Chron. 28:20). He whose whole heart and life is devoted to these two purposes can count upon the promise that, to the one who seeks first the kingdom of God and to act righteously before Him, all needful earthly things shall be added (Matt. 6:33).

"Teach us, O God, that, if we had Thy perfect wisdom and Thy perfect love, we should order for ourselves exactly what Thou orderest for us" (A. T. Pierson).

6. *Honoring Leaders.* vers. 5 to 17. This paragraph opens and closes by references to the leaders of the church. All that lies between is thus enclosed as being one theme. This it is, for the Writer, as we shall see, passes from the matters of individual conduct just treated to deal with the corporate life of Christians as a community.

i. *Ver. 7. Guides.* The Head of the church has appointed authority therein. Guides, leaders, rulers are His gift and institution for the good order, instruction, and

encouragement of His people. They are what shepherds are to the flock, going before, showing the way, gathering stragglers, protecting from foes, guiding to safe pastures and quiet waters.

The commentators take this verse as a call to remember those leaders who had died. They base this view upon the past tense “who *spake* unto you the word of God,” and upon the word *ekbasis* taken in its sense of “ends” close of life, implying perhaps death by martyrdom. This may be right, but the present participle “remember those guiding you” more naturally implies the guides as being alive, and is exactly parallel to ver. 3, “remember those in bonds,” and to ver. 17, “Be obedient to *those ruling you*,” which all take to mean living leaders. *Ekbasis* and its verb *ekbainō* have also the sense of produce of the soil, fruit growing from the ground. The exhortation may be to contemplate the present character, course, and fruitful service of their leaders and to follow in their steps as the flock the shepherd.

But it is the faith of these guides that is to be imitated. Their callings in life or their position in the church may not be those of others, but the faith that led them to glorify God, to suffer for Christ, to serve His saints, that faith each believer needs for what may be his particular calling or service. George Muller was called to care for orphans, trusting God for their support. Not all are called to that form of service, but all are called to bring God into every step in life, to live by faith.

But whether the leaders had died or were alive such are to be remembered and honored (1 Tim. 5:17; 1 Thess. 5:12, 13; 1 Cor. 16:15, 16). The house of God is *not* a democracy but a *theocracy*, a place where the Son of God rules (3:6); it is *not* a sphere where every man has equal status and authority, but in which the Head of the house appoints each to his place and duty (Matt. 25:14, 15; Mark 13:34). Therefore to refuse honour to those whom the Lord has qualified to lead His people is to reject the authority of the Head of God’s house.

But the two-fold test of who are true guides, raised up by the Lord, is to be noted. First, they can “speak the word of God”; they are “apt to teach” (1 Tim. 3:2), “able to exhort in the health-giving teaching” and “to convict gainsayers” (Titus 1:9). Then also their manner of life is commendable, its issue is fruitful to the glory of God and is a safe example to “others. Thus Paul could unhesitatingly call attention to his life among Christians and before the world, and call upon others to imitate him even as he imitated the Great Shepherd, the Head of the household, Christ (1 Thess. 1:5, 6; Phil. 3:17). It is deeply to be regretted that so many gain leadership in the churches who do not manifest these indispensable features. Their influence is hurtful, being not of the Spirit of Christ, but only natural, or even carnal, even when they are capable, energetic, and “get things done.”

ii. Ver. 8. *Jesus Christ*. In spite of much weakness within and fierce attacks from without that Society known as the church of God has continued through the centuries. Empires have come and gone, all human institutions prove unstable, but the church of God is indestructible.

The reason for this is the unchangeableness of Jesus Christ. He is the Rock of ages (Isa. 26:4) upon which the house of God stands securely and defies the tempests of time. The Church of Rome says that Peter is the rock, but, great servant of Jesus Christ as Peter was, he was impulsive, needed to be rebuked by the Lord (Matt. 16:23) and by man, for in practice he could be variable and unreliable (Gal. 2:11-16).

But "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and to-day and unto the ages." The Son of God has passed through distinct and varied conditions and experiences. He existed originally in the form of God (Phil. 2:6); He took the form of man (Phil. 2:7), assuming human nature into indissoluble union with His prior divine nature; He passed into the state and realm of death; He arose and ascended to the throne of God: but throughout He himself in essential individuality was, is, and remains eternally the same person, the same *ego*, the Son of God, Jesus Christ.

iii. Ver. 9. *Divergent Doctrines*. His unchangeability. This is the infallible touchstone of truth by which to test and expose error. Even in that early time of our Writer there were spreading teachings as to Jesus Christ which in various ways were diverse from this truth and foreign to it. These false ideas concerning Him have continued till to-day, indeed, have found startling modern revival.

In early centuries many *Gnostics* and *Docetists* asserted that the body of Christ was only a phantasm, an appearance, not a reality. Therefore His humanity was merely an illusion. *Christian Science* to-day includes this falsehood by regarding *all* material existence as mere illusion. Therefore its text book, *Science and Health*, denies the reality of Christ's life, sufferings, death, atonement, and bodily resurrection (see esp. chapters 1 and 2). Thus Jesus Christ has no real existence, neither yesterday, to-day, nor for ever.

The *Gnostics* and *Anus* agreed in attributing to Jesus preexistence, but as a created being. "Pastor" Russell, Judge Rutherford, with their followers Jehovah's Witnesses, accept this, adding that in resurrection He was elevated to "divinity" as a reward for His fidelity to God on earth. Thus He is some-thing to-day and for ever other than what He was yesterday.

*Judaism, Christadelphianism, Mohammedanism, and common Unitarianism* deny that the One now known as Jesus existed before his birth as man. Therefore He had no "yesterday."

In the fourth century *Apollinaris* taught that the humanity of Jesus had no personal human soul or *ego*, but only an animal life and body suffused by the Divine Logos. Thus the man Christ Jesus had no “yesterday,” not being a proper and distinct person.

In the last century *Swedenborg* taught a similar conception, denying the eternal existence of the Son in the Godhead, with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Approximating on this point to Mohammed, God, he said, is One, adding that this One and only Divine Person assumed human nature. Thus again the man known as Christ Jesus had no prior individual existence, no “yesterday” (*The True Christian Religion*, chapters 1 and 2).

In *Esoteric Christianity* Mrs. Besant, President of the Theosophical Society, adopted the early heresy that Jesus was only a man born as other men, that at His baptism “the Christ” descended upon Him, energized Him until the hour of crucifixion, and then withdrew from Him. So that only a man died, and His career ended. Thus as Jesus Christ He had no “yesterday,” and has no “for ever,” but a merely earthly course and end.

Every modernist who asserts that Jesus had only a natural birth, and denies His personal resurrection, thereby denies that one and the same Person is unchangeable “yesterday and to-day, yea and for ever.”

These examples illustrate how the Person of Christ is the standard Christian truth from which every false teaching diverges and becomes anti-Christian. We are here warned, as in Eph. 4:14 also, not to allow such “winds of doctrine” to toss our minds to and fro and whirl us about as children in a hurricane.

Since Jesus Christ is unchangeable any teaching concerning Him which is new and strange, later than and differing from the New Testament, cannot be true.

iv. Ver. 9. *An Established Heart*. This state is the opposite to the feeble child tossed about by the wind. Such a heart says: “My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing, yea, I will sing praises” (Ps. 57:7; 108:1). It has settled convictions, is stout to defend them, and strong to spread them. It is the house built upon the rock.

How shall this firmness be gained. The answer is both positive and negative. It is reached (a) by grace; (b) *not* by “meats.” Here the Writer concentrates once more upon his main theme. “Meats” stand for those external, bodily, legal observances, prescribed by Moses, of which eating or not eating certain foods, or eating or not eating at certain seasons, or on certain occasions, were typical examples. Such ceremonial distinctions and restrictions of food the Lord had annulled by teachings which made “all foods clean”

(Mark 7:19). The Epistles follow to the same effect, as Rom. 14; 1 Cor. 6:12, 13; chapter 8; 1 Tim. 4:3.

Those Mosaic regulations had value in restraining the gluttonous eating in which the heathen indulged, and so they promoted bodily and mental health. Yet in the higher realm of the moral and spiritual life these observances could be to no profit, as our Writer points out. C. H. Spurgeon sat next to a rabbi at a dinner. When a sucking pig was served, with its savory accompaniments, the rabbi whispered, "Moses very hard, Moses very hard." Outwardly he walked according to the law, but he broke it in his heart, and misjudged God's laws. There was no spiritual gain, but rather loss. The great preacher gave the appropriate answer: "Yes, there is a yoke upon your necks that neither ye nor your fathers were able to bear" (Acts 15:10).

From this spiritually profitless yoke Christ sets free, replacing it by His light and restful yoke (Matt. 11:27-30; Gal. 5:1).

The means of this emancipation from slavery (John 8:35, 36) is the revelation of the Father which the Son grants (as is shown in the passages cited in Matthew and John) and especially of the *grace* of the Father to sinners. For it is experience of His grace revealed in Christ that overwhelms rebellion in the heart, creates assured confidence, kindles gratitude and affection, and establishes the child in dutiful obedience to the Father.

To-day, as ever, the lack of such enjoyment of the grace of God is very wide among religious persons. There are great systems, miscalled Christian, the very basis of which is law, not grace, Moses not Christ, works not faith; in which ceremonies, penances, self-mortifications, obligatory observances of days and seasons, monetary payments, in short all that is meant by "meats," hide from the penitent the freeness, richness, vastness, entire sufficiency of what God bestows in Christ upon the principle of grace.

And now, as ever, those who adhere to such systems are not profited in soul, but remain without assurance Godward or as to eternity; they struggle vainly for peace and power, they live and die in spiritual poverty. Indeed, the clerics who maintain these systems often deceive their adherents with the false assertion that it is pure and serious presumption to think that a sinner can have assurance of salvation prior to the day of judgment, and they order them to be more zealous concerning meats," if so be that at last they may thereby secure the mercy of God.

v. Ver. 10. *The Altar*. If one enters the church buildings of the religious systems mentioned the first object met is a bowl of water. Passing up through the edifice to the far end the *last* object found is an altar, and to this the clergy only may approach.

In the Tabernacle and Temple of old, which God then honored with His presence, the arrangement was vitally different. The *first* object met, at the front gate, was the *altar*, then came the bowl of water, and afterward the building where God then dwelt. That is to say, in God's arrangement the first provision made was for atonement and pardon on the ground of the sacrifice of a substitute for the sinner. We have the clear authority of the Son of God that a repentant sinner who approached that altar with faith on the atoning sacrifice there burning, the morning or evening lamb,<sup>2</sup> "went down to his house justified" (Luke 18:14). There was no question of his pardon being deferred to some distant date. He was then and there forgiven, justified. Only thereafter came the water of practical holiness, leading on to communion, worship, service in the house of God.

This symbolism, and the truth it taught, Satan skillfully corrupted in early Christian times. The water was brought to the fore and the new birth was falsely said to be effected by baptism. Then the altar was made inaccessible, save to the priest, so that the sinner should not attain to certainty of pardon, but be left dependent upon his own unavailing efforts and the good offices of the thus indispensable priest, for which latter of course he must pay, to the enrichment and power of the priests.

This displacing of the altar, with the consequent annulling of its primary purpose and benefit, marks these systems as anti-Christian. They have not even so much virtue as the ancient Mosaic system. The typology of that was at least true and helpful, whereas the symbolism of these systems is false and destructive.

An altar is indispensable. There *must* be propitiation for sin. If, then, as our Writer has shown, the Mosaic ritual has been set aside by its fulfillment in Christ, where is our altar? For he says distinctly that "we have an altar," a place of sacrifice, atonement, pardon, reconciliation. 'Where stands this altar? To what spot must the repentant now betake himself to meet with God? Where shall he find the sacrifice and the priest?

vi. Ver. 11. *Outside the Camp*. Attention is next drawn to the greatest day of the year under the Mosaic law, the day of general atonement for the whole people (Lev. 16). There were daily and frequent sacrifices for sins, but these were chiefly (a) individual sacrifices for personal offences; (b) they left unknown sins unatoned; (c) the blood that made atonement was taken no nearer to God than the brazen altar at the entrance gate; (d) they left the justified offender standing afar from God, though forgiven.

But on the great day of atonement (Lev. 16) the sacrifices were (a) for the whole people (vers. 5, 15, 24, 33); (b) for *all* their sins, unknown as well as known, during the

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<sup>2</sup> This faith on the sacrifice is implied in his appeal, "God, he *propitiated* to me the sinner." As he was making a general confession of sinfulness, the common public sacrifice availed. Had he been confessing some particular trespass he must have brought a personal offering.

whole year preceding (vers. 16, 21, 22, 34); (c) the atoning blood was taken into the holiest of all and sprinkled upon the golden mercy-seat in the immediate presence of God; (d) on the ground of which blood, there presented, the high priest, as representative of the whole people, was granted access to that Presence.<sup>3</sup>

It was true that he could not stay there, nor venture in on any other than that one day in the year, for the blood of bulls and goats could not provide perfection in communion with God; but the access granted on that day was a foreshadowing of the perfect and perpetual communion which Christ would establish for Himself and His people by the presenting of His own sacrifice to God in the heavenly tabernacle.

Now, with an acute, divinely granted insight, our Writer points out that the bodies of any beasts the blood of which was brought into the holy place were not burned on the altar at the entrance gate but were taken to a place outside the camp and consumed there. Outside the camp was a place of reproach where communion with God was denied. It was the Sphere of the leper (Lev. 13:46), the blasphemer (Lev. 24:14), the sabbath breaker (Num. 15:35, 36). The carcasses in question bore that reproach because of having been by imputation "made sin."

This detail of the divinely appointed types, as every other detail, Christ must fulfil. "Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered *without the gate*." God secretly overruled every detail of the death of His Lamb. "They led Him away to crucify Him" (Matt. 27:31); away from the temple and the court of the judge they lead Him *-out* to crucify Him" (Mark 15:20); "and He went *out* unto the place called Golgotha," out of the city itself, "for the place where Jesus was crucified was *nigh unto the city*" and therefore outside of it (John 19:17, 20).

Thus did men unite to cast reproach upon the Holy One of God. They drove Him away from the temple, they cast Him out of the city, they gave Him the place of dishonour in the execution ground of criminals. *There* the Lamb of God offered Himself without blemish; *there* He died; *there*, not in the temple court, is our altar; *there*, not in the city, must the sinner seek Him, *there* must the believer espouse Him, *there* receive the atoning virtue of the precious blood which entitled Him to return from banishment to the Father's house and throne, and entitles Him as the Priest to bring unto God all who draw nigh through Him.

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<sup>3</sup> There were other victims burned outside the camp (Lev. 4:11, 12, 21) and their blood was sprinkled in the holy place (vv. 5, 6, 16, 17). Our Writer shows that not these but the ceremonies of the great day of atonement are in his mind for he gives a particular true of that day only, even that the high priest brought the blood into "the holy places" (plural, *ta hagia* or *hagion*). This plural is, I believe, found in *Hebrews* only and it always includes the Holy of Holies (8:2; 9:3, 8, 52, 24, 25; 10:19; 13:11).

From that central hour of all the ages the temple became the center of obsolete ceremonies. He who remains there as his place of worship, or who returns there after having for a time gone forth to Christ, must forfeit any right to eat of the true altar, the cross of Christ. He must starve his soul on the now empty forms of the temple. The worshipper at the altar saw part of his offering dedicated to God in the altar fire, part the priest took and enjoyed, part he himself ate (Lev. 7). "Behold, Israel after the flesh: have not they who eat the sacrifices communion with the altar?" (1 Cor. 10:18). Thus also at the cross of Christ, both God, the great Priest, and the worshipper have holy fellowship. But this is "outside the gate."

The temple is the center of earthly, ritualistic, legalistic religion. This religion is in the "city," it is the religion of the world, part of its system. But God is not in the "city" or its "temple." When in Christ He came to it He was cast out into the place of the curse; all classes of the city combined to despise and reject Him: the religious leaders, priests and rabbis; the politicians and the men of law, judges, police officers, learned scribes, and the common people, all joined in thrusting Him away. Neither the city nor the temple saw Him again; *He is not there*, and it is vain to seek Him there. It is at Calvary He must be first met; and Calvary, the place of reproach, is the only doorway into the kingdom, the house, the heart, the glory of God.

In plain language it means that he who wishes to have fellowship with God in His holy heaven must abandon every system of religion that is of law, of ceremonies, of self-effort, of human devising, of secular authority, and must accept the reproach of dependence upon, of fellowship with, of obedience to the Redeemer Who suffered "without the gate."

It can be that honest but unenlightened hearts within those systems may gain some such acquaintance with God as can truly God-fearing Jews, but it cannot be that in such twilight they see and enjoy the full sunlight of God's grace. And should one who has reached the sunlight return to the shadow he must learn by bitter experience the force of this warning by Christ: "If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, the darkness how great!" (Matt. 6:23).

It is not a matter of leaving one religious denomination to join another company, but of abandoning a system of religion which is of the world, not of Christ, even though it assumes His name. Indeed, it involves that the heart be weaned and separated from the whole world-system of which such religion is a part.

In the time of Christ (and to-day) the city was what the camp was in Israel's early national period. It was the sphere of life, social, political, religious: it was gratifying to the senses, attractive to the natural mind, the realm of activity and prospects. But Abraham had to leave the city, Israel had to leave Egypt, the first Christians were soon driven from Jerusalem, by being crucified with Christ. Paul found his whole life outside of the

world system in its entirety. Such men realize that “we have not here an abiding city, but we seek after the city which is to come” (ver. 14). The cities of the nations shall fall (Rev. 16:19), they are all only temporary; indeed, the whole world-system at present occupying the earth is “passing away” (1 John 2:17), is transitory, disappointing. “Let us therefore go forth unto Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach” (ver. 13), and so inherit that which is eternal.

vii. Vers. 15, 16. *Spiritual Sacrifices*. The place “outside the camp” is in itself uninviting, indeed forbidding. No one would resort there by natural choice. It requires a powerful inducement, a supreme attraction. This is provided. The call is not merely to go outside the camp, but “Let us therefore go forth UNTO HIM.” The altogether lovely One is there, the Joy of the Father, the Lover of our souls.

Who that one moment bath the least descried Him,  
Dimly and faintly, hidden and afar,  
Doth not despise all excellence beside Him,  
Pleasures and powers that are not and that are?  
(*St. Paul, Myers.*)

And when the soul thus reaches Christ in true, deep experience, and joins the company of those who thus know Him where He now is; when there has been a fulfillment of the mighty promise: “He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will *manifest* Myself unto him” (John 14:21); then the outside place becomes as Paradise, for the desert rejoices and blossoms as the rose.

And what are the occupations of those found there with Him? Do they grieve over the loss of the pleasures and prospects of the city? Nay, verily, for they share in His activities, which are two, Praise and Benevolence.

In chapter 2:12 He has been shown as leading the praise of God in the midst of His people. He is the Chief Singer, the Precentor of the choirs, heavenly and earthly. With Him the heart overflows, bubbles up (Ps. 45:1), and the desert resounds with songs of gladness. Though still amidst the trials of life, they have reached already in His company the fullness of the psalmist’s desire,

Then will I go unto the altar of God,  
Unto God, the gladness of my joy:  
And upon the harp I will praise Thee,  
O God, my God. (Ps. 43:4).

These know what His greatly distressed servant meant when he wrote “as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich” (2 Cor. 6:10).

For, in the second place, those outside WITH HIM receive of His spirit of love and faith. This cures them of fear of to-morrow, of consequent love of getting and keeping, and enables them to find their joy in giving. How contrary to the city! They do good and distribute cheerfully, out of their little they enrich many.

The care of the poor by the early Christians astonished the heathen; for there was no ulterior motive, but evident sincerity, when the persecuted were kind to their persecutors. It is a modern rationalist who wrote concerning Christ "that the simple record of three short years of active life has done more to regenerate and soften mankind than all the disquisitions of philosophers, and than all the exhortations of moralists." (Lecky, *History of European Morals*, ii, p. 8).

And now that in some lands the State has taken in hand to be general Almoner, let the Christian watch carefully that he become not slack in generosity, but let him rather look keenly for the needy who hide their need and who may be overlooked by State officials; and let him, as opportunity offers, send his sacrifices of love farther afield, as the Philippians did to a prisoner of Christ in a distant land or when he was serving in the gospel far away (Phil 4:10-20), or as the Christians of Greece sent to needy saints in Judea (2 Cor. 8 and 9).

In any case let not the followers of the One Who is outside the world-system, having been rejected by it, hand their benevolences to that world to distribute, otherwise than by paying taxes as compelled by law. Let them distribute Christ's money under Christ's direction and in His sweet spirit; for social theorists may argue and scheme as they will, but until the kingdom of heaven has been established on earth under Christ there will always be the poor and so always opportunity for companions of Christ to distribute His bounties and share His joy of sacrifice.

For it is *sacrifice* that is well-pleasing to God, not the giving out of our superfluity (Luke 21:1-4). And praise becomes a sacrifice when it costs us something to confess our faith in God, and giving is a sacrifice when one impoverishes himself by the gift.

These, then, are the happy occupations of such as "go forth unto Him, bearing His reproach." These shall not fear the consuming fire but shall rejoice in the Father's love.

viii. Ver. 17. *Rule and Submission*. This circle of exhortations is completed by a further enforcement of the duty of submitting to the Chief Shepherd by obeying under-shepherds of His appointment. No circle of society can enjoy order and peace save by due respect for proper authority. In the "city" there flourish insubordination and consequent disorder. Christ calls for submission of heart to authority, and He enables this by giving grace to be lowly.

But again it is set forth what manner of men such must be who are to command respect and exercise rule in the house of God. They are such as (a) watch in behalf of souls, as shepherds watch over the health and well-being of the sheep; and (b) they serve the flock as those who must render account to the Owner.

Shepherds that love power, that feed themselves, or are hirelings serving only for pay, are sternly denounced by God (Ezek. 34; Zech. 11; John 10:12). But woe to the flock, or the individual sheep, that obeys not the true shepherd. The honour of the shepherd and the health of the flock are linked inseparably. The Owner and Chief Shepherd shall require an account from the under-shepherds. If these must report that the sheep were refractory, wandering, and so became ill-fed and unhealthy, then in that day of reckoning this shall not be to the joy of the shepherd, but shall cause him to groan in sorrow, and it shall not be to the profit of the sheep.

Here the Writer closes his arguments and appeals, and does so by emphasizing the same themes that he has pressed through out. Privilege and responsibility are inseparable: he who would enjoy the one must discharge the other. God in grace has both offered the privileges and will grant the strength to secure enjoyment of them. All is of grace; it is our part to see that we do not fall short of that grace.

7. Vers. 18, 19. *Prayer*. Yet the Writer's mind continues to move within the sphere of Christian unity: not, however, an unity of external organization but of spiritual co-operation. He knows the place and power of prayer in the working of the kingdom of God. His appeal for their prayers indicates:

i. That he who seeks the help of God must "exercise himself always to have a conscience void of offence toward God and man" (Acts 24:16). The word "honest" is not here used in its present narrowed sense as opposed to deceitful or fraudulent. "The adjective *kalos* seems to retain its characteristic sense of that which commands the respect and admiration of others" (Westcott). But the full force includes the thought that the heart and life will bear the scrutiny of the all-knowing God. The widow must be able to cry "Do me *justice* of my adversary" (Luke 18:3, 5, 7, 8, marg.). For "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" (Ps. 66:18), but "the prayer of the upright is His delight" (Prov. 15:8).

ii. That prayer has influence over circumstances, including such as one may not be able otherwise to overcome. Elijah controlling the weather is a chief instance (Jas. 5:16-18). The Writer was under some restraint which hindered him from being with those to whom he was writing. What those circumstances were they may have known, though we do not. It is to our advantage not to know, for so we may extend the lesson, and our prayers, to other than his particular conditions. Paul as a prisoner was in such circumstances when he wrote to Philemon and asked for his prayers (Philemon 22), but this is not ground enough to infer that Paul was our Writer, for many others

were prisoners for Christ: or our Writer's hindrance may have been from quite other conditions, such as sickness. Whatever were the circumstances the encouragement remains that united prayer can prevail over them.

iii. Intensity of spirit is a factor in effectual prayer. "I beseech you . . . I beseech you *the more exceedingly*." "The *supplication* of a righteous man has much prevailing strength in its working." Elijah "prayed with prayer," that is, fervently, without abating till the answer was granted (Jas. 5:16, 17. See my papers "*Praying is Working and Prayer Focused and Fighting*").

8. Vers. 20, 21. *The Benediction*. He who seeks the prayers of others will pray for others.

i. The Writer turns to God as "the God of peace"—the God in Whom there are no conflicting passions (as the heathen attributed to their gods); Who feels no distraction or fear, for His almightiness is sure of being equal to every occasion; and Who is therefore a God of order and peace (1 Cor. 14:33). He is the God Who, through the blood of His Son, made possible a righteous peace between Himself and rebels, and thereby causes men estranged from one another to live in peace. And He is the God Who diffuses the peace of His own heart in the hearts of those who trust His almighty power and love, so that they are kept in peace under all adversities and uncertainties (Isa. 26:3; Phil. 4:4-7).

Thus does this God of peace become the resource of the believer in every need, the refuge where his heart dwells in quietness even when storms devastate his outward affairs. How hopeful, how useful, how practical to have access to Him and to seek His grace for others. There is no other way so surely to help them.

ii. Ver. 20. The power of this mighty God extends over the dread realm of death. The chief proof of this is, that the One Who went into death laden with a far heavier load of guilt than any other who has ever gone thither (for He bore the sin of the world, whereas each other bears only his own sin), and over Whom death might therefore have claimed a firmer and lasting grip, this One, the Redeemer, God nevertheless brought up out of that realm. Christ was "raised from the dead through the glory of the Father" (Rom. 6:4), "because it was not possible that He should be held by it" (Acts 2:24), seeing that He had cancelled its full claim against sin by discharging its full penalty.

In Eph. 1:19, 20 this canceling of the claim and power of death is described as "that working of the strength of His [God's] might which He wrought in Christ [Messiah] when He raised Him from the dead, and made Him to sit at His right hand in the heavenly places" in supremacy over the universe. This highest, all-dominating example

of the power of God exhibits “the exceeding greatness of His power *to us-ward who believe*.”

This is the thought that our Writer here connects with the resurrection of Christ. It is as “the great Shepherd of the sheep” that He has been taken out of death into the glory of heaven, and in this He is the Forerunner of His believing people (chapter 6:20), even as the Eastern shepherd goes before his sheep. Thus it comes to pass that we are associated with Him as *raised from the dead*. It is in the world of resurrection that the believer is joined to the Lord. It was with Moses as the one who had led them through the Red Sea that Israel were linked as a flock with a shepherd (Isa. 63:11, 12; 1 Cor. 10:1, 2). Thereby he and they were effectually cut off from Egypt, even as they to-day who follow Christ are made dead to sin and the world by association with “Him Who for their sakes died and rose again” (2 Cor. 5:15; Rom. 6:1-14; Gal. 6:14).

When the Lord lived on this earth it was as a shepherd who would have to die to secure the eternal welfare of His sheep (John 10:1-18). Association with Him then and thus was indeed a privilege: but they are but little in the good of present truth and privilege who sing “I wish I had been with Him then.”

Nor is any real service done to children by teaching them so to sing. *We cannot* now be connected by the Spirit with Jesus *as a man on earth*, because He is not such, but is the Man in heaven, the great Shepherd raised out of death. “Even though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet *now* we know Him so no longer” (2 Cor. 5:16).

But they who go forth unto Him outside the camp, those in whom His death and resurrection are made operative through faith, by the Spirit, find that the great Shepherd leads them unto fountains of water of life which rise at the throne of God and make heaven itself the fruitful realm of peace and joy.

Sumptuous the banquet spread by Love divine;  
Melchizedek brings heavenly bread and wine;  
The Prince of peace with stately grace attends  
To serve His faithful servants as His friends.

Since the Shepherd is raised and seated in heavenly places, that is the place of His people (Eph. 2:5, 6), as they get to know who follow Him whithersoever He goeth (Rev. 14:4).

iii. Ver. 20. This position and portion are guaranteed to faith, for they are secured by covenant, that eternal covenant before reviewed (ch. 9), the ratification of which was by the precious blood of Christ.

iv. Ver. 21. This covenant is eternal, because Christ and His blood are of eternal, undiminshable virtue.

v. Ver. 20. And this covenant is “ours,” for we have associated ourselves with Him to be His sheep, we have set our seal to this, that God is true (John 3:33). It is for us to persevere to the end in His steps; for there are three chief and indispensable marks of His sheep: they listen to His voice, they are recognized by Him as being His sheep, and they follow His steps as their Shepherd (John 10:27).

vi. Ver. 20. And therefore this Shepherd is to them their *Lord*, whose call, guidance, wishes, words are of unquestioned authority. But this their divine Lord is also JESUS, the Man of human nature, experience, sympathy, as shown at chapter 4:14, 15; 5:2, 7-10.

vii. Ver. 21. His people are as yet sadly imperfect, sometimes as unhealthy sheep. But the God of peace has taken them in hand with a view to making them perfect. Many are afraid of this word, as if it denoted somewhat of which they are in danger, and they remain very imperfect. Some misuse it to teach that the very root of sin in our human nature can be eradicated in this life and leave no trace in heart or conduct. This idea has nothing to do with this particular word nor is it anywhere taught in Scripture.

The meaning of *katartizo* is that an article is accurately and completely adapted to its intended use. Fishermen were “*mending* their nets,” so that these might catch and hold the fish (Matt. 4:21; Mark 1:19). Compare Gal 6: 1: “*restore* such an one,” so that he shall be again adapted to serving God. Or take the usage in our Epistle. 10: 5: The holy body of Jesus was specially *Prepared*, fitted for His life and service on earth. 11:3: The ages and worlds were *framed*, perfectly adjusted together, as are the parts of a complex machine to produce a finished article. “Comp. 1 Pet. 5:10. The word *katartizein*, to *make Perfect*, includes the thoughts of the harmonious combination of different powers (comp. Eph. 4:12 *katartismos*, 2 Cor. 13:9 *katartisis*), of the supply of that which is defective (1 Thess. 3:10), and of the amendment of that which is faulty (Gal. 6:1; comp. Mark 1:19)” (Westcott).

Thus is God dealing with “broken earthenware,” human beings ruined by sin. He is remedying broken parts, and supplying new parts and faculties, so that we may be able and glad to do “good works” (as contrasted with our former “dead works,” 9:14), works, that is, good according to His own standard. It is Paul, the apostle of grace, who urges “that they that have believed God” must be careful to maintain good works, be “zealous of good works” (Titus 3:8; 2:14).

viii. Ver. 21. The standard of these good works is the will of God. This His will we learn from His Word, by His Spirit. The one truly perfect Servant God has yet had on

earth said, “Nevertheless, not My will, but Thine be done” (Luke 22:42). The Son learned the Father’s will from the Father’s Book and by the leadings of His Father’s Spirit. It was a principle of His life that the Scripture must be fulfilled, no matter the cost.

ix. Ver. 21. This willingness of spirit, and this conduct “which is well-pleasing in His sight,” God works in the heart that is utterly devoted to Him. Here enters the gracious activity of the Spirit of God.

“And every virtue we possess,  
And every victory won,  
And every thought of holiness,  
Are His alone.”

It is He ‘Who teaches us what is well-pleasing to God, removing our perverted ideas; He it is Who enables the soul to delight in God’s will and to do or to suffer it cheerfully. Of ourselves we could neither know nor do that will of God; but when the soul has ceased from its own notions and endeavors, God works in us and adjusts and empowers effectually.

“And each deed is at once the deed of man and the deed of God (*poiesai, poion*). The work of God makes men’s work possible: He Himself does (*autos poion*), as the one source of all good, that which in another sense man does as freely accepting His grace. And all is wrought in man ‘through Jesus Christ’ (Comp. Acts 3:16)” (Westcott).

x. Ver. 21. And all is “well-pleasing to God through Jesus Christ,” forasmuch as, in this yet incomplete stage of our development as children of God, there is nothing absolutely fit for God save as it becomes acceptable by the mediation of our great Priest and the association with it of His merits, as incense and frankincense suffusing all with sweetness (Lev. 16:12; 2:2). And when we shall at last have been brought unto perfection we shall still be acceptable through Jesus Christ, for then there shall be in us nothing that is not of Him, and He shall be all in all.

xi. Ver. 21. Thus is served already in measure the end that once governed the universe, and shall yet govern it, that unto God shall “be the glory unto the ages of the ages,” even for ever and ever. The essence of sin is that it deprives God of due glory and sets up a creature to receive glory. This is that “vainglory of life” (1 John 2:16) which in reality makes the creature wholly inglorious. This dishonorable condition God is rectifying through Jesus Christ. None but God can effect this. Therefore to Him belongs all glory both as Creator, Redeemer, and Restorer. It is for each to watch narrowly his own acts, to scrutinize closely his inner motives, so as to exclude self-glory and to render all glory to God ‘Whose exclusive right it is.

9. Ver. 22. *Exhortation*. The Writer here indicates the character of the whole Letter: it is *exhortation*. It is designed to stir up to ceaseless watchfulness against backsliding and the rather to press on after Christ unto the goal of Christian hope.

His words were few having regard to the vastness of the theme. It may be doubted whether the infinite topics which the New Testament writers handle could be treated so concisely, yet so comprehensively and lucidly, by merely human skill. Even as literature they bear the hall-mark of Divine ability. This is abundant reason for accepting, pondering, obeying their instructions and exhortations.

10. Ver. 23. *Timothy*. i. The 'Writer knew Timothy. ii. He knew that Timothy had been a prisoner. iii. He knew that he was now free. iv. It was possible that Timothy would reach him shortly. v. In that case they would together visit the believers addressed.

These particulars are used by some to maintain that Paul was our Writer. This is plausible and possible but insufficient. For Timothy worked sometimes without Paul (1 Tim. 1:3), sometimes with others besides Paul (Acts 20:4), for a time with Silas alone (Acts 17:14). The supposition that no one else than Paul could fulfil the above particulars is untenable and so the argument is inconclusive.

As far as the records show Timothy was never in Palestine, which throws doubt upon the notion that the Epistle was written to believers there. It is more likely that they lived somewhere in the regions where Timothy traveled and was well-known.

The brief reference indicates (1) the troubles that preachers met in that period; (2) the brotherly regard the Writer had for Timothy; (3) the concern which he knew the believers addressed would have for Timothy; (4) his own welcome of Timothy as a companion in service. Evidently Timothy had "won his spurs."

11. Ver. 24. *Salutations*. There is a courtesy which becomes a Christian. It saves from abruptness of manner. The 'Writer first honors pointedly those set over the church by the Head of the church. "Salute all them that have the rule over you," those guiding you. This is the third mention of the leaders (vers. 7, 17). It is important to note that in this community of Christians there were several overseers—"all them." It is ever so; see Acts 14:23; 1 Cor. 16:15, 16; Phil. 1:1; 1 Thess. 5:12-14; Titus 1:5. The rule of a church by a single leader has no New Testament warrant. The "angel" in the churches in Rev. 2 and 3 was an *angel*, a heavenly being, as in the sixty-seven other places where the word comes in that book.

The church was to salute its leaders for the Writer. So the Letter was not addressed to the leaders, let alone to any one of them as pre-eminent, but to the community. Thus were the leaders not elevated to an undue superiority above the

church as being the addressees of the Letter and officially distinct from the rest of the saints, and yet the latter were to show due respect to the leaders as marked out for particular salutation.

He then greets “all the saints.” Brotherly love is comprehensive and is warm towards all children of God.

“They of Italy salute you.” He is in fellowship with brethren where he is writing. Either he was in Italy or some from that land were with him. It is obvious that Paul was not the only person of whom these conditions could be true.

12. Ver. 25. *Conclusion*. “Grace be with you all. Amen.” A noble conclusion, concentrating in its brevity the whole Letter. That divine, infinite grace of God which has given His Son, and in Him all possible benefits, be with you; accepted by faith, producing responsive gratitude and obedience, teaching you to be gracious to one another, supplying to faith all that will ever be required to bring you to that glory to which God is conducting His sons (2:10)—that grace be with you, and with you all, for the grace of God is free to all who will receive it. AMEN. So be it. It shall be so!

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