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LESSONS

• on the •

Letter to the Hebrews

FOR
Senior Classes.

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Introductory Note.

THE student will find many texts and suggestions in the notes to these lessons that are not directly brought out in the questions, which will furnish material aid in the preparation of the lessons. Let him first go through the lesson, looking up and reading carefully each text that is referred to. Read the context in each instance, and look up any passages of Scripture that may occur to your mind as bearing on the same point. Do not make any special attempt at this time to trace the connection of the various texts cited as answers to the questions, but endeavor to get a good idea of each individual text. Then read the notes carefully. Go through the lesson again in the same way, only before turning to the texts cited, see if you can recall the substance of them, and read each text over slowly and carefully at least six times. When you know what each text contains, and can recall it by the question and the reference, go over the lesson again, trying to note the object of each question, and the connection of the various texts. A lesson learned in this way will prove a blessing to the student long after it has been recited. The teacher should frame his extra questions with reference to the notes.

Letter to the Hebrews.

LESSON XXVII.

APRIL 5, 1890.

HEBREWS 10: 23-29.

1. To what are we exhorted to hold fast? Heb. 10:23.
2. What incentive have we for holding fast our profession?—*Ib.*
3. For what must we consider one another? Verse 24.
4. What should we not do? Verse 25, first part.
5. While holding fast and meeting together, what should we do?—*Ib.*, last part.
6. What promise is given to those who do thus? Mal. 3: 16, 17.
7. What hope is there for those who sin willfully in the full light of truth? Heb. 10: 26.
8. To what alone can such look forward? Verse 27.
9. Are there any in the world who have not sinned? Rom. 3: 9-12, 23.
10. Have they had sufficient light so that they cannot excuse themselves for their sins? Verse 19.
11. Is there then no hope for any who have sinned? 1 John 1: 9; 2: 1, 2.
12. What does the apostle say of the one who despised Moses' law? Heb. 10: 28.

13. Where do we find instruction to this effect? Deut. 17:2-6.

14. What notable instance have we of the carrying out of this rule? Num. 15:32-36.

15. Of what kind of sin was this an example? Verses 30, 31.

16. What led that man to do as he did? Verse 31, first part. His act was the result of contempt for the law and the Lawgiver. It was a deliberate insult to the Lord; a defying of his authority.

17. Why could he not have forgiveness? *Ans.*—Because he despised the law and its Maker, and cut himself off from the source of forgiveness.

18. What is the nature of the willful sin against which the apostle warns? Heb. 10:29.

19. What is the only hope of salvation for men? Acts 4:12.

20. Then how can there be forgiveness for one who deliberately turns from Christ, spurning him with contempt, and counting his precious blood as a common thing?

NOTES.

“NOT forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, . . . but exhorting one another.” Here is undoubted reference to church gatherings for mutual encouragement. The prayer and social meeting is a means of grace which no one can neglect except at the loss of spirituality. Since the words of the apostle were inspired by the Holy Spirit, we have here a divine injunction to assemble for exhortation and prayer. To attend the prayer-meeting and to take part in the service, is a duty which everyone who joins the church of Christ takes upon himself. The one who neglects

this duty is unfaithful to his church vows. It may be noted here, for the encouragement of some and for the instruction of others, that the best exhortation that can be given is a humble, grateful testimony of praise to God for his goodness, and of trust in his mercy.

It seems evident, however, from what follows, that the apostle had more in mind than simply the prayer-meeting, and that his language comprehends the entire church as a body of believers. The exhortation not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together is really an exhortation against apostatizing. To forsake the assembling of ourselves together is a mark of indifference. So closely is the assembling of Christians associated with the profession of Christianity, that one who willfully neglects the one, inevitably gives up the other. The members of the church are members of one body; and when they cease to be as perfectly joined together as are the members of the human body, they cease to live.

“If we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth,” etc. This language has often been grievously misapplied, and has been the means of discouraging people for whom there was hope. It is a terrible mistake to apply it to those to whom we have been presenting what we see to be truth, and to which they assent, but which they do not give evidence of intending to obey. It is not for us to judge. We cannot know the nature of the soil into which the truth has fallen, and we cannot tell how long it may take for it to take root and bear fruit. Neither should we say that there is no hope for the professed Christian who falls into error. Our God is a God that “pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgres-

sion of the remnant of his heritage; he retaineth not his anger forever, because he delighteth in mercy." Micah 7: 18.

THE twenty-sixth verse should be read in the light of verse twenty-nine. The sin of which the apostle speaks is the sin of one who deliberately turns his back upon the assembly of God's people, and not only sins, but despises the Saviour of sinners, trampling him under foot, and counting his blood as unholy and worthless. He not only defies God's law, but he spurns his offer of pardon. What greater insult could be offered to God? For such an one there can be no hope, because he rejects the only source of hope.

NOTE the force of the language of verse 26, as addressed to the Hebrews, in view of what has gone before. The apostle has demonstrated that the sacrifices of the earthly sanctuary never had any virtue to cleanse from sin, but that they typified the one sacrifice of Christ, and that even the shadow has now passed away, since Christ has suffered once for all. He is the only sacrifice for sin; therefore if one rejects him there is no hope.

LESSON XXVIII.

APRIL 12, 1890.

HEBREWS 10: 29-31.

1. FOR what kind of sin is there no forgiveness?
2. What does the one who commits this sin do to the Son of God? Heb. 10: 29.
3. How does he regard the blood of the covenant, whose power he has felt?—*It*.
4. What does he do to the Spirit of grace?—*It*.

5. How only can men come to Christ? John 6:44.
6. How does the Father draw them? Gen. 6:3; John 16:7, 8.
7. Then if one drives the Spirit from him, what must be his condition?
8. What are we solemnly warned against doing? Eph. 4:30; 1 Thess. 5:19.
9. What has the Lord said to deter us from such a course? Heb. 10:30, 27.
10. What does the prophet Nahum say? Nahum 1:2.
11. What is a thing to be dreaded? Heb. 10:31.
12. Yet what did David choose? 2 Sam. 24:14.
13. What is always true of God? 1 John 4:8.
14. Did the prophets realize this while they were speaking of God's judgments? Nahum 1:3; Ps. 136:1, 10, 15.
15. Whom does God reject? 2 Tim. 2:12.
16. While it is a fearful thing to *fall* into the hands of God, where is our only place of safety? John 10:27-29.
17. What is told us for our comfort? Deut. 33:27.
18. Instead of falling into the hands of God, what should we do? Ps. 91:1; Prov. 18:10.
19. What shall we thus find him to be? Nahum 1:7.

NOTES.

THIS lesson should be considered in connection with the preceding one. After going through with

this; a general view of the subject should be taken, from the beginning of the preceding lesson, observing the fact that judgment is never visited upon a person unless he has brought it upon himself, and that in the midst of wrath God remembers mercy.

“GOD is love.” This attribute is inseparable from his character. His law, which is the transcript of his character, is a law of love, and it was given in love. Deut. 33: 1-3. The love of God is a living, moving rock of adamant. Those who despise it and oppose it are crushed by it, while those who place themselves upon it, find it a sure and safe refuge from all evil. Government exists for the benefit of the subjects. Those who would impeach God’s love and kindness, because he punishes rebels, would have him ignore the loyal subjects, and administer his government with reference solely to the benefit of rebels. Rebellion sets government at defiance, and endangers the welfare of those who are loyal. When men despise God and his law, and also his mercy, they declare themselves not his subjects, and it is but a manifestation of his love to those who trust him when God removes the dangerous element from his kingdom. How much better to place ourselves in the hands of God than to fall into them in a vain attempt to escape from him!

LESSON XXIX.

APRIL 19, 1890.

HEBREWS 10: 32-35.

1. WHAT should be done especially in view of the approach of the day of the Lord? Heb. 10: 25.
2. Instead of apostatizing, what were the Hebrews exhorted to do? Verse 32.

3. In what did this fight of afflictions consist?
Verse 33.

4. In thus suffering, of what were they made partakers? 1 Peter 4: 12-14.

5. Then what did their affliction make them know? 2 Cor. 12:9.

6. How did they show the possession of the Spirit of Christ? Heb. 10: 34.

7. What hope buoyed them up in the trial?—*Ib.*, last part.

8. What are those who have thus known Christ exhorted not to do? Verse 35.

9. What is necessary if we would receive the reward?—*Ib.*, also Heb. 3: 6.

10. What is the condition of those who have no confidence? 1 John 4: 18.

11. Where will the fearful have their part at last? Rev. 21: 8.

12. When the spies came back from Canaan, what did Caleb and Joshua say? Num. 13: 30; compare 14: 6.

13. What did the other men say? Num. 13: 31.

14. What was the ground of the confidence of Caleb and Joshua? Num. 14: 6-9.

15. What resulted to each class? Num. 14: 29, 30; see also verses 22-24.

16. What language of Jesus to two blind men is applicable to all? Matt. 9: 29.

17. What exhortation and assurance are given by the prophet Isaiah? Isa. 26: 4.

18. While thus trusting, how should we feel? Eph. 6: 10; Phil. 4: 4; Ps. 34: 2.

19. And what may we say? Isa. 12: 2.

NOTES.

IN studying the tenth chapter of Hebrews we shall better keep the thread of the apostle's discourse if we consider verses 26-31 as parenthetical, and connect verse 32 with verse 25. The apostle urges the Hebrews, and us as well, to be diligent in attending the assemblies of the saints, and not to forsake them and turn back, but rather to call to remembrance their former experience, when their afflictions and persecutions proved to them the power of Christ and the reality of the gospel. Verses 26-31 are thrown in after the exhortation in verse 25, to show the terrible results of apostasy.

THE teacher and pupil may extend the study of the subject of confidence at their pleasure. They will find themselves well repaid for their time. Few professed Christians realize the necessity of confidence; of knowing whom they have believed. 2 Tim. 1:12. Some people seem to think that it is a virtue—a sign of humility—to doubt their acceptance with God, and to talk about the difficulties in the way. They think that it would savor of presumption to say that they can overcome and have an abundant entrance into the kingdom of God. Let such learn a lesson from the twelve spies. The unbelieving ones, who said, "We be not able to go up against the people," did not go up; but the two who said, "We are well able to overcome it," did go up. It was not presumption in Caleb and Joshua to talk as they did, but it was faith in God. All were rewarded according to their faith, or the absence of it. The soul whose trust is wholly in God cannot have too strong confidence.

"The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to its foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no, never, no, never, forsake."

LESSON XXX.

APRIL 26, 1890.

HEBREWS 10:36 to 11:1.

1. WHAT do we need to have joined with confidence, in order to receive the promise? Heb. 10:36.
2. To whom will God render the reward of eternal life? Rom. 2:7.
3. What encouragement is given for our patient continuance? Heb. 10:37.
4. How could Paul say, eighteen hundred years ago, "For yet a little while and he that shall come will come?" See note.
5. By what shall we be enabled to do the will of God? Heb. 10:38.
6. What will be the fate of those who draw back? Verse 39.
7. What of those who believe?—*Ib.*
8. Is there any special time when the just shall live by faith? Rom. 1:16, 17; Heb. 11:6.
9. What is faith? Heb. 11:1.
10. Upon what does faith depend? Rom. 10:17.
11. Does faith require some evidence that God will perform what he has declared in his word? *Ans.*—No; it is its own evidence. When the Lord has made a declaration, faith grasps it and makes it real. There cannot be anything that can add strength to the simple word of God. Macknight well says: "Faith answers all the purposes of a demonstration, because, being founded on the veracity and power of God, these perfections are to the believer complete

evidence of the things which God declares have happened, or are to happen, however much they may be out of the ordinary course of nature."

12. When one knows the word of God, and still has no faith, what is he virtually doing? **1** John 5:10.

13. Relate the incident of the healing of the impotent man at the gate of the temple. Acts 3: 1-10.

14. By what was this man made whole? Verses 13, 16.

15. Give another instance of the power of faith. Matt. 12:10-13.

16. Was the hand restored before the man stretched it out, or afterward?

17. What was it that enabled him to obey the command of Christ, to stretch forth his hand?
Ans.—Simple faith in the promise of God.

18. Cite another instance in which the evidence is plain that it was simple faith that brought healing. Luke 8:43-48.

19. For what purpose are the miracles of Jesus recorded? John 20: 30, 31.

NOTES.

THE writer of Hebrews in chapter 10:37, 38 quotes from Hab. 2:3, 4, who is speaking prophetically to the people living in the last days. The book of Hebrews, like a great part of the Bible, was written not simply to those who lived in the writer's day, but for all time until Christ should come. Prophecy is given as a light "until the day dawn." 2 Peter 1:19. While the practical teaching connected therewith would be always applicable, the entire scope of the prophecy would only be

met when that generation was reached to which it applied, and whose dangers, needs, and experiences accorded with the warnings and predictions. The book of Hebrews is of especial interest to those living in the last days. In the light which shines upon the sanctuary question, it can now be understood and appreciated; and to the people who understand this it is true that "in a little while he that shall come will come and will not tarry." That Paul did not believe that Christ's coming was imminent in his day is shown by 2 Thess. 2:1-3, and yet he speaks in the first epistle as though it was near at hand. See 1 Thess. 1:10; 4:13-17; 5:23. Those who were instructed as to the times and seasons, who heeded the prophetic portion of the word of God and the apostolic injunction, would not be deceived in this respect. Again, the same God who gave that word still lives, and his faithful servants, of whom there have always been some, always have and will bring forth the "meat in due season" to the household of faith. Matt. 13:52; 24:45. When the time comes that the word is due, God will see that it is given.

"Now the just shall live by faith." Some have erroneously read this as though the first word were the most prominent in the sentence, and that the apostle refers to some special time when the just shall live by faith. The word from which "now" is rendered in this instance is not an adverb at all, and is never used with any reference whatever to time. It is a conjunctive participle, having the force of *moreover*, *nevertheless*, *besides*, etc. It is often used, as in this instance, to introduce an additional thought. Such expressions are very common in the English. For an instance, see Ex. 16:36. Since the days of Adam there has not been a time when the just could live in any other way than by faith.

FAITH requires no evidence but the simple promise of God. Its confidence in God is such that it grasps the promises and makes them real. Knowing that nothing is too hard for the Lord, and that he cannot lie, it cannot do anything else but believe, as Chrysostom says, "Since what God giveth transcends reason entirely, it is but reason that we have faith." God promises forgiveness of sins to those who believe. If we believe, our sins are forgiven; if we do not, they are not. Thus it is faith that takes the promises of God, and transforms them into facts.

LESSON XXXI.

MAY 3, 1890.

HEBREWS 11:1-7.

1. WHAT is faith? Heb. 11:1.
2. How only can faith come? Rom. 10:17.
3. What did the elders obtain by it? Heb. 11:2.
4. Who are meant by the elders?
5. What is the first great thing that we understand by faith? Heb. 11:3.
6. What is the fitness of introducing the creation at the beginning of a discourse on faith? See note.
7. Can we reason out the method by which the worlds came into existence?
8. Since the creation is beyond the grasp of human reason, what is the most reasonable thing to do?
9. If we believe and *know* that God created the

worlds from nothing, what comfort and encouragement may be derived from it?

10. How did it come to pass that Abel offered a better sacrifice than Cain? Heb. 11:4.

11. Which was first, Abel's faith or his sacrifice?

12. What did he obtain by it? Verse 4.

13. Since by his offering of faith he obtained the witness that he was righteous, what was the nature of his righteousness? Rom. 3:22.

14. How was Enoch translated? Heb. 11:5.

15. What witness did he have before his translation?—*Ib.*

16. And how alone is it possible to please God? Verse 6.

17. What is necessary to our coming to God?—*Ib.*

18. How does the apostle Peter say that we are made partakers of the divine nature? 2 Peter 1:4.

19. And what makes these promises real to us? Heb. 11:1.

20. What led Noah to build the ark? Verse 7.

21. Could he see any evidence of the coming flood?

22. Upon what did he rest his faith? Gen. 6:13, 17.

23. And what did he get besides the saving of his house? Heb. 11:7, last part.

NOTES.

“By it the elders obtained a good report.” The word “elders” does not in this instance refer to a particular office, but to those who lived “in that elder day,” in the olden time—the ancients. This

is shown by the citations which follow, all taken from the men of old.

THE Revised Version says that they "have witness borne to them?" This is an exact rendering of the Greek. What this good report or witness is shown especially in verses four and five. Abel obtained witness that he was righteous, and Enoch obtained the testimony that he pleased God.

"THROUGH faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." There is no other way by which we can know anything about creation; for reason cannot grasp the idea of something brought from nothing. So-called scientific speculation concerning the origin of things always proceeds on the basis of something already existing, from which other things were evolved. How the first matter came into existence science cannot tell. Therefore since reason cannot settle the method by which the worlds came into existence, the most reasonable thing to do is to accept the inspired declaration that it was by the word of God. And this lies at the very foundation of faith. If we believe that God created the universe from nothing, we can believe that he has power to make something to his own glory out of us, who are "less than nothing and vanity." And so, in a discourse upon faith, it is eminently fitting that the power of God as manifested in creation should be the starting-point.

DR. MACKNIGHT has the following thoughtful comment on Heb. 11:3:—

"The account of the origin of things given by revelation, is very different from the cosmogony of the heathen philosophers, who generally held that

the matter of which the worlds are composed is uncreated and eternal; consequently, being independent of God, and not obedient to his will, they supposed it to be the occasion of all the evil that is in the world. But revelation, which teaches us that the things which are seen were not made of the matter which did appear before they were made, but of matter which God then brought into existence, by thus establishing the sovereignty of God over matter, hath enlarged our ideas of his power, and strengthened our faith in his promises concerning the felicity of good men in the life to come. For the creation of the new heavens and the new earth, and the glories of the city of the living God, do not to their formation require more power than the creation of the present universe; and therefore if we believe that the worlds were framed by the word of God from nothing, every other exercise of faith will be easy for us."

NOTICE the completeness and the simplicity of the apostle's argument to prove his statement that Enoch was translated by faith. He was translated because he pleased God. He walked with God. But without faith it is impossible to please God. Therefore since Enoch did please God, and was translated in consequence, it follows that he was translated through faith.

"HE that cometh to God must believe that he is." To believe that God is, we must believe that he is just what the Bible says he is. If we have any notions of our own concerning God, then the god whom we worship is not the true God, but a god of our making. To believe that God is just what he is, as he has revealed himself to us in nature and revelation, is the very foundation of faith. He who thinks of God as he is, who has a just concep-

tion of his power, his glory, and his love, cannot help having faith. Therefore "acquaint now thyself with him and be at peace;" for "being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

LESSON XXXII.

MAY 10, 1890.

HEBREWS 11:8-16.

1. GIVE the apostle's proof that Enoch was translated by faith.
2. To what do we look forward? 1 Thess. 4:17.
3. Then by what must we also live? Heb. 11:6; 10:38.
4. What caused Abraham to leave his native land to go to an unknown country? Heb. 11:8.
5. When he reached the land of promise, did he settle down to enjoy it? Verse 9.
6. Why not? Verse 10.
7. What city is that? Rev. 21:2.
8. Of what was Isaac the child? Gal. 4:28.
9. Was his birth in the ordinary course of nature? Heb. 11:11.
10. What was the condition of Abraham? Verse 12; Rom. 4:19.
11. Yet what sprang from him? Heb. 11:12.
12. Then what must be the nature of all this multitude of descendants of Abraham? *Ans.*—They must be children of faith. See Gal. 3:7.
13. In what state of mind did the patriarchs die? Heb. 11:13.

14. What were the promises? Gen. 13:14-17; 26:1-4; 28:13, 14; Rom. 4:13.

15. Did they inherit this promised possession? Acts 7:5; Heb. 11:9, 13.

16. Then why were they not disappointed when they came to die? Verses 14-16.

17. How did King David regard himself? Ps. 39:12.

18. If we are Abraham's children, how shall we regard ourselves here in this world? 1 Peter 2:11.

LESSON XXXIII.

MAY 17, 1890.

HEBREWS 11:17-19.

1. How did God try Abraham? Gen. 22:2.
2. What led Abraham to comply? Heb. 11:17.
3. What had been promised him? Gen. 13:16.
4. Through whom had it been said that this numerous posterity should come? Gen. 21:12; Heb. 11:18.

5. Then in obeying the Lord's commandment, what was Abraham apparently giving up?

6. How did he think that the promise could be fulfilled? Heb. 11:19.

7. Of what then did Abraham have knowledge? and what was his hope? Acts 26:6-8.

8. What expression is used in regard to Isaac? Gen. 22:2, first part; Hebrews 11:17, last part.

9. Of what then was the offering up of Isaac a striking figure? John 3:16.

10. Did Abraham know of Christ and his work? John 8: 56.

11. Then what important lesson in connection with the promises must Abraham have learned from this sore trial? Rom. 8: 32.

12. Could Abraham have stood this test if he had not had implicit faith in God?

13. What did this do for his faith? James 2: 22.

14. And what scripture was fulfilled? Verse 23.

15. How should we feel when great trials come to us? 1 Peter 4: 12, 13.

16. What is said of the trial of our faith? 1 Peter 1: 7.

17. What will be the result to the one who patiently endures trial? James 1: 12.

LESSON XXXIV.

MAY 24, 1890.

HEBREWS 11: 20-30.

1. WHAT blessing did Jacob pronounce upon Joseph's sons just before his death? Gen. 48: 16, 19, 20.

2. Since he had no possession, how could he say with such assurance what they should have? Heb. 11: 21.

3. How did Joseph, at his death, show his faith in the promise of God? Heb. 11: 22; Gen. 50: 25.

4. How did the parents of Moses show their faith in God's promise? Heb. 11: 23.

5. What did Moses' own faith lead him to do when he was grown? Verse 24.

6. What did he prefer to the sinful pleasures of Egypt? Verse 25.

7. In making this choice, with whom was he casting his lot? Verse 26.

8. If by choosing to be known as an Israelite he was sharing the lot and reproach of Christ, who must have been the guardian and leader of Israel.

9. What promises are to those who suffer with Christ? 2 Tim. 2:11, 12; Rom. 8:17.

10. What sustained Moses in leading the children of Israel from Egypt? Heb. 11:27.

11. How did Moses keep the passover? Verse 28.

12. Who is the real Passover? 1 Cor. 5:7.

13. Then since Moses kept the passover through faith, what did he see in it?

14. How did the Israelites pass through the Red Sea? Heb. 11:29.

15. By what were the walls of Jericho thrown down? Verse 30.

16. For what purpose are all those things recorded? 1 Cor. 10:11; Rom. 15:4.

17. What practical application may we make of the fall of Jericho? 2 Cor. 10:4, 5.

NOTE.

The history of Moses furnishes a wonderful instance of the confidence and courage born of faith. When Moses trusted in his own strength and military skill to lead the people of Israel from Egypt, and began the work, a poor laborer's taunt made him tremble, and the rumor of the king's anger made him flee for his life. But when he went bearing the commission of Heaven, distrusting his own

ability, and trusting only in God, Pharaoh on his throne, surrounded by all his soldiers, could not cause him to fear. And so he "left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king." Truly, "in the name of the Lord is strong confidence."

LESSON XXXV.

MAY 31, 1890.

HEBREWS 11:31-40.

1. How was it that Rahab was saved from the fate that befell Jericho? Heb. 11:31.
2. In what did she have faith? Josh. 2:9-11.
3. What other ancients "obtained a good report" through faith? Heb. 11:32.
4. What did they accomplish through faith? Verses 33, 34.
5. Give an instance of the subduing of kingdoms by faith. 2 Chronicles 20.
6. Mention some marked cases of righteousness wrought by faith.
7. Give the particulars of the stopping of the mouths of lions, and quenching the violence of fire, by faith; and give references.
8. What notable instances of turning to flight the armies of the aliens through faith have we on record? Give the particulars of David's victory over Goliath, and of Gideon's great victory, and cite references.
9. Quote one of the things accomplished by faith, which should specially encourage us. "Out of weakness were made strong." Heb. 11:34.

10. Under what conditions are the grace and strength of Christ shown in perfection? 2 Cor. 12:9.

11. What did the faith of the ancients lead them to endure? Heb. 11:35-38.

12. What did these all receive through faith? Verse 39.

13. Did they see the fulfillment of the promise? —*ib.*

14. Is it any the less sure because of the delay? 2 Peter 3:9.

15. To whose advantage is the delay in the fulfillment? Heb. 11:40.

NOTE.

“OUT of weakness were made strong.” There is no expression in the Bible that contains more of encouragement than this. It brings us face to face with the wonderful power of God. In this we see the importance of meditating upon the Lord’s creative power, as an aid to faith. God could make the universe from nothing. So great is his power that he takes “things which are not, to bring to naught things that are.” 1 Cor. 1:27, 28. Our very weakness may in his hands become the source of our greatest strength. The fiercest persecutor of the church became the greatest apostle. Thus, instead of spending time bewailing our weakness, let us commit the keeping of our souls to God, as unto a faithful Creator (1 Peter 4:19), knowing that in his hands our weakness will be transformed into “all might, according to his glorious power.”

LESSON XXXVI.

JUNE 7, 1890.

HEBREWS 12:1-13.

1. WHAT is the great subject under consideration in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews?

2. What do all the cases cited show? *Ans.*—The power of faith.

3. In view of these testimonies, what ought we to do? Heb. 12:1.

4. Unto whom must we continually look? Verse 2.

5. Why must we look to Jesus?—*b.* Because we are to win only through faith, and faith begins and ends with him.

6. What was the joy set before him? Isa. 53:11; compare Phil. 2:5-8. See Revised Version.

7. If we consider Christ, against what will it guard us? Heb. 12:3.

8. What does the apostle say we have not yet done? Verse 4.

9. Did Christ resist unto blood, in his struggle for us? Luke 22:44.

10. In all of his temptation did he sin? 1 Peter 2:21, 22.

11. What strength may we have in resisting? 2 Tim. 2:1; Eph. 6:10; Col. 1:10, 11.

12. If we murmur at trial, what have we forgotten? Heb. 12:5.

13. Of what is chastisement an evidence? Verses 6-8.

14. For what reason does God chastise? Verses 9, 10.

15. If chastisement is endured with patience, what will be the result? Verse 11.

16. What does Paul say of tribulation? Rom. 5:3-5.

17. Why is it a cause for rejoicing when we suffer reproach and persecution? 1 Peter 4:14.

18. Thus, instead of murmuring, what should we do? Heb. 12:12.

19. In what kind of paths must we run? Verse 13.

20. What must be meant by making even paths for our feet? See note.

21. Why should this be done? Verse 13.

22. What responsibility have we for our brethren? Rom. 14:7; Matt. 18:6.

NOTES.

“WHEREFORE seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses,” etc. The word rendered “witnesses” is the word *martyros*, “martyrs,” signifying, in the singular, “a witness; one who bears testimony.” It is never used in the sense of “viewing,” but always of one who gives evidence. Those who suffered for the cause of truth were called martyrs because they bore witness with their blood to the truth which they held. So Christ is said by the apostle Paul to have “witnessed a good confession” before Pontius Pilate. 1 Tim. 6:13. Heb. 12:1 has sometimes been used to prove that all the ancient worthies are looking down upon us, to see how we run, and this is considered as fully establishing the doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul. But such an exposition does violence to the text, besides contradicting scriptures which teach that the dead know not anything. Those men of old are not surveying

us; but they have by their lives borne a good testimony to the power of faith; and of this testimony there is an abundance. Seeing, then, that there is so much unimpeachable testimony, we ought not to doubt.

There is another truth which may be suggested by this text, and that is that God, Christ, and the angels are intently watching us in our struggle, and that the record they bear will testify for or against us in the Judgment. This also should serve as a spur and incentive to us to press forward.

“WHO for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame.” Phil. 2: 5-8, which is referred to in this connection, reads as follows, according to the Revised Version: “Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus; who, being in the form of God [Greek, “originally with God,” compare John 1:1], counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross.” The joy that was set before Jesus was the salvation of souls. When he sees the travail of his soul, that is, the result of the travail of his soul, he will be satisfied. It was not for any personal good that he could gain that he suffered; for he had all heaven already. Equal with the Father, having life in himself, the creator and upholder of the universe, receiving the adoration of the highest angels, there was nothing that could be added to him. But when he saw mankind in sin and suffering, doomed to eternal death, he did not account his lofty place in heaven a thing to be desired. So great was his love for fallen humanity, that he could not enjoy heaven till he had rescued from perdition all who would receive his kind offices. So he “emptied

himself,"—laid aside his joy,—that he might have the (to him) greater pleasure of saving sinners. Surely it is worth while to consider him. If we would continually look upon him, viewing him in his true character, who could become weary and discouraged? Such love as that, combined with divine power, will surely be sufficient to make us "more than conquerors."

"AND make straight [even] paths for our feet." This must mean the removing of those obstacles that would hinder us in running. The weights that hold us back are, by a slight change in the figure, considered as things lying in the path. This is done in order that the thought may be impressed that the things which hinder us in the race hinder others also. The things which weigh us down in the Christian race are stumbling-blocks to others. And since no man liveth to himself, we should remove them, not alone on our own account, but in order that feeble ones may not be turned out of the way by them.

LESSON XXXVII.

JUNE 14, 1890.

HEBREWS 12: 14-21.

1. WHAT practical exhortation does the apostle give us? Heb. 12: 14.
2. How anxious should we be for peace? Rom. 12: 18; Ps. 34: 14.
3. What else should be pursued with equal ardor? Heb. 12: 14.
4. How necessary is holiness to us?—*ib.*
5. Against what should we diligently guard? Verse 15.

6. Give an instance of such bitterness as is referred to. Acts 8: 18-23. See note.

7. What further shows that sin is the "root of bitterness" to be avoided? Heb. 12: 16.

8. After Esau had sold his birthright what could he not do? Verse 17.

9. Show how in selling his birthright Esau proved himself to be a profane scorner. See note.

10. To what does the apostle say we have not come? Heb. 12: 18-21.

11. What mount was it that burned with fire, and was enshrouded with darkness, and shaken by tempest? Ex. 19: 16, 18; Deut. 4: 11.

12. What was the occasion? Deut. 4: 11, 12; 5: 22.

13. When the Lord spoke the law, what did the people say? Ex. 20: 18, 19; Heb. 12: 19, 20.

14. Did the Lord speak any more? Deut. 5: 22, last part.

15. What was indicated by the terrible sights and sounds which overwhelmed the people when the law was spoken? See note.

16. Why are we not come to that mount? See note.

NOTES.

"FOLLOW peace with all men, and holiness." The word rendered "follow" is *diōkō*, meaning to pursue, chase, hunt, as for beasts. As hunters display the utmost eagerness in pursuing their prey, so we are exhorted to pursue peace and holiness.

"LOOKING diligently . . . lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled." Simon the sorcerer was said by Peter to

be "in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity." And in Deut. 29:15-18 apostasy and idolatry are called a "root that beareth gall and wormwood." Hence we are justified in concluding that it means sin. The contaminating character of sin is here brought to view. If the poisonous herb springs up, it will defile all around it.

"LEST there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright." We do not read that Esau was a fornicator, and the text does not necessarily imply that he was. The warning is against fornicators or profane persons such as Esau. That Esau was a profane person, a scorner, a rejecter of the faith of his father, will be apparent to one who closely studies the record in Genesis. The birthright carried with it the blessings to Abraham and Isaac. The promises to Abraham were to be perpetuated through the first-born, or the one who had the birthright. These promises, as we have learned, were not temporal, but eternal. The patriarchs looked to the future life for their fulfillment. Their hope was in the resurrection. Esau showed that he did not possess this hope, and that he looked with contempt upon the promised inheritance. Coming in from the chase, faint and weary, he asked Jacob for the food he was preparing. Jacob asked for the birthright in return for the food, and Esau said, "Behold, I am at the point to die; and what profit shall this birthright do to me?" Gen. 25:32. When Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob came to die, their faith was unshaken; they were sure that the promise would be fulfilled, even though it was "afar off" when they were "at the point to die." But Esau did not believe in the resurrection; he scoffed at the idea that the inheritance would be of any profit to him unless he received it before he died. And

so, because he had no faith in God or his word, he despised his birthright.

“HE found no place of repentance,” for the simple reason that having made a deliberate sale of his birthright, he could not back out from the trade. We need not necessarily conclude from this that he had committed the unpardonable sin. He had shown his infidelity, in selling his birthright, and could not by any means be the one through whom the promises were to descend; but we cannot determine whether his infidelity was so deliberate and persistent that he could not even have a share in the blessing. It is not important that we should know this. What we do learn is that it is impossible to barter the blessings of Heaven for the enjoyments of this life, and then have those blessings besides.

THE terrible phenomena that accompanied the giving of the law, indicated the majesty and the inflexibility of that law, which could not spare an offender. The terror which struck the hearts of the people was some of the same terror which the wicked will feel when they are brought face to face with that law, as it shines forth from heaven at the last day. They literally could not endure that which was spoken. They could not approach the mount, because the law was there in its awful majesty, and it cannot spare the guilty. In the giving of the law we have a vivid representation of the fact that “by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified.” We are not come to Mt. Sinai, that is, to the law from Sinai, to find our inheritance, because the inheritance is not of the law, but of promise (Rom. 4:13-15; Gal. 3:18); the inheritance is for the righteous, and righteousness does not come by the law (Gal. 2:21), but by the faith of Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:22; Phil. 3:9).

LESSON XXXVIII.

JUNE 21, 1890.

HEBREWS 12: 18-39.

1. UNTO what does the apostle say we have not come? Heb. 12: 18-21.

2. Unto what have we come? Verses 22-24.

3. Trace the connection through verses 18-24, and note the contrast. Study note.

4. How are we admonished? Verse 25.

5. Why must we take heed not to refuse?—*Ib.*

6. When was the voice heard speaking on earth? Verses 18, 19; Ex. 19: 18, 19.

7. When he spake on earth, what was the result? Heb. 12: 26, first part.

8. What will take place when he speaks again, from heaven? Verse 26, last part:

9. When will this be? Compare 1 Thess. 4: 16; John 5: 28, 29; Ps. 50: 1-4; Jer. 25: 30-33; Joel 3: 16.

10. Whose voice is it that will then be heard?

11. What is he now speaking to us from heaven?

Ans.—He is speaking peace by his blood, which is still sprinkled before the throne.

12. Then if there was no escape for those who refused to heed his voice when it was heard proclaiming the terror of the law, what hope can there be for those who refuse his gracious call of mercy to the violators of that law?

13. What will the final shaking by his voice signify? Heb. 12: 27.

14. What things will God remove? Heb. 2: 14; 1 John 3: 8.

15. What cannot be moved? Ps. 125: 1; 112: 1-6.
16. Then to what exhortation should we take heed? Heb. 12: 28.
17. Why? Verse 29.
18. To whom is he a consuming fire? Ps. 97: 1-3.
19. But what is he to the righteous? Isa. 25: 1, 4.

NOTES.

“BUT ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company [myriads] of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written [margin, “enrolled”] in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel.” Heb. 12: 22-24.

LET us note each of these cases, to see what scene we have presented here before us. The Mount Sion, the heavenly Jerusalem, is the city of the living God,—the place where God sits as judge of all. In the temple in that holy city, he sits upon his throne, between the cherubim. Around about the throne are ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands of angels. Rev. 5: 11. These are in the temple in heaven—in the heavenly sanctuary. In that sanctuary, where God sits in judgment, are the books of record and the book of life, in which are written the names of the general assembly and church of Christ, the first-born. Around the throne are the elders,—men who have been redeemed unto God “out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;” and who,

having been raised from the dead at the crucifixion of Christ (Matt. 27: 50-53), were led by him from captivity to heaven, when he ascended to the Father (Eph. 4: 8), and were made unto God kings and priests (Rev. 5: 9, 10). These representatives of the human family are assistants of Christ in his priestly work as mediator of the new covenant. Thus we have in these verses a view of the heavenly sanctuary, where Christ ministers in behalf of sinners, with his own blood. Now we can see the connection running through verses 18-24. It is a vivid contrast between the old covenant, with its ministration of death, and the new covenant, with its ministration of the Spirit of life. In the preceding verses the apostle gives a warning against apostasy, and then, as an encouragement, tells us that we are not directed to Mount Sinai, to trust in the law for righteousness, when it has for us only curses, nor to the old covenant, with its ministration of death, but to the Mount Zion, where we may find the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, and may find peace and help "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think."

HAVING this abundant help so freely offered, it becomes us not to refuse the gracious offers of Him who now speaks peace to us. Those who despised the words spoken by Christ on Mount Sinai could not escape; then how much less can any hope to escape who not only violate the law spoken on earth, but refuse the means of deliverance from that transgression. When he spoke on earth, his voice shook the earth. But when he speaks the second time, his voice will shake not the earth only, but heaven also. The first shaking was only a shaking, but the second shaking means the removal of everything which is not of God, or not anchored to the throne of God, through faith in Christ.

LESSON XXXIX.

JUNE 28, 1890.

HEBREWS 13: 1-21.

1. WHAT is the first exhortation of this chapter?
2. What is true brotherly love? 1 John 3: 16-18.
3. Of what must we not be forgetful? Heb. 13: 2.
4. Cite instances where hospitable men have entertained angels unawares.
5. How should we remember them that are in bonds? Heb. 13: 3.
6. Why should we be free from covetousness? Verses 5, 6; compare Matt. 6: 31, 32.
7. Who are to be held in special reverence? Heb. 13: 7.
8. What comforting assurance have we in depending upon Christ? Verse 8.
9. What exhortation is given concerning stability? Verse 9.
10. What contrast is made between Christians and those who hold to the old covenant? Verse 10.
11. What lesson is to be learned from the fact that the bodies of those beasts whose blood was brought into the sanctuary were burned without the camp? Verses 11-14. See note.
12. What sacrifice, then, must we render? Verses 15, 16; Ps. 51: 17; 116: 12-14.
13. Why should we be submissive to those in authority in the church? Heb. 13: 17.

14. Does this mean that God has set officers in the church as lords? 1 Peter 5: 3, 5.

15. What assistance did the great apostle desire? Heb. 13: 18, 19; compare Rom. 15: 30; Eph. 6: 18, 19.

16. With what wonderful prayer does the apostle conclude his instruction? Heb. 13: 20, 21.

NOTES.

“WE have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.” The reference is undoubtedly to the feeding upon Christ, which is both the privilege and the duty of every Christian. See John 6: 51-57. But the text must not be understood as implying that Christ is the altar. The priests in the earthly sanctuary did not eat the altar, but they ate the flesh of victims offered upon it. Christ is not the altar, but the Lamb slain. Of him we eat.

THE apostle seems in these verses to still continue the contrast between the two covenants as shown by the differences of the sacrifices connected with them. He shows that it was not an arbitrary thing that the bodies of those beasts whose blood was brought into the sanctuary, were burned outside of the camp. That was a type of Christ's suffering outside of the camp, or outside of the city of Jerusalem. The significance of this would seem to be that salvation was not confined to those within the camp, but that the sacrifice is for all,—that he should die, “not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.” John 11: 52. Our going forth without the gate, bearing his reproach, is the confession that we are here strangers and sojourners, seeking an abiding city yet to come.

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