

2001

Monday, January 22nd - Hebrews 2: 11, 12

From v. 11 to the end of this second chapter, the writer details the results of Christ's incarnation, perfect life, and atoning death. The first thing noted is that Christ saves His people from the power and corruption of sin. Christ became man that He might sanctify men. As the Son of Man, our Lord sanctified Himself (Jn. 17:19). Both in His divine and human nature Christ was perfectly holy. He retained that holiness throughout the entire course of His life on earth, never for a second doing a sinful deed, speaking a sinful word, or thinking a sinful thought. Moreover, He not only avoided sin, He positively was, did, and loved doing perfect righteousness. As such, He is the source of sanctification for His people. As He is, so we in Him become. Our being conformed to the holy likeness of Christ is the divine intention, result, and blessing of our salvation.

Tuesday, January 23rd - Hebrews 2: 11

So truly did the Son of God become man, and so perfectly did He live His human life and offer it as an atoning sacrifice, that the result was far greater than that issuing from the first creation. Jesus redeemed fallen men, making them to be more than simply creatures restored to God. He makes those for whom He died to be just like Himself, sons of God (Jn. 1:12), and hence brethren with Him. So thoroughly does His sanctifying work, graciously applied to His people, issue in their glorious perfection, that He has no reluctance in claiming a fraternal relation with them. Jesus is no more ashamed to call us His brethren than He is to call Himself God's Son.

Wednesday, January 24th - Hebrews 2: 12

This verse speaks of Jesus offering proclamation to man regarding God, and praise to God as the Son of Man. The proclamation Jesus made to men was more than a verbal announcement. By His words and deeds Jesus conveyed to us the perfect and fullest manifestation of God. By His incarnation, life, and death He demonstrated the Father's loving heart (Rom. 5:8), and delivered to His people the perfect manifestation of the grace and truth of God (Jn. 1:14,17). So perfect is Christ's proclamation of His Father, that those who behold the Son can know that they behold the Father (Jn. 14:9). It is precisely such full and perfect proclamation that calls and effectually draws men to God, transforming them from alienated sinners to holy brethren.

Thursday, January 25th - Hebrews 2: 12

No being ever has offered to God such perfect and pleasing worship as the Son of Man. It may truly be said that Jesus worshipped unto His own death. It was His trusting obedience in His Father that prompted and sustained Him in the laying down of His life (1 Pet. 2:23). Jesus not only laid down His life for man, bearing in Himself the penalty due the sins of His people, He also offered Himself to God an unblemished sacrifice. Thus, Jesus praised His Father to an immeasurable height. But He is not alone in the offering of such praise. By His atoning sacrifice, He acquired brethren who, in Him, would offer such joyful praise to the Father. The cross results in a congregation of brethren who bear a striking family resemblance to Jesus. Foremost in that resemblance is their inclination to praise their heavenly Father.

Friday, January 26th - Hebrews 2: 13

This verse speaks of trust and trophies. By His entrusting Himself to His Father, who judges righteously (1 Pet. 2:23), Jesus begot for Himself and His Father a family of holy children. This could only have happened through the incarnation of our Lord. The first Adam fell precisely at this point of trust in God. The serpent beguiled Eve, and Adam failed to trust God, choosing instead to die with his wife than to live without her.

The second Adam trusted God to and through His own death. We see His trust in Gethsemane, at His arrest (Mt. 26: 53; Jn. 18:11), and as He stood before Pilate (Jn. 18:36; 19:11). With perfect, trusting fidelity Jesus ran the race set before Him, and His trophy was a people for Himself, who would increasingly over the course of their pilgrimage through this life learn to trust and obey the Father as befits those of the Father's family.

Saturday, January 27th - Hebrews 2: 13

Because Jesus trusted God, He laid down His life, offering it as an atoning sacrifice for His people. Because our Lord was born to die in this way, he took no earthly wife and begot no natural children (Is. 53:8). His trust took Him to the tomb, which became more fruitful than any womb. It was through such trust unto death that He begot His true offspring (Is. 53:10,11). Trust in the Lord may lead the one so trusting through many tribulations, but they will all prove ultimately to be richly fruitful.

Sunday, January 28th - Hebrews 2: 13

The reward for the trusting obedience of the Son of Man was an innumerable multitude of sons of God. Jesus reproduces Himself in the hearts and lives of all believers. The unique Son of Man has given us the perfect pattern, and has conveyed to us the power and authority to be called children of God (Jn. 1: 12). He did this not primarily because He loved us, but because He loved and trusted His heavenly Father. By the love of God wrought out in the trusting obedience of Jesus, believers are no longer rebellious, alienated creatures of God, but beloved and loving children of God (1 Jn. 3:1), addressing Him as *Abba, Father* (Gal. 4:6). Who would have thought that such trust, leading through death, would beget such marvelous living trophies?

Monday, January 29th - Hebrews 2: 13

In vv. 11, 12 believers were referred to as *brethren* of the Redeemer. In this verse they are designated *children*. In other places of Scripture, they are termed Christ's *bride* (Rev. 21:9). There is nothing confusing or contradictory about these various relations to Christ being attributed to believers. Each one presents a facet of that manifold intimacy which believers have with God through Christ. All of these relations are employed to show us as fully as possible what is still for us now, as we behold the truth through a glass darkly, an approximation of how closely and lovingly related we are to God through His Son.

Tuesday, January 30th - Hebrews 2: 14, 15

In v.11, with the mention of our sanctification, we learn that one of the results of the incarnation, life, and death of Christ is our salvation from sin. In v. 14 we are told that another result is our salvation from death. Man, by his sin, forfeited his life, death being the wages of sin (Rom. 6:23). The eternal Son of God could not have died for man, but the Son of God incarnated as the Son of Man could and did so take to Himself the bearing of sin's penalty. Because man sinned, man had to bear the consequences of sin. Sinful man cannot bear that penalty except by his own dying. The sinless Son of Man voluntarily took to Himself that penalty so that His brethren, the children of God, would be freed from death due to their being released from their sins.

Wednesday, January 31st - Hebrews 2: 14, 15

Christ, we are told, shared in the flesh and blood, meaning the humanity, of His brethren; but He did not share in their sin. He came in the likeness of sinful flesh (Rom. 8:3; Phil. 2:7), meaning that He was truly man, but without sin. Yet, from His birth He appeared to be sinful in all that He endured—His impoverished birth, His circumcision, His baptism, etc. However, what we bear essentially and necessarily in consequence of our sin, He bore voluntarily as our penal substitute. Thus, in His death we should see our own death to sin, and in His resurrection we should see our living to God (Rom. 6:3-11).

Thursday, February 1st - Hebrews 2: 14, 15

Christ delivered us from the fear of death by dying Himself in our place. In His death, we died, but only to sin (Rom. 6:10,11). Our Lord tells us that those who believe in Him do not die (Jn. 6:50; 11:26). Christ's death has forever transformed death for believers. For the unbeliever, death means his leaving this life where he partakes of the common grace of God, which falls upon the just and the unjust, and facing an eternity of full and constant punishment for his sins. For the believer, death means his freedom from the afflictions of life in this cursed world, his perfection in righteousness, and life eternal in glory with the Lord and His people. Death is for the believer but the portal into heaven, a portal constructed for us by the cross of Jesus.

Friday, February 2nd - Hebrews 2: 14, 15

By Christ's death we are saved not only from sin (v.11) and death (v.14), but we are also saved from the malicious power of Satan. Our sin rendered us vulnerable to the exploitation of the devil, who had himself sinned against God. In particular, Satan wields the club of the fear of death as a coercive tool against men. He who through the serpent promised man that he would be as free, as powerful, as wise, and eternal as God, led man into sin, degradation, and bondage to the fear of death. Even while sinful man lives, his life is miserable, for the prospect of death casts a shadow over all of his life. Satan may entice men by presenting to them deceptive conceptions regarding the pleasure of sin. The devil also intimidates men by threatening them with the inevitable prospect of their death. Christ has destroyed these works of the devil, thus liberating His people by the light of His truth and by the eternal life He procured for us in His death. Satan thought, when he orchestrated the crucifixion of Jesus, that he was destroying the Son of God and sealing sinners forever in their bondage to sin and the fear of death. What the devil in fact did was but to bruise the Savior's heel, while that heel crushed Satan's head.

Saturday, February 3rd - Hebrews 2: 14, 15

The death of Christ has rendered Satan powerless to taunt men with threats of death. This is so because the cross of Christ has made the bitter waters of death sweet to the believer. For those in Christ, to live is Christ and to die is gain (Phil. 1:21). The believer knows that his Redeemer has the keys of death (Rev. 1:18), and that nothing in death or life can separate him from the love of God in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:35-39). Our being free from the fear of death liberates us from making decisions based upon what we suppose would result in our avoiding death or discomfort. The full armor of God now makes us impervious to the threats of death, and consequently we decide and do according to what is right, not according to our endeavor to avoid that which we once feared.

Sunday, February 4th - Hebrews 2: 14, 15

The awesome results of our salvation from sin, death, and Satan's thrall have all been accomplished by the most unlikely of works, namely, the death of the Son of Man. The divinely designed goal of the incarnation was the death of Jesus. He was born to die. The Lamb is slain from the foundation of the world. The result of that goal is our deliverance. Our Lord assumed human nature not to reign in it, but to suffer and die in it. In Christ, God became man not to display the strength of His divinity, but to assume our weakness, and to endure sufferings and death in His humanity. By this amazing condescension, this voluntary vulnerability to sufferings, our Lord rescued us from sin, death and suffering, transforming all those harsh task masters into servants working together for our good (Rom. 8:28).

Monday, February 5th - Hebrews 2: 2:16

This verse literally says that it is clear that Christ did not *take hold of* (evpilamba,netai) angels, but did *take hold of* the seed of Abraham. By this the writer affirms what he has been saying regarding the necessity of the incarnation of the Son of God, and the saving results of the incarnation for believers. Nowhere in Scripture is it asserted that the Son of God assumed an angelic nature to redeem fallen angels. Yet

everywhere in Scripture is declared that the merciful God is for and with His people in the One called Immanuel, meaning, God with us. The pre-existing Word of God has become flesh for the express purpose of redeeming His people from their sins. The Son of God did not assume an angelic nature to redeem the awesome fallen angels, but He did assume human nature to redeem unworthy men.

Tuesday, February 6th - Hebrews 2: 17

In this verse, the writer reiterates the necessity of the incarnation of Christ. The terms of redemption, set in the eternal counsels of God, obliged (w;feilen) the Son of God to assume man's nature in order to be the Redeemer of man. Therefore, He was made like His brethren in all things. This involved an immeasurable condescension to which the Son of God freely consented. He who is God condescended to become a man; but also, He who is perfectly holy condescended to become sin for the sake of His people (2 Cor. 5:21). We are unable to fathom such costly condescension, but we may and must gratefully accept it and praise our Lord ceaselessly for it.

Wednesday, February 7th - Hebrews 2: 17

Yet another facet of the work of redemption accomplished by Christ is touched on in this verse. By the word, *propitiation*, we learn that Christ wrought for us salvation from the wrath of God. We have already been told that Christ has saved us from death (vv.14,15). But death is not the final consequence of our sin. After death comes judgement before the holy God whom we have offended (Heb. 9:27). Those in Christ no longer face such judgment (Jn. 5:24), for they have an Advocate with the Father who wins their acquittal (1 Jn. 2: 1,2). The effects of Christ's redeeming work stretch from earth to heaven, and from time into eternity.

Thursday, February 8th - Hebrews 2: 17

Thus far, all of the manifold results of Christ's saving work have been considered from man's perspective. Man is saved from sin (v.11), from death and demonic exploitation (vv.14,15), and from the wrath of God (v.17). But here in v.17, the result of Christ's atoning work as it pertains to God comes into view also through the term, *propitiation*. Man's sin not only alienated him from God and issued in manifold miserable consequences. Man's sin also aroused in God righteous wrath. It is the appeasing of that wrath that is the first and foremost work of Christ's sacrificial giving of Himself. Therefore, in this verse the writer speaks of Christ being a high priest in things pertaining to God. Just as in the Old Testament sacrifices, the blood was applied first to the altar, then to the worshipper (Ex. 24:6,8), so the blood of Christ has its first and most significant effect in appeasing God's wrath, and making the holy God to be at peace with those to whom the same blood of Christ is applied.

Friday, February 9th - Hebrews 2: 17

Christ's incarnation worked a special affinity in Him toward His people. As the Son of Man, Christ became mercifully sympathetic toward man, understanding by His own experience as man the pitiful plight of man. He also is designated a faithful high priest. He was faithful to fulfill the covenant promises of God by His remaining faithful to His Father, resisting all temptations, and thus maintaining His virtuous qualification as Mediator between God and man. Both His mercy toward man and His fidelity to God were necessary components of His saving work. One without the other would not have resulted in man's redemption.

Saturday, February 10th - Hebrews 2: 17, 18

The human experience of the Son of Man rendered Him mercifully sympathetic toward man. He who, by His resistance to temptation, endured the full force of temptation, grew in His sympathy for those who succumb to temptation before it exerts its full force upon them. This experience enabled Him to come to the aid of those tempted. He who resisted temptation by His remaining steadfastly faithful to God is able to help those tempted by infusing them with similar fidelity to God. Merciful sympathy without the aid of

strengthening faithfulness to God would be mere sentimentality. Faithfulness to God without merciful sympathy toward men would confirm men in their sin and divine condemnation. Thanks be to God that in Jesus we have a high priest who is both merciful and fortifying.

Sunday, February 11th - Hebrews 2: 17, 18

These verses inform us of another result of Christ's saving work. We are saved from sin (v.11), from death and from the devil (vv. 14,15), from God's wrath (v.17), and, finally, we are saved from the power of temptation. This is not to say that we will never face temptation. It is, rather, to say that we never shall face temptation alone. We have a merciful high priest who not only is our Advocate with the Father, but also is the prevailing source of aid with us in our temptations. What a full, manifold, and rich salvation we have in Christ!

Monday, February 12th - Hebrews 3: 1

A challenge was issued in 2:1-3, calling us to pay much closer attention to our salvation. Now as this third chapter opens, another challenge is issued, calling us to give more careful and constant consideration to the Savior. The challenge is based upon what we learned in the second chapter regarding the necessity and results of the incarnation of the Son of God. It is further strengthened by the teaching which follows in chapters 3 and 4, wherein we learn that Christ is superior to Moses. The person of Jesus, whom we are called to consider with care and constancy, is the greatest subject whom we shall ever study. He who has condescended to save us has descended from and ascended to the greatest heights of glory.

Tuesday, February 13th - Hebrews 3: 3: 1

How believers are addressed in this verse is instructive and encouraging. We are called *holy brethren*. By Christ's incarnation, perfect life, and atoning death, we who were sinners have been made holy by the imputed righteousness of Jesus. We who dwelt in a sinfully self-absorbed, miserable alienation from God and man have been reconciled to God and made brothers and sisters bound together by the holy love of Christ filling us with love for the Lord and for each other. It is right that we who have been so blessedly transformed and united should give more grateful and devoted consideration to Jesus, the source of this blessing.

Wednesday, February 14th - Hebrews 3: 1

The writer also refers to believers as being *partakers of a heavenly calling*. Our calling in Christ is from heaven and for heaven. The King of heaven has come down to call us to Himself, so that we might be lifted up by Him to be with Him in His heavenly glory (Jn. 17:24). In Christ we are no longer slaves to sin's bondage, wanderers upon the cursed earth, and subjects of satanic exploitation. We are adopted children of the living and holy God, and thus citizens of His heavenly glory. Accordingly, Paul tells us to be heavenly minded, for it is in heaven where our lives are hidden with Christ in God (Col. 3:1-4). Those delivered by Christ to such a glorious destiny should find all of their pleasure and true profit in their faithful concentration upon Jesus.

Thursday, February 15th - Hebrews 3: 1

The call addressed to holy brethren and partakers of a heavenly calling is to consider Jesus. We are to study, meditate upon, digest and assimilate into ourselves the truths regarding the person and work of Jesus. No subject is more vital, worthy, or rewarding. We may live with safety and satisfaction if we know nothing except Christ crucified (1 Cor. 2:1,2); we are poor, blind, wretched, and naked if we know and even possess all things without Him.

Friday, February 16th - Hebrews 3: 1

The Jesus we are called to consider is the Apostle and High Priest of our confession. A confession is our saying the same thing (th/j o`mologi,aj) not only in agreement with others, but essentially in agreement with the true nature of things. The truth of our confession is that Jesus is the Apostle, the One sent by God with a message. The message was the faithful manifestation of the character and will of God (Jn. 17:6). But Jesus came not only with a message, He came from God on a mission, namely, to redeem His people from their sins and for God. Hence, Jesus is also the High Priest of our confession, who offered Himself an atoning sacrifice for our sins. In the Old Testament, these offices of Apostle and High Priest were kept fairly distinct. Moses was apostolic whereas Aaron was priestly. But in Jesus these offices combine, for He is our perfect Prophet, Priest, and King.

Saturday, February 17th - Hebrews 3: 2, 3

As Moses was faithful to his divine appointment, so Jesus was faithful to the mission to which He was appointed. In particular, Moses was faithful in his serving in the household of God. Moses faced Pharaoh, led Israel out of their Egyptian bondage and to the land of Canaan, gave Israel God's Law, and constructed the tabernacle. But whereas Moses was faithful in his dealings with these shadows of salvation, Jesus was faithful to deliver salvation's substance. Accordingly, Jesus is worthy of infinitely more honor and glory than Moses. In short, great as Moses was (and he was, by God's grace, great), he was himself part of the house of God, a living stone of great significance, but one needing himself to be saved by Jesus. We should never exalt Israel's lawgiver, or even the Law itself above the Lord of salvation.

Sunday, February 18th - Hebrews 3: 4

Men effect things instrumentally, God effects all things ultimately. God creates, sustains, governs, and perfects; men administrate, as second causes, the divine will. When this verse declares that God is the builder of all things, it has special reference to all things in God's house, the Church. There is here an implied syllogism: If God builds all things, and Jesus builds His Church (Mt. 16:18), then Jesus is God. This writer has already asserted that Christ, the Son of God, created all things (Heb. 1:2). Now he especially asserts that regarding the Church, the household of God (Eph. 2:19), Christ is the founder, architect, and inheritor. The Father, through the Son, brought into being all things in general and His own house in particular. Accordingly, Jesus is worthy of more glory than Moses.

Monday, February 19th - Hebrews 3: 5, 6

These verses most clearly draw the distinction between Moses and Jesus. As for Moses, he was faithful *in* God's house as an administrator of God's will. Yet, Moses was himself part of that house, a sinner saved by God's grace, a living stone incorporated into the temple of the Lord. However, Jesus was faithful *over* God's house, as foundation and capstone, source and goal. By divine grace, Moses is a component in God's house; by divine right, Jesus is head and proprietor over God's house. The degree to which Jesus is due more honor than the honorable Moses is infinite.

Tuesday, February 20th - Hebrews 3: 5, 6

The distinction between Moses and Jesus is not simply that between an administrating member of the house and the proprietor over the house. There is also the distinction between their respective relations to God. Moses was a servant of God. The service he rendered was typical and symbolic, for through the shadows of what he inaugurated he offered testimony of the coming substance of salvation. In contrast, Jesus is the unique, eternal, only-begotten Son of God. Moses was promoted from his bondage in sin to his service of God. Jesus condescended from His filial and holy communion with His Father to render the service of His becoming sin for man's Salvation. Yet, even as the suffering servant, Jesus was the Son of God, worthy of all worship, adoration, and obedience (Jn. 20:28). If Moses inspires respect, as he should; Jesus inspires reverence.

Wednesday, February 21st - Hebrews 3: 6

This verse identifies who are members of the house of God. It is those who have been made living stones by their possession and exercise of saving and persevering faith in Jesus. It is those who have and maintain a trusting confidence neither in things of this world, nor in themselves, nor even in the greatest servants of God, such as Moses, but only through such servants and means of divine grace in Christ Jesus alone. The living stones of God's house are those whose entire reliance is upon, and sufficiency is in, the Savior.

Thursday, February 22nd - Hebrews 3: 6

This verse contains significant phrases which define for us some essential qualities of the living stones of the house of God. True members of the house of God hold fast their confidence. By this expression, a quality of enduring constancy is meant, as would befit those who have built the house of their own lives upon the immovable rock which is Christ (Lk. 6:47,48; Eph. 4:13-16). If we are in Christ, our confidence is neither in our own endowments, attainments, nor circumstances, but only in Christ's person and work. We may be buffeted by adversity, attacked by Satan, and enticed by the world, yet we will hold fast to Christ through it all, finding Him to be the one thing necessary (Lk. 10:42).

Friday, February 23rd - Hebrews 3: 6

Another phrase describing the perseverance of the living stones of God's house tells of the boast of their hope. We boast not in our own strength, but in the salvation of our Lord. Our strength, by which we defy our fears and foes, as Samson defied countless Philistines, is found in the certain consequences of what we now grasp by faith, namely, a justifying stand before the living God. The regeneration and justification we now have, however, are but the pledges of a fullness to come. Our victory, in which we live as more than conquerors over all trials, fightings, and failures, is our sure and certain hope of the full realization of salvation. With that full realization, we, like the sinner caught in adultery, will stand before God with none to accuse us, with the Lord not condemning us, but welcoming us into His joy, and wiping away forever all of our sin-caused tears. The grace we experience now betokens the glory which shall be ours hereafter.

Saturday, February 24th - Hebrews 3: 6

Most English versions of this verse contain the words, *firm until the end*. The word translated *end* is not found in many Greek texts, yet the firmness and complete continuance of our confidence and hope are contained in the compound verb translated *hold fast* (kata,scwmen). This is not to say that the faith of true believers never wavers or weakens. What it does tell us is that we shall cleave effectively to Christ through all the ups and downs of our pilgrimage. Saving faith adheres to Christ to the end of time and perfection of eternity.

Sunday, February 25th - Hebrews 3: 7, 8

The opening verses of this third chapter called upon us to consider Jesus as being superior to Moses, as being the apostle and high priest of our confession, and as being the Son of God and Lord over the house of which we are living stones. This call for us so seriously to consider Jesus is now followed by a lengthy and sobering admonition which runs from 3:7 - 4:13. In sum, we are warned against falling away, not from a system of doctrine, not from a human organization, not from a tradition, but from the living God (v.12). Our merely considering the facts about Jesus does not secure us unless we cleave to the Christ whom we consider.

Monday, February 26th - Hebrews 3: 7, 8

Practical questions usually arise in connection with Scripture's warnings against our falling away from the Lord. We ask whether truly converted believers can finally and fully reject their Redeemer. In answer we maintain that presumptuous, professing believers—whose faith is temporary and spurious, not being founded in Christ (cf., the parable of the sower)—can and do finally and fully fall away from the Lord. True believers may fall temporarily, but they will eventually return to the Lord. While this distinction does

have a basis in Scripture, the writer of this letter makes no such fine distinction between professing hypocrites and true believers. He simply and categorically calls for our submission and obedience to Christ. Gratefully submissive obedience forms the essential attitude of those truly in the kingdom of God. Without it, we have fallen from grace (Gal. 5:4) into either legalistic performance or licentious presumption.

Tuesday, February 27th - Hebrews 3: 7, 8

We are called to diligent vigilance by the Word of God. The writer cites a passage from Ps. 95. Central to his concern is the admonition: *Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts, as when they provoked Me.* This warning call from the Word of God is issued three times in this letter; first, here in vv. 7,8, then in v.15, and finally in 4:7. It is a sobering and humbling thing for us to realize that we are so prone to wander from the gracious love and glorious excellencies of God in Christ that we require such direct and repeated warnings from the Lord.

Wednesday, February 28th - Hebrews 3: 7, 8

The human author of Ps. 95, which is here cited, is David (Heb. 4:7). Yet, the infallible inspiration for David's writing came from God the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the divine authority for this admonition is strikingly set before us when the writer of this letter informs us that none other than the Holy Spirit of God speaks to us through what is written in the Scriptures. We may at times wisely and safely ignore the words of finite and fallible man; we ignore the voice of the living God to our great peril.

Thursday, March 1st - Hebrews 3: 7, 8

God speaks to us through His Word and by His Holy Spirit. Faith enables us to hear and heed the divine instructions, admonitions, and consolations of Scripture. Yet, faith, while it is a gift of God (Eph. 2: 8,9), is a power we exercise. Faith forms the eyes of the heart (Eph. 1:18). But as with our physical eyes, so with the eyes of our inner man, we may shut out the light and liberating power of God's Word. Should we deny this possibility, we are directed to the actual hardening of the hearts of Israel in the wilderness. This warning for us to guard our hearts and keep them ever sensitive to the Word of God is not based upon a conceptual or hypothetical possibility of our hardening them against the Lord. Rather, the warning issues from the actual, demonstrated failure of a whole generation of ancient believers.

Friday, March 2nd - Hebrews 3: 8, 9

The fathers referred to in v. 9 were those Israelites who were led by Moses out of Egypt. They had witnessed the miraculous plagues which compelled Pharaoh to release them from their oppressive servitude. They had walked through the miraculously parted Red Sea, and saw it miraculously cover and drown Pharaoh's army. They fed on manna from heaven, drank water miraculously provided, and were led by the pillar of cloud by day and fire by night. Still, when they came to the entrance of the Promised Land, they hardened their hearts against God (Num. 13,14). If they who had seen and vitally benefited from the massive and repeated miracles of God could harden their hearts against the Lord, can we presume ourselves immune from spiritual sclerosis?

Saturday, March 3rd - Hebrews 3: 9

In our superficial generation, where contemporary fashion prompts most people more than do timeless fundamentals, we do well to note how the Word of God points us back to the experience of our fathers, so that through their example we may lay to heart lessons of timeless validity. As the old Russian proverb declares, he who keeps an eye on the past loses an eye, while he who keeps no eye on the past loses both eyes. If we do not learn the lessons of history, we are doomed to repeat the costly mistakes of past generations.

Sunday, March 4th - Hebrews 3: 9

It was not only the fathers of these Hebrew believers, but our fathers in the faith who hardened their hearts against the voice of the Lord and tested Him rather than submit to Him in trusting obedience. They who were God's particular people, who had been the objects of His miraculous deliverance from Egypt, to whom the very divine oracles were entrusted, were the very ones to harden their hearts. Hereby we learn that no outward privileges or circumstantial provisions can, in themselves, safeguard us from spiritual hardening, or give us license freely to presume upon the grace of the Lord.

Monday, March 5th - Hebrews 3: 9

Those who had been graciously and mightily redeemed by God from their bondage in Egypt should have trusted their divine Redeemer, not tried and tested Him. Had their hearts been filled with gratitude, instead of grumbling (Ex. 17:1ff), had they exercised the power of faith, instead of fault-finding, they would have found themselves most satisfyingly secured in the love and power of the Lord. By their thankful trusting, they would have journeyed from Horeb to Kadesh-barnea and their entrance of Canaan, in eleven days. By their faithless testing of God it took them forty years to make that journey (Dt. 1:2,3), a period wherein God made for them gracious, miraculous provision of manna, but also applied disciplining works of power to them as well, until the entire, unbelieving generation died in the wilderness. Painful and prolonged delays of our entering into the blessing of God may likewise be the cost we bear for our petulantly testing our God.

Tuesday, March 6th - Hebrews 3: 10

God honors faith. He hates our faithless testing of Him. Those Israelites so recently redeemed from Egypt by the power of the Lord were soon refusing to walk by a trusting faith in God. They relied, instead, upon their own senses and sinful reasoning, determining thereby the criteria they saw fit for concluding whether or not the Lord was with and for them. On their side of things, the fathers tested God. This, however, begot a reaction on God's side of things. The Lord was filled with holy wrath. He Who was tested by a faithless people (v.9), was mightily provoked by that testing (v.8) If we would but see how our indulgence of doubts and fears grieves and provokes our God, we would be more quick to vanquish such testing attitudes by the exercise of our faith.

Wednesday, March 7th - Hebrews 3: 10

The Israelite fathers walked out of Egypt not by their own well-reasoned plans and prevailing power, but by the mercy and might of God. Yet, once out of Egypt, they quickly and consistently lapsed into trusting their own eyes and hands and finite, fallen reasoning power. Such a way of walking leads us nowhere but astray from the wise direction, loving care, and providing power of the Lord. When our hearts stray from God, our eyes will not see, nor our minds understand, nor our feet tread the wonderful ways of the Lord.

Thursday, March 8th - Hebrews 3: 10, 11

Spiritual complacency and faithless wandering are serious sins which issue in miserable consequences. The worst consequence of all is the arousal of a serious determination of God (matching the hardened determination of faithless wanderers) that such faithless ones should not enter into His rest. God takes with utmost seriousness the persistent waywardness of His people. A point is reached where the Lord will tolerate it no longer. We do not know where that point is, but God does. Once we cross it, we trigger an irrevocable reaction in our God. He swears in His holy wrath that we shall not enjoy the refreshing security of His blessing. Should any fondly imagine that God would not do this, we have the account in the Books of Moses and reiterated in Psalm 95 that He has done this. This divine discipline is recorded for our admonition, as the writer of this New Testament epistle is at pains to make clear to us.

Friday, March 9th - Hebrews 3: 10, 11

The ways of God lead to the rest of God. To be ignorant of the divine ways is to be excluded from the rest which only God can give. The rest here spoken of is a restorative cessation, an intensive stopping (th.n kata,pausi,n) of one's fugitive flight from God and consequent subjugation to the harsh tyranny of sin and all sinful enemies of God. God's way out of Egypt's bondage leads into this pacific recreation. All other ways lead to miserable bondage and fruitless, exhausting toils.

Saturday, March 10th - Hebrews 3: 11

The rest of God results from the peace we have with God, which peace is a fundamental blessing of our redemption. There is an objective and a subjective dimension to this peace. Objectively, believers have peace with God through the justifying work of Jesus (Rom. 5:1ff). Subjectively, we feel a composure and tranquility, even amidst circumstantial turmoil (Phil. 4:6,7). Together these dimensions of peace make us to be more than conquerors in Christ (Rom. 8:31ff). It is an impoverishing denial of staggering proportions when God Himself swears to refuse His own hard-hearted people admittance to that recreating and empowering rest. Nor is it a vain threat we have here, but a sobering warning recorded for our benefit.

Sunday, March 11th - Hebrews 3: 12

The admonition found in vv.7-11 is followed by a consideration of the causes of and cure for spiritual hardening (vv.12-19). The undeniable reality recorded in Scripture is that the first generation of those redeemed from Egypt fell away from Moses, the Lord's servant, and suffered by their having been divinely denied entrance into Canaan. The warning to us is even more serious. We are warned against our falling away from Jesus, the Son of God, who is infinitely greater than Moses. If we fall away from the living Son of God, we suffer much greater loss than our being denied entrance into a patch of land in the Middle-East.

Monday, March 12th - Hebrews 3: 12

The warning against our falling away from God is so serious and categorical that we may be tempted to object that God's graciousness would never allow us so to fall away. However, true divine grace, as opposed to a counterfeit license, makes us careful, not casual, regarding our walk with the Lord. Thus, the writer calls to our attention the sobering disciplinary dealings of God with His people of old so that we might call ourselves to spiritual attention. The word translated *take care*, in this verse, literally exhorts us to see (ble,pete). Our spiritual eyes (Eph. 1:18ff) should be opened and rightly focused, for it is through such vigilant and vigorous exercise of faith that we resist hardening our hearts and enter ever more deeply into the ways and rest of the Lord. Saving grace does not make us slack, but rather diligent workers bringing forth the fruits of our salvation (Phil. 2:12,13).

Tuesday, March 13th - Hebrews 3: 12

We are to be and remain watchful against an evil, unbelieving heart. Our being professing believers amidst a fellowship of believers is no guarantee against such hardening. We must subject ourselves to piercing self-examination. That which we guard against is not simply unbelief, or unfaithfulness, as bad as that is. What the writer particularly warns against is an *evil* unbelieving heart, namely, one which has been touched by divine grace and surrounded by the means of sanctification, but which hardens itself against such blessing. This is a malady deeper and more serious than occasional doubt or periodic wanderings. It is a condition where one refuses to credit God's communications through His Word, Spirit, and people. It is when fault-finding and grumbling replace faith and gratitude. When we examine our hearts, what do we find there?

Wednesday, March 14th - Hebrews 3: 12

As surely as faith unites us to the Lord, an evil, unbelieving heart alienates us from Him. Thus, the consequence of such faithlessness is mentioned in painfully personal terms. Those who allow an evil, unbelieving heart to grow within them will find that in attitude and action they will fall away not from a

system of doctrine, not from a tradition, not from a human society, but first and foremost from the personal, living God. Our word, *apostasy*, comes from the word in this verse translated *falling away* (avposth/nai). It is a standing away from God, the very opposite of the restful stopping beside and staying with God mentioned in v.11 (kata,pausi,n).

Thursday, March 15th - Hebrews 3: 12

The serious admonition contained in this verse is given to those whom the writer addresses as *brethren*. Here is a convicting challenge, when we realize that sons of God can be subject to apostasy. But here is also a converting comfort, when we realize that it is a common family trait of the redeemed that we must ever watch and mortify within ourselves even the beginnings of evil unbelief. God awakens us by His Word and Spirit precisely so that we may stand with or return to Him, not heedlessly drift away from Him.

Friday, March 16th - Hebrews 3: 13

In v.12 we are called negatively to guard against an evil, unbelieving heart. In this verse we are told positively how to prevent the development of such a heart, or to restore such a heart that has been wounded by evil unbelief. We are to examine ourselves (v.12), and encourage one another (v.13). Too often this order is reversed, so that we encourage ourselves and examine one another, with disastrous results. Recall our Lord's teaching about the log in our eye and the speck in our brother's eye (Mt. 7:3-5). Yet, in due order, both elements are necessary for our maintaining good personal and corporate spiritual health.

Saturday, March 17th - Hebrews 3: 13

If we are to avoid spiritual hardening, we must encourage one another. In Christ, we are our brothers' keepers. The only true source of encouragement we have is not our natural endowments, attainments, or personal agendas, but rather our standing by the grace of God in Christ. Hence we are to exercise a mutual ministry of the Word and love of God. This, of course, presupposes our mutual submission to the Word, and our growth in the experience of divine love. This mutual ministering is to be constant, as day after day we help each other to feed on the ever fresh mercies of the Lord. It is to be a perpetual ministry, performed until the end of time. Nothing other or less than this will prevent our developing hard, apostatizing hearts.

Sunday, March 18th - Hebrews 3: 13

Our hearts are hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. As Adam sought feebly to cover his nakedness, guilt, and shame from the eyes of the all-seeing God by means of a fig leaf, so sin ever adopts a guise to conceal its truly ugly and grim character from us. Sin must be sugar coated with the promise of momentary pleasure in order for anyone to yield to it.

Monday, March 19th - Hebrews 3: 14, 15

The proof of our true conversion and union to Christ is our persevering in faithful obedience throughout the course of our lives. Those with evil, unbelieving hearts may think for a time that they can have salvation without a life committed to holy obedience. Eventually, their profession of faith will ring hollow even in their own ears. Saving faith prompts and empowers us to cleave to Christ as the one thing necessary through all the ups and downs, trials and triumphs of our lives. For true partakers of the unchangeable Christ cannot fail to complete what they begin to believe and do in Jesus. This perseverance is not only a fruit of our new nature, but also a result of the sustaining and perfecting work of God, who always completes what He begins to do for and in us (Phil. 1:6).

Tuesday, March 20th - Hebrews 3: 15

True believers may fall into sinful disobedience, but they cannot dwell there. Eventually, they hear the voice of the living God calling them to walk in the way of His blessing. When the Lord speaks, faith would have us to hear and to heed without delay. Thus, the writer, citing once again the words of Ps. 95, tells us through use of the word, *today*, that now is the time for us to examine our hearts, encourage one another, and distinguish ourselves from the unfaithful Israelites of old, by our hearing and rendering faithful obedience to our God. Delayed obedience is disobedience, and serves to harden our hearts against future obedience.

Wednesday, March 21st - Hebrews 3: 16, 17

If we think it impossible for professing believers to harden their hearts and, consequently, to be rejected by God, we need but consider the reality of an entire generation of sinning Israelites having been just so painfully chastised by the Lord. Their demonstration of sinful determination, and God's demonstration of His holy discipline should be most sobering to us. Truly we must guard our hearts, for out of them come the issues of life. Few people ever experienced such singular blessing as did the Israelites who were miraculously led out of their Egyptian bondage, and who had no lesser man than Moses, the servant of the Lord, to lead them. Yet, few generations have so completely hardened themselves against it all, and thus qualified themselves to experience divine capital punishment. If the Lord does not always call all such hardened ones to temporal account, it is because He exercises a patience which is designed not to confirm them in their sin, but to lead them to repentance (Rom. 2:4). Let us never regard the divine patience as divine indulgence. Our very lives depend upon our not confusing the two.

Thursday, March 22nd - Hebrews 3: 16-19

Those who came out of Egypt under Moses had a promising start to their new lives in freedom. Yet, their actions did not spring from proper gratitude for the amazing grace shown to them, but rather flowed from grumbling hearts. Thus, they were disobedient to their God (v.18), their disobedience culminating in their refusal to enter Canaan at Kadesh-barnea (Num. 13, 14). Accordingly, God slammed the door to the Promised Land in the faces of that entire generation. They were disobedient due to their unbelief (v.19), for they ever took counsel of their fears, rather than of faith. Therefore, those who left bondage and were called to life and liberty sinned against the God who called them, and their corpses littered the wilderness through which they were doomed to wander for forty years. They were not prevented from entering Canaan by the pursuing Egyptians, nor by the Canaanites dwelling in the land, but by their own consistent unbelief and settled pattern of sinning. No enemies can do to us anything to compare with what we bring upon ourselves by our own unbelief and sinful disobedience.

Friday, March 23rd - Hebrews 3: 16

Those witnessing the gracious and powerful redemptive works of God, and who have the Word of God urging them to live in a manner worthy of their high calling in the Lord should be filled with gratitude for the immeasurable blessings they have received from God. It is a sad and sobering truth, however, that objects of such divine grace can let grumbling, rather than gratitude, fill their hearts. Such ingratitude is a provocation to God. Our Lord is neither indifferent to nor indulgent with those who spurn His gracious gifts by their ingratitude. Let us learn from the calling of God's Word and the sobering example of the ancient Israelites not to be so base and ungrateful for the precious and manifold blessings we have received in Christ.

Saturday, March 24th - Hebrews 3: 16-18

There are three questions asked and answered in these verses. These questions show the accumulated seriousness of the sin of ingratitude to God. The repeated grumbling of the Israelites, who had been so wonderfully led out of Egypt by God's miraculous power operating through Moses, provoked the righteous ire of the Lord. Those who fail rightly to take to heart the divine mercies render themselves not objects of God's pity, but rather of His anger. The frightful seriousness of our provoking such divine anger is seen in

the second question, where we are told that the result of such divine anger was the death, over the course of forty years, of an entire generation of people who had been redeemed from Egypt. The gravity of such provocation of God is further emphasized when we learn, from the third question, that God's determination to judge His people was irrevocably confirmed by the Lord swearing. The righteousness of this discipline is seen in the answers to these questions. The people so provoking God experienced His redemption from Egypt, for which they should have been grateful instead of grumbling. Those dying in the wilderness did so due to their sin, while those prevented by divine oath from entering the rest of the Lord were ones disobedient to the will of the God who had redeemed them from their bondage in order that they might serve, rather than defy, Him. What a terrible chain of events is forged by our base ingratitude to our God.

Sunday, March 25th - Hebrews 3: 19

Those who were called out of their bondage by divine grace, who were delivered by divine power, yet who were never duly grateful, but remain grumbling, never were faithful, but rather were fearful. Fear, which so characterized their slavery under the oppressions of Pharaoh, is not the appropriate attitude to have and to exercise in the kingdom of our Father's gracious love and liberty. Fear always leads to murmuring hearts, grumbling speech, and disobedient deeds. Faith, on the other hand, vanquishes fear, perceives the amazing love and securing power of the Lord, and leads us to live lives of loving gratitude and submissive obedience. If we live in the kingdom of God as though we were out of it, we may soon find ourselves banished from it, in time, if not in eternity.

Monday, March 26th - Hebrews 3: 19

The door to divine blessing may be opened wide by the grace and power of the Lord, yet faithlessness erects a barrier, more immovable than the great stone which sealed the tomb of Jesus. Israel needed no training in warfare, no accumulation of the material and experience of martial science, no expertise in conquering her enemies, but rather needed only to have faith in her God to enter into Canaan. Such faith will enable us to behold and gladly enter through the portals made by the great and precious promises of the Lord. By faith, we perceive doors where the eyes of flesh see only walls. With faith, nothing can prevent us from entering into the blessing of God; without faith, everything in heaven and on earth will keep us out of it.

Tuesday, March 27th - Hebrews 4: 1

This verse commends to us fear, but of the right sort. Israel refused to enter Canaan because she feared the inhabitants of the land. Such fear is sinful and is vanquished by faith in the Lord. However, faith in the Lord does not presume upon Him, nor take His grace for granted. Thus, we are called to the exercise of a godly fear in view of our God's dealings with His unfaithful ancient people. If we fear offending God by our failing to follow Him fully into His immeasurable blessing, then we shall not be repressed and emotionally paralyzed as secular psychologists assert. We shall instead be invigorated to the performance of feats of faith in an attitude of holy boldness, loving gratitude, and confident expectation of godly success (Josh. 1:5-9; Pr. 3:5,6).

Wednesday, March 28th - Hebrews 4: 1, 2

Too many professing believers, especially in our superficial and entertainment obsessed generation, conceive of the grace of God as a license for moral and spiritual laxness, and believe the joy of the Lord to be mere giddiness. The genuine joy of the Lord is ever intertwined with the fear of the Lord, as we learn in Ps. 2:11, where we are called to worship the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling. The fear of God leads to free access to God and empowered, liberated, and liberating service for God. Without such fear, we become presumptuous and thus provoke the Lord's anger to ignite against us.

Thursday, March 29th - Hebrews 4: 1, 2

Our Lord sweetly invites all who are weary to come to Him for rest (Mt. 11:28). Yet, this invitation is one thing; our entering into His rest is quite another. Such entrance into the divine rest is not automatic. We must by reverent faith enter and remain in His rest. Those thinking and acting as though such rest is an automatic given will find the door of divine blessing slammed in their faces, as did those complaining Israelites under Moses. The writer in v. 2 draws a clear parallel between the experience of those Israelites and contemporary recipients of the gospel. If the ancient Israelites feared man and not God, lacked a trusting and obedient faith, and thus were forbidden by God to enter His blessed felicity as typified by Canaan, neither shall we enter into the Lord's rest if we are similarly faithless. One's having the Word of God without heeding it by faithful obedience is like one possessing a treasure without knowing how to profit by it.

Friday, March 30th - Hebrews 4: 3-11

These verses lay out other considerations which pertain to the divine call for a faithful sensitivity to the Lord and His blessings. The nature of the promised divine rest, its commencement for God and for us, and the way in which we enter into it are drawn out in this passage. Our living in the world of grace is not simplistic, but instead is a matter of our understanding and living according to manifold dimensions of blessing.

Saturday, March 31st - Hebrews 4: 3, 4

The nature of the rest to which God calls us in Christ is revealed in these verses. It is not a rest which God bestows, or a product which He gives apart from Himself. It is, in fact, the rest which He Himself enjoys. That is why the Lord refers to it as *My rest*. For the Lord, this means His having a positive complacency in Himself and in His work. For us, it means our having such positive complacency in the Lord and His work. It is our having peace with God in His person and works, our being lovingly submissive to the Lord and finding our deepest satisfaction in Him and all that pertains to Him, such as His Word, His Spirit, His Son, and His ordinances. Those who have truly believed in Jesus have entered such rest. Their peace and felicity issue from their knowing that they stand amidst all of the changes and challenges of time anchored to and empowered by the redeeming work of God in Christ which was, so far as God is concerned, finished in the counsels of eternity from the foundation of the world.

Sunday, April 1st - Hebrews 4: 3, 4

The rest of the Lord is eternal. Its commencement is without beginning, for His works have been completed from the foundation of the world. The ancient Israelites failed to enter God's rest, not because that rest was in process of coming into being. The first full day of our first parents' life was a day of God's rest—a rest which has been perpetual, for the Genesis account does not record God terminating His rest after the seventh day of creation. Unbelievers think God is as harried as they are in their fevered, fearful lives. Those who have believed know the peace of God, which passes understanding, and which sustains them amidst all of the storms and tribulations of this life.

Monday, April 2nd - Hebrews 4: 3-6

If the rest of God is eternal, it therefore follows that it is ever available to men. But all men do not enter into it. Not even do all men who hear the divine invitation to enter into the rest of the Lord enter into it. Those who have believed in God through the saving work of Christ have entered God's rest. Others, who may have heard, but who demonstrated their lack of faith by their disobedient deeds, fail to enter such rest. Indeed, their refusal to enter God's rest is confirmed by the Lord swearing that they shall not enter His rest. Thus we see that for fallen man, made miserable by his sin, the blessed peace of God commences when that sinner believes in Christ, and it continues as he believes in Christ, perseverance being essential to genuine saving faith.

Tuesday, April 3rd - Hebrews 4: 7

The fact that God's rest is eternal and hence ever available to man, is seen in the fact that such rest was enjoyed by God at creation, and was offered to the Israelites who were led by Moses out of Egypt. It is further seen in the fact that centuries after Moses, David spoke of God's rest in Ps. 95. The Israelites under Moses could have entered God's rest in their day; the Jews of David's day could likewise have entered the divine rest. We in our day may do so. For the rest of God is not something for which we must wait, or work toward its completion. It is available in any day, and those failing to enter into it do so not because it does not exist or because they have no divine invitation so to enter, but because their hard, faithless hearts keep them from the peace of God which passes understanding.

Wednesday, April 4th - Hebrews 4: 7

Both Ps. 95, written by David, and this admonition based upon it and addressed to professing believers, teach us that God's rest is available to each generation. We are also taught by these Scriptures that God's denying hard hearted and disobedient people entrance into His rest is not confined to the generation of Moses' day. If any man in any day hesitates to enter the rest of God when he is summoned thereto by the Spirit of God, he may well find himself the object of a divine oath to keep him from that rest. Let us therefore be sobered and refuse to render our Lord defiance or even obedience marred by our delay.

Thursday, April 5th - Hebrews 4: 8

This verse takes us to Joshua's day wherein the people of Israel actually did enter Canaan. It not only shows us how the rest of God was available for yet another generation, but also indicates to us something of the nature of that rest. We learn that the promise of God's rest being enjoyed by His people was not fulfilled by their entrance into the Promised Land. The territory of Canaan symbolized the rest of the Lord, but was not its essential reality. Thus, we are taken by degrees into a deeper understanding of that peace of God into which we enter and remain by faith in Christ.

Friday, April 6th - Hebrews 4: 8, 9

Joshua led the people of God into Canaan, but there they did not enter fully, finally, and forever into God's rest. We know this because centuries after Joshua, David spoke in Ps. 95, through inspiration of the Holy Spirit, of another day when the people of God would hear God's voice and would need to resist the temptation to harden their hearts against God's will. This makes it clear that there is a deeper rest, a more enduring Sabbath than can be found in any place or time in this world. We are repeatedly slipping from our experience of the deep, spiritual peace of God which passes understanding and finding ourselves tossed about on the changing times and fading things of this life. God calls us, by His Word and Spirit, back into His rest. Whenever that call comes, let us with sincere gratitude heed it and not harden ourselves against it.

Saturday, April 7th - Hebrews 4: 9, 10

These verses form the conclusion to the somewhat complicated argument started in vv. 3-8. It still remains for God's people to enter finally, fully, and forever into God's rest. It may be objected that we cannot enter God's rest so long as we are in this world, living as pilgrims in this valley of tears. In answer, we find God's Word calling us to exercise godly fear (v.1) which will enable us to take seriously the divine call to enter ever more deeply into the peace of God. We find such a call elsewhere in the Word (Phil. 4:6,7).

Sunday, April 8th - Hebrews 4: 9-11

The Sabbath rest remaining for the people of God is that perfect complacency in the Lord, and a sinless and invigorating service rendered for Him as we reign with Him forever (Rev. 22:4, 5). It is our dwelling in the glorious, celestial city, whose architect and builder is God (Heb. 11:10). Saving faith prompts believers in this life to settle for nothing less than this perfect Sabbath rest. (Col. 3:1-4; Heb. 11:13-16). Yet, while we cannot enter into full, final and perpetual enjoyment of that rest in this life, saving faith enables us to reckon it to be our sure inheritance, and derive great consolation and fortification from it here and now.

Therefore, the writer here exhorts us to exert ourselves in order that we might enter into the rest of our Lord. We are not to wait for death to take us into that rest, but rather our calling is to work here and now towards a progressively deep experience of that rest before we enter, after this life, into its perfection.

Monday, April 9th - Hebrews 4: 11

A paradox is set before us in this verse. We do not enter into the Lord's rest automatically. Nor can we expect to enter into it by our casual and sporadic efforts. We are to strive vigorously to enter into that rest. The word translated *strive* or *be diligent* (

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If the rest of God is eternal, it therefore follows that it is ever available to men. But all men do not enter into it. Not even do all men who hear the divine invitation to enter into the rest of the Lord enter into it. Those who have believed in God through the saving work of Christ have entered God's rest. Others, who may have heard, but who demonstrated their lack of faith by their disobedient deeds, fail to enter such rest. Indeed, their refusal to enter God's rest is confirmed by the Lord swearing that they shall not enter His rest. Thus we see that for fallen man, made miserable by his sin, the blessed peace of God commences when that sinner believes in Christ, and it continues as he believes in Christ, perseverance being essential to genuine saving faith.

Tuesday, April 3rd - Hebrews 4: 7

The fact that God's rest is eternal and hence ever available to man, is seen in the fact that such rest was enjoyed by God at creation, and was offered to the Israelites who were led by Moses out of Egypt. It is further seen in the fact that centuries after Moses, David spoke of God's rest in Ps. 95. The Israelites under Moses could have entered God's rest in their day; the Jews of David's day could likewise have entered the divine rest. We in our day may do so. For the rest of God is not something for which we must wait, or work toward its completion. It is available in any day, and those failing to enter into it do so not because it does not exist or because they have no divine invitation so to enter, but because their hard, faithless hearts keep them from the peace of God which passes understanding.

Wednesday, April 4th - Hebrews 4: 7

Both Ps. 95, written by David, and this admonition based upon it and addressed to professing believers, teach us that God's rest is available to each generation. We are also taught by these Scriptures that God's denying hard hearted and disobedient people entrance into His rest is not confined to the generation of Moses' day. If any man in any day hesitates to enter the rest of God when he is summoned thereto by the Spirit of God, he may well find himself the object of a divine oath to keep him from that rest. Let us therefore be sobered and refuse to render our Lord defiance or even obedience marred by our delay.

Thursday, April 5th - Hebrews 4: 8

This verse takes us to Joshua's day wherein the people of Israel actually did enter Canaan. It not only shows us how the rest of God was available for yet another generation, but also indicates to us something of the nature of that rest. We learn that the promise of God's rest being enjoyed by His people was not fulfilled by their entrance into the Promised Land. The territory of Canaan symbolized the rest of the Lord, but was not its essential reality. Thus, we are taken by degrees into a deeper understanding of that peace of God into which we enter and remain by faith in Christ.

Friday, April 6th - Hebrews 4: 8, 9

Joshua led the people of God into Canaan, but there they did not enter fully, finally, and forever into God's rest. We know this because centuries after Joshua, David spoke in Ps. 95, through inspiration of the Holy Spirit, of another day when the people of God would hear God's voice and would need to resist the temptation to harden their hearts against God's will. This makes it clear that there is a deeper rest, a more enduring Sabbath than can be found in any place or time in this world. We are repeatedly slipping from our experience of the deep, spiritual peace of God which passes understanding and finding ourselves tossed about on the changing times and fading things of this life. God calls us, by His Word and Spirit, back into His rest. Whenever that call comes, let us with sincere gratitude heed it and not harden ourselves against it.

Saturday, April 7th - Hebrews 4: 9, 10

These verses form the conclusion to the somewhat complicated argument started in vv. 3-8. It still remains for God's people to enter finally, fully, and forever into God's rest. It may be objected that we cannot enter God's rest so long as we are in this world, living as pilgrims in this valley of tears. In answer, we find God's Word calling us to exercise godly fear (v.1) which will enable us to take seriously the divine call to enter ever more deeply into the peace of God. We find such a call elsewhere in the Word (Phil. 4:6,7).

Sunday, April 8th - Hebrews 4: 9-11

The Sabbath rest remaining for the people of God is that perfect complacency in the Lord, and a sinless and invigorating service rendered for Him as we reign with Him forever (Rev. 22:4, 5). It is our dwelling in the glorious, celestial city, whose architect and builder is God (Heb. 11:10). Saving faith prompts believers in this life to settle for nothing less than this perfect Sabbath rest. (Col. 3:1-4; Heb. 11:13-16). Yet, while we cannot enter into full, final and perpetual enjoyment of that rest in this life, saving faith enables us to reckon it to be our sure inheritance, and derive great consolation and fortification from it here and now. Therefore, the writer here exhorts us to exert ourselves in order that we might enter into the rest of our Lord. We are not to wait for death to take us into that rest, but rather our calling is to work here and now towards a progressively deep experience of that rest before we enter, after this life, into its perfection.

Monday, April 9th - Hebrews 4: 11

A paradox is set before us in this verse. We do not enter into the Lord's rest automatically. Nor can we expect to enter into it by our casual and sporadic efforts. We are to strive vigorously to enter into that rest. The word translated *strive* or *be diligent* (spouda,swmen), means to hasten, to spare no effort, to work hard. It is the antithesis of that casual presumption and indolent procrastination which characterize those who, like the foolish virgins in the parable (Mt. 25: 1-13), will be shocked to learn on the last day that they will be banished from the presence and glorious peace of the Lord (Mt. 7:21-23).

Tuesday, April 10th - Hebrews 4: 11

The paradox between our striving and our entering into the Lord's rest is resolved by faith. The striving is by and according to faith, for it is by faith alone that we perceive the city of God and the gracious, divinely issued calling for us to enter therein (Heb. 11:13-16). It is also by faith alone that we set our minds, hearts, and hands to the task of living as pilgrims, leaving the delusions of comfort and security in this world, and, like Abraham, sojourning within the provisional means of God's grace until we enter into the fullness of His glory. By the grace of God, operating through our exercise of that faith which He has given to us, we move through the tribulation and vicissitudes of this life victoriously sustained by the peace of God which passes understanding, which is a pledge of the perfect rest of God.

Wednesday, April 11th - Hebrews 4: 12

The opposite of that diligent striving to enter into the Lord's rest is that disobedience to the Lord who calls us to work out our salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12,13). Diligent obedience is the fruit of faith; disobedience is the fruit of faithlessness. Those who say they have faith and demonstrate none of that diligence which characterizes genuine, living faith, possess only a dead, counterfeit faith by which they shall never enter into the Lord's rest (Jas. 2:26). Far be it from us to seek our security and peace in disobedience to the God who is the source of true security and peace.

Thursday, April 12th - Hebrews 4: 12, 13

These verses are clearly connected with those preceding them. The word, *for*, connects the reason with the requirement that we fear God (v.1) and strive with diligence in working out our salvation and entering into the rest of God (v.11). Previously, the fact that God calls us by His Holy Spirit was stressed (3:7). Now, it is the living Word of God, the second person of the Trinity, with whom we find we have to do. The Son of God, speaking to us through Scripture, has piercing power to penetrate all of our excuses for our spiritual indolence. The ascended Christ sees through our theological rationalizations and falsely pious fig leaves. He, not we, can perfectly determine whether we with the totality of our being, strive to enter into the rest of God by our loving Him with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength.

Friday, April 13th - Hebrews 4: 12, 13

We may fall to the temptation to be casual and sluggish respecting our salvation, but our Savior is ever living and active. He ever lives to make intercession for us, and our desire and demonstration of diligence in our entering into and progressing in the rest of God are fruits issuing from His interceding root. He is active. If we are sluggish it is not because we trust and obey Him. When we are inwardly prompted to heed and live according to the Word we read or hear preached, it is because He is activating us to be effectual doers of the Word.

Saturday, April 14th - Hebrews 4: 12, 13

The Scriptures have a piercing effect upon us because the Son, the living Word of God has perfectly penetrating power. Sharp swords may be able to cut our bodies and reveal hidden tissues and organs, but no sword can cut so as to reveal hidden thoughts. Christ is likened to a two-edged sword. He penetratingly probes us at every turn. He is not only sharp, He is the supremely sharp sword, penetrating to our inner essence, and distinguishing our most subtly intertwined components. The penetrating and purging power of Christ is represented in Rev. 1, when John sees His ascended Lord with eyes like a flame of fire, purging all they see, and a mouth from which came a sharp two-edged sword, penetrating to the most hidden recesses of all men. It is not only futile when we seek to evade or deceive this Christ, it is offensive to His glorious omniscience.

Sunday, April 15th - Hebrews 4: 12, 13

The writer of this letter is not detailing the components of human psychology in v.12 so much as he is indicating that each and every inner element of our being is known to Jesus. In the passage, Heb. 3:7-4:11, we have been admonished to have and exercise a godly fear and faithful diligence in our working out our salvation. How do we know we are truly doing this? These verses inform us that Jesus can tell whether we are genuine—He knows what is in the hearts of all men (Jn. 2:25). But He is no mere omniscient spectator. He will faithfully let us know our failings and stands ready to help us rectify them.

Monday, April 16th - Hebrews 4: 12, 13

Christ perceives us not only as we appear outwardly with our attempts to act respectfully, but He sees us as we truly are inwardly. He knows not only who and what we are, down to the most subtle detail, but, through His knowledge of our intentions, He knows what we hope to become and to do in the future. That Christ has full and perfect knowledge of our inner essence is conveyed through the several pairs of words

used in v.12, namely: soul and spirit, joints and marrow, thoughts and intentions. Negatively, no one can be hidden from His perception; positively, all creatures and all things pertaining to all creatures are open and evident to Him. We may dull and delude ourselves with the thought that if we convince men of our integrity, we have integrity. However, the only competent judge of true integrity is the all-knowing Son of God.

Tuesday, April 17th - Hebrews 4: 12, 13

Christ is not an omniscient spectator of all creatures. He sees and understands all of our thoughts, words, and deeds. He also is alone the perfect assessor and judge of our attitudes and actions. The reason the writer of this letter mentions Christ's omniscience at this point is so that we might understand that if we are anything less than diligent in our striving to enter God's rest (v.11), Christ, and not we, will be the first to know. Christ knows us better than we, deadened by our sin, can ever know ourselves. And since we have to do with Him, it follows that He has to do with us. That means that our Lord will disclose to us our true selves, and He will transform us into our highest and best for His glory.

Wednesday, April 18th - Hebrews 4: 14

The fact that Christ has such intimate awareness and perfect understanding of our actions and attitudes should sober us from our thinking that He is inattentive to or unknowing of any lack of sincerity in our Christian walk. His omniscience is a searching light in which, by His Word and Spirit, we see light (Ps. 36:9), and more truly perceive ourselves in that light. Yet, we do not flee in shame from Him, for there is something powerfully attractive about this all-seeing Savior. We do not think about running from such a One from whom it is impossible to hide, and we do not want to run from Him, but rather to Him. For He sees our evident and hidden sins not as a condemning judge, but as a skillful and loving physician, who diagnoses us to heal us. Therefore, it follows that we should come to and hold fast to ourselves our all-knowing Savior, who has demonstrated His love by His sacrificial atonement rendered for us.

Thursday, April 19th - Hebrews 4: 14

The living Christ (v.12) gives to His people a living and laboring faith. Thus, we are told that lack of spiritual diligence is a bitter fruit of disobedience, not a sweet and satisfying fruit of faith (v.11). We are also urged in this verse to hold fast our confession of faith in Jesus, our gracious and glorious high priest. For He has done a work for us which gives us unshakable standing not only on earth (Lk. 6:46-49), but also in the perfect light of heaven's courts (Col. 3:1-4). We have already in this letter been urged to hold fast our confidence in the work of Christ so faithfully performed (Heb. 3:6). Now we are urged to hold fast to our confession of faith in the loving person who has accomplished for us this efficacious work. Faith does not hold lightly such treasures as the person and work of Jesus.

Friday, April 20th - Hebrews 4: 14

We are called to be diligent in our walk and to be careful to hold fast our confession of faith in Jesus not so that we might attain salvation, but because we are already possessors of salvation by the Lord's gracious doing. For we are saved by the high priestly service of the God/Man, who rendered Himself an atoning sacrifice for our sins, and now has ascended to heaven with His perfect humanity which, by his continued priestly intercessions, is being imparted to us. Our striving to enter ever more deeply into the rest of God, and our cleaving to Christ by faith represent not our poor endeavors to earn salvation, but rather the fruits which issue from that salvation Jesus has perfectly accomplished for us.

Saturday, April 21st - Hebrews 4: 14

We are exhorted to hold fast our confession not because that confession will fade or slip away from us. Instead, we ourselves are easily inclined to drift from it (Heb. 2:1-4). Additionally, the wicked world and deceptive devil will conspire, by enticement or intimidation, to distract us from this one thing necessary. Our knowing this not only forewarns us, but also fortifies our grip upon this priceless treasure of salvation.

Sunday, April 22nd - Hebrews 4: 15

The perfect knowledge Christ has of us proceeds not only from His divine omniscience, but also from His loving human affinity. His experience as the Son of Man in this cursed world populated by fallen, sinful humanity wrought in Him an intimate fellow-feeling with us. His holy essence makes Him the only perfectly qualified high priest in the things pertaining to God (Heb. 2:17). At the same time, His human experience renders Him the perfect Savior of men. He attracts sinners to Himself by His sympathetic understanding of their plight. He need not be told the secrets of our soul, for He knows them perfectly by His divine omniscience and He feels them perfectly by His loving humanity.

Monday, April 23rd - Hebrews 4: 15

Our high priest sympathizes with our weaknesses not because He had such weaknesses during His earthly life. Rather, His sympathetic capacity arises from His having submitted Himself to the full range of our temptations. The temptations by which He was tested in the wilderness were representative of a plethora of temptations He faced throughout His earthly life. This means not only that we face no temptation which is not common to man (1 Cor.10:13), but also that we face no temptation which the Son of Man has not Himself faced.

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Tuesday, April 24th - Hebrews 4: 15

We are told that our great high priest has been tempted in all things as we are. This expresses to us the comforting truth that our Savior understands fully, from His own experience, our temptations. We are further told that He faced them all without sin. This means that Jesus never succumbed to the power of temptation, thus committing sin. The implication of this is not that He, because He did not sin, is unable to appreciate the power of temptation. Rather, because His resistance was beyond the point of each temptation's power, He alone knows the full power of every temptation. Because we give in to temptation before we experience its full power, it is we, not He, who are ignorant of the true strength of temptation. Without this high priest, we cannot stand against temptation's power. With Him, we can resist and prevail in the most evil of days (Eph. 6:10ff).

Wednesday, April 25th - Hebrews 4: 15, 16

The gracious sympathy of Jesus, our high priest, should inspire confidence in us. It is not that we are to be confident in ourselves, the just nature of our cause, or the worthiness of our persons. Rather, it is His tender grace and sympathetic love which attract us to confide in Him. We can and should tell Him all that is in our

hearts—even and especially the worst. Though He is without sin, He will be the very last to throw any stones of condemnation at us.

Thursday, April 26th - Hebrews 4: 15, 16

The sinless One is the only truly sympathetic One. Therefore, we should ever stir ourselves to draw near to Him. We should never ignore Him, as though He, being sinless, could not understand and sympathize with us. As we are called to action in our striving to enter God's rest (v.11), so we are here called to action in our drawing near to the One who has so fully demonstrated His saving love for us. This action of our drawing near to Him, and through Him to the Father, should be prompted by an attitude within us of complete confidence in the divine mercy. This means that we should have assurance that our Lord will ever help, never hurt, us. It also means that we confide in Him, opening ourselves freely and candidly to Him. This we must do, for He who knows our very thoughts and intentions (v.12) would have us freely express to Him our needs, as though He, the omniscient One, had need to be informed by us. By such communication we do not simply provide our Lord with information, but enjoy loving communion with Him. Let us, therefore, never petulantly rely upon His omniscience to fathom our needs, when He so lovingly calls upon us freely to express them to Him.

Friday, April 27th - Hebrews 4: 16

We are called to draw near to a throne. To guilty sinners, the thought of a summons to the seat of sovereign authority and offended majesty is awesomely forbidding. But we are called to approach the throne of grace. By this we are to understand that our sovereign Lord has mercifully taken the initiative to guarantee that we shall always receive blessed reward for our confident approach to His throne, and never shall we receive from Him that condemnation we so rightly and richly deserve (Rom. 8:1).

Saturday, April 28th - Hebrews 4: 16

Our approach to the throne of grace, which throne is occupied by our sympathetic high priest, results in our finding a merciful reception by the very God whom we have offended by our sin. We also receive from our God gracious, empowering provision suited perfectly to our need as well as to the time in which we find ourselves. We shall never approach the throne of grace and there find anything other than the most tender, loving reception and wise and fortifying assistance. None of our Savior's promises or invitations are vain; still less vain is the full and prevailing provision He makes for us.

Sunday, April 29th - Hebrews 5: 1, 2

The writer, having made mention of Jesus as our great and sympathetic high priest (4:14), now begins a new section of his epistle. Christ has been shown to be superior to angels (ch.1) and to Moses (chs. 3, 4). Now the writer begins to tell how Christ is superior not only to Aaron, Israel's first high priest, but also superior to all high priests of the Aaronic order. This emphasis upon Jesus as the supreme high priest spells out for us the nature of the help our sympathetic Mediator gives to us, namely, that He saves us from our sins (Mt. 1:21). The wounds we have resulting from our sin necessitate our Redeemer's tender and sympathetic handling of us; our sin, the cause of the wounds, necessitates His sacrificially saving, high priestly work for us.

Monday, April 30th - Hebrews 5: 1

This verse informs us that the whole point of our having such a great high priest as Jesus is not so that we may receive an indulgent pat on the head. The divine calling and commissioning of a high priest is to the end that we might have atonement wrought for our sins, resulting in our having unhindered and holy communion with God. Our greatest need is for such an effectual high priest. Aaron provisionally typified this office which Jesus essentially fulfilled.

Tuesday, May 1st - Hebrews 5: 1-4

These verses summarize the nature of the office of high priest as represented by Aaron and his sons. They tell us that there were two essential requirements for each high priest. First, there must be solidarity between the high priest and the people he represents before God. Secondly, the high priest must be divinely appointed to his office. The work of the high priest, we are reminded, involved his offering, in accordance with divine directive, gifts and sacrifices for the sins of the people. Aaron imperfectly shadowed forth these requirements in his person and work, but Jesus perfectly and substantially fulfilled them all.

Wednesday, May 2nd - Hebrews 5: 1-4

Aaron was an Israelite, whose calling was to represent Israel before God, and to portray God to Israel. In his representation of Israel, he had to have a genuine sympathy for the people and solidarity with them arising from his common relation to them and experience with them. He had to perceive their needs by his being conscious of his own needs. Thereby he could deal gently with them, enabling them to feel free to approach him with their sacrifices. The word translated, *to be gentle* (metriopaqei/n), means to feel mid-way. It implies a mediation between objective indifference and subjective sentimentality. The high priest had to empathize with sinners, but he was not to be so overwhelmed by fellow-feeling that he could not with a holy detachment faithfully manifest God to them or minister for them before God. Aaron did not always perfectly manifest this gentleness. Incidents with the golden calf (Ex. 32), and when the sons of Aaron offered strange fire (Lev. 10), show Aaron's being almost swallowed up in a sinful sentimentality for the people. Jesus, our great high priest, is the only perfectly gentle high priest.

Thursday, May 3rd - Hebrews 5: 1-3

The high priest was required not only to have sympathy with the people, but he also was required to represent them before God. Here the dimension of sacrifice and atonement comes into view. Sinful man, as he is in himself, cannot appear before the holy, living God. Therefore, atoning sacrifice offered by the high priest was essential. The high priest secured the acceptance of the people by their holy God through his offering of divinely appointed sacrifices for and with them. The high priest was required to be a caring person called by God to offer costly, sacrificial service. The Aaronic high priests were but shadows of this substantial high priesthood which belonged only to Jesus.

Friday, May 4th - Hebrews 5: 4

The sinful people needed a high priest who sympathized with them and faithfully offered sacrifices for them before God. But not just any sympathetic Israelite could fill this office. Only Aaron and his sons were so authorized to serve as high priests because they were appointed to the office by God. This divine appointment is set out in elaborate and vitally significant detail in Ex. 28, 29. It would have been the height of presumption for any man to assume such an office on his own initiative. It would have been dangerous as well, as Korah and his fellow rebels learned when they declared all the congregation to be holy and thus qualified to serve as priests (Num. 16).

Saturday, May 5th - Hebrews 5: 5, 6

In vv. 5-10 the writer shows us that the two essential characteristics required for a high priest were possessed in perfect measure by Jesus. Our Redeemer is supremely sympathetic with us, and thus He is perfectly qualified as high priest to deal tenderly with poor, needy sinners. He was also uniquely authorized by God to represent redeemed sinners before the throne of divine and holy majesty. Nor was Jesus merely qualified to act as a provisional, shadowy high priest. He is the perfect, substantial high priest of whom all other priests are but imperfect reflections.

Sunday, May 6th - Hebrews 5: 5, 6

Christ freely undertook the work of our redemption, but the office of high priest, wherein He accomplished our redemption by the atoning sacrifice of Himself, He did not undertake on His own initiative. Christ was appointed our great high priest by God the Father in the counsels of eternity. The significance of this divine authorization can be seen from the writer's Old Testament citations in these verses. From Ps. 2:7, Christ is called God's Son. That psalm, however, is an enthronement psalm celebrating Christ as King. Yet even as the divine Son of God and sovereign, heavenly King He did not presume to act as high priest, as did, for example, sinful King Saul (1 Sam. 13:8-14). He received His appointment as high priest by God the Father. That divine appointment is cited from Ps. 110, a Messianic psalm, wherein Christ is appointed high priest according to an eternal priesthood, namely, that of Melchizedek. Thus, we should understand that Christ in His person and by authority of His appointment to His office of high priest, was fully and uniquely qualified to accomplish our redemption.

Monday, May 7th - Hebrews 5: 7-10

These verses speak of the sympathy of our great high priest. Our Christ, the divinely appointed great high priest, the Son of God and King of all kings, is supremely approachable. Sinners need not flee from Him, but rather should run to Him, for He, by His incarnation and earthly ministry, has acquired complete sympathy with us. He learned such sympathy through His becoming one of us and exposing Himself to all of our trials. Accordingly, we may say that by His divine commission and by His human compassion Christ is uniquely and perfectly qualified as our great high priest.

Tuesday, May 8th - Hebrews 5: 7, 8

When the Son of God assumed a human nature at His incarnation, He remained all that He ever was as God, but He became much that He never had been. The eternal One assumed a nature which had a beginning in time; the Creator became a creature; the heavenly Sovereign became a suffering servant on earth; He to whom men prayed became Himself One who prayed, offering His supplications to His heavenly Father. In short, the Son of God learned as a man to obey God. The supreme test of Christ's obedience was in Gethsemane, where He cried to His Father in prayer, asking that He be spared drinking the full cup of His sufferings on the cross. Yet Christ submitted His will to that of His Father, something He never had to do prior to His incarnation. Therefore, through His sufferings, the Son of God acquired the experience of obedience to God, something which He, having eternally been co-equal and thus co-commanding with His Father, never had experienced. The magnitude of such costly condescension for our salvation is inconceivable to us. Yet, it is blessedly true.

Wednesday, May 9th - Hebrews 5: 7, 8

The things Christ suffered are manifold in quantity and costly in quality. He suffered the limitations of being conceived and carried in a woman's womb. He was born in adverse conditions, and grew up in obscurity and poverty. At the outset of His public ministry He was tempted by Satan in the wilderness. His patience was tried constantly by uncomprehending disciples, and He endured ceaseless challenges from His opponents. In Gethsemane, He submitted His will obediently to the course of exquisite agony set before Him by the Father. On the cross, He identified so completely with His sinful people that He became sin for them, and endured the wrath of God and death which was due to us for our sin. Christ remained obedient to His Father, even when it brought upon Him sufferings, wrath, death. The sympathy for sinners and obedience to God possessed by Aaron and the other shadowy high priests would have been exhausted long before the end of the course which our great high priest completed.

Thursday, May 10th - Hebrews 5: 7, 8

We are told that the Son of God prayed to His Father agonizingly and that He was heard because of His piety. Yet, the Son prayed that the cup of His sufferings might pass from Him. From Christ's subsequent arrest, trial, and crucifixion, we might think that His prayers were not heard, but rather were ignored or denied. The Son's prayers, however, were heard on the deepest level. For He who asked that the cup pass

from Him, also asked that it not be His will, but the Father's will which prevailed. Here was the Son's ultimate trust in and obedience to His Father. Here is a great high priest who offers not rams or goats—something apart from Himself—but rather offers Himself in heart, soul, strength, and mind to the Father.

Friday, May 11th - Hebrews 5: 8, 9

Although Christ was the Son of God, He was treated as though He were a servant bound over to suffer for sins and crimes He committed. His enduring such extreme sufferings, however, did not destroy Him, but rendered Him the perfect high priest, who offered Himself as the spotless Lamb of God for the sins of His people. He who was eternally perfect in His being, therefore, was, by the things which He suffered, made perfect for His mediatory office between God and man, for His suffering the penalty due our sins was of the essence of His high priestly office and service.

Saturday, May 12th - Hebrews 5: 8, 9

Christ was eternally perfect in His divinity. His humanity was conceived in perfection, and He maintained the sinless perfection of His human nature throughout His earthly life. However, it was from the things He suffered that He became the perfect source of eternal salvation and temporal sanctification to all who by faith and trust obey Him. Christ is the perfect source for our obedience. His example encourages our obedience in the darkest days of our afflictions. Furthermore, He empowers us with His own victorious resistance against temptation and sin, so that we are by our faith in Him preserved for our glorious and eternal inheritance (1 Pet. 1:4,5).

Sunday, May 13th - Hebrews 5: 8-10

Christ is the source of eternal salvation due to a convergence of factors. As the eternal and holy Son of God, He alone could and did perform a saving work of eternal and infinite significance. As the obedient and suffering Son of Man, He paid for our sins, and He set for us the perfect example and provides empowering for our obedience. Yet, in addition to His holy nature and sinlessly sin-bearing service, the fact that He was appointed to an order of priesthood higher than that of Aaron also serves to make Him the perfect source of eternal salvation. By His gifts, graces, divine commissioning, and sacrificial work, our Redeemer has abundantly and eternally secured our salvation.

Monday, May 14th - Hebrews 5: 10, 11

The writer of this epistle has been elaborating upon Christ's office of high priest. He has detailed the shadowy pattern of that priesthood in Aaron, and has gone on to show Jesus to have been the perfect substance of the high priest. In his richly detailed and highly significant treatment of Christ's office of and service as high priest, the writer has mentioned the character of Melchizedek as the prototype of a priestly order higher than that of the Aaronic order. Yet, before he opens up the deep treasures of truth regarding Melchizedek, and what that priest shows us about our great high priest Jesus, the writer hesitates. He does so because he senses impatience and impairment on the part of his readers. Neither they nor we can rightly receive the deep treasures of truth so long as the impairment of our spiritual lethargy remains. What treasures are we currently missing due to our dullness?

Tuesday, May 15th - Hebrews 5: 11

Concerning Melchizedek the writer has much to say. We may be surprised to learn that there is so much to be said regarding this ancient and relatively obscure character about whom so little is written in the Old Testament (Gen. 14:18-20; Ps. 110:4). There are vast mines of vital truth often hidden in Scripture beneath brief notices, the true significance of which would remain hidden from us were it not brought out elsewhere in Scripture. Thus, we see the necessity for our taking in a ministry of the whole counsel of God, rightly expounded and applied.

Wednesday, May 16th - Hebrews 5: 11

By the brevity of the notice given to him in the Old Testament (Gen. 14:18-20; Ps. 110:4), we may wrongly conclude that Melchizedek is a fairly minor character. Yet our writer has much to say about him. He has much to say because there are many significant details about him which are not immediately apparent, and which, therefore, require of us the mental effort of thoughtful analysis. He has much to say which is of vital importance to us, since Melchizedek represents Christ. We may wonder why we should have the type and shadow so fully considered when we now have in Christ the substance itself. However, the substance of our Savior is so blindingly glorious and, at the same time, so wonderfully concealed in humble simplicity that we draw much understanding of His person and work by our rightly studying the contours of His shadowy prefigurations. Let us not, therefore, despise any study of a shadow which is cast by and points us to our Lord.

Thursday, May 17th - Hebrews 5: 11

The difficulty the writer senses he will have in his explaining the significance of Melchizedek lies not in any tediousness or apparent irrelevance of the subject, for rightly esteemed such depth and detail reveal the richness and wonder of the subject. Nor is the difficulty due to any poor comprehension and inadequate power of articulation on the part of the writer. Instead, the source of the difficulty is found in the spiritual dullness of those whom the writer addresses. Such spiritual lethargy may make the teaching of God's Word to appear dull, just as a film over the eyes can make light appear dull and foggy to the impaired seer. The problem is in the capacity of the ones perceiving. That dullness is therefore challenged, so that those reading this exhortation would arouse themselves to cry to God, "open my eyes, that I may behold wonderful things from Thy law." (Ps. 119:18). Wonderful things are there to be seen in every jot and tittle of Scripture, if we but had eyes to see (Eph. 1:18).

Friday, May 18th - Hebrews 5: 11, 12

Those who grow weary of the wonders of God's Word and anything in it pertaining to the glories of Christ's person and work have undergone a process, perhaps at first imperceptible, wherein their powers of spiritual perception and digestion of the nourishment of truth have grown sluggish. It is clear from what the writer says in v.12 that this condition resulted neither from natural limitations nor unavoidable calamity, but rather from perversity of heart for which the dull ones were themselves responsible. Such perversity inclines the mind to become ingenious, not in its pursuing Christ and the way of godly obedience, but in finding ways to excuse the lack of exertion in one's asking, seeking, and knocking after the Lord. When they come to us, we should treasure those challenges which are designed to quicken us from our spiritual deadness.

Saturday, May 19th - Hebrews 5: 12

From this challenge we learn that believers are expected to grow and mature in the faith (Col. 1:28; 2 Pet. 3:18). Those who do not grow not only fail to assume responsibility as leaders and teachers in the Church, but they also lose their grasp of the rudimentary things and they themselves need to be taught the basics once again. Our calling is ever upward and onward in Christ. If we are not progressing, we are digressing. Static attainment is not an option in the world of grace.

Sunday, May 20th - Hebrews 5: 12, 13

Note how frankly and faithfully the writer is in his dealing with his readers. He tells them plainly, if painfully, that they are spiritual pigmies, stunted in their growth and development. They have come to this point by a process wherein they failed to appreciate the superiority of Christ (chs. 1,2), failed to concentrate upon Christ's person and work (ch.3), failed to hold fast their confession (4:14), and failed constantly and vitally to draw near to the throne of grace (4:16). They had become distracted by lesser things—angels,

Moses, Aaron—things not sinful in themselves, but neither were they the one thing necessary. Do the matters we consider refinements of the faith in fact serve to retard our growth in Christ?

Monday, May 21st - Hebrews 5: 12, 13

There is nothing wrong with our being babes when we are babes. Peter writes of spiritual babes longing for the milk of the Word (1 Pet. 2:1-3). Yet we are supposed to grow in the faith (Eph. 4:11-16). When adults refuse to mature, to grow, to develop, to think, to learn, and to apply to themselves the Word of God, they are guilty of a perverse rebellion which has serious and sore consequences (Eph. 4:14). Milk is always easier to ingest and digest than meat. Milk is pre-digested and requires only to be swallowed. Meat must be prepared and chewed before it can be swallowed. There is another difference between milk and meat. The former issues from living animals, the latter from animals slaughtered. It is a hallmark of a retarded spirituality that it demands ease, convenience, immediate gratification, and that it delights only in the sweet things of our Lord's life, while eschewing His bitter but blessed sufferings and death.

Tuesday, May 22nd - Hebrews 5: 13, 14

The word of righteousness takes us to the cross, where Christ bore the righteous penalty due our sins, and provided for us His righteousness (2 Cor. 5:21). At the cross we behold the Lamb of God taking away our sin. When we feed upon Christ, we feed upon the solid food of heavenly manna (Jn. 6:32,33). When we by faith consume His flesh (incarnation) and drink His blood (His death), we have eternal life (Jn. 6:53,54), which empowers us to be more than conquerors in time and eternity (Rom. 8:35-39). Those who know and fully follow the Savior are set upon a course of training through many trials, which serve to strengthen and purify them, not destroy them. Hence, the writer speaks of the mature having been habitually trained in the spiritual gymnasium (gegumnasme,na) to the point where they can accurately discern worlds of difference between small but significant things.

Wednesday, May 23rd - Hebrews 5: 14

Good and evil are poles apart in reality. Yet in appearance they may seem confusingly similar to an undiscerning babe. The Greek words used in the original of v. 14, by the similarity of their appearance, show this apparent but infinitely significant difference between good (kalou/) and evil (kakou/), which may only be rightly discerned not by the casual and infantile observer, but by the careful and mature man of God. Let us, then, submit to that spiritual training and subsist on that substantial diet whereby we are enabled to grow out of that spiritual infancy which leaves us so vulnerable to destructive deception (Eph. 4:14), and so useless in our inability to teach others (v.12).

Thursday, May 24th - Hebrews 6: 1

It is the design and determination of God that His people grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ (2 Pet. 3:18). This means that our duty and determination should be that we grow spiritually. True spiritual satisfaction comes through our hungering and thirsting for Christ (Mt. 5:6), and our longing for His ordinances (1 Pet. 2:1-3). Those who feel that they are full and have attained all they need or desire spiritually do not know how poor and empty they are (Rev. 3:17). Those who think they have enough of Christ may find that they have none of Christ, for it is the hallmark of the genuine Christ dealing with His people that He ever leads them onward and upward in their pilgrimage.

Friday, May 25th - Hebrews 6: 1

Those Christians who are intent to stick to the basics of theology, who cling to what they call the simple gospel, are badly mistaken in their views of sanctification. Nothing is quite so detrimental to our spiritual

growth and to our serving and pleasing the Lord as is the minimalist mentality, which is content with the fewest, most simple fundamentals of the faith. Such misguided souls are intent upon sticking at the beginning (th/j avrch/j) of the person and work of Christ, and refuse to press on to perfection (th.n teleio,thta) in the things of the Lord. No one would think it right purposely to stunt his own physical or intellectual development. Why would we ever think it right to maintain immature spiritual stature? We all begin in the kingdom of God as babes, but if we seek to remain there we succeed only in becoming pitiful dwarfs, not perpetual infants who are pleasing in the sight of our God.

Saturday, May 26th - Hebrews 6: 1

We are called to leave behind the beginnings or the basic things of the Lord, and to press on to completeness in Christ. This does not mean that we abandon the basics, but rather that we are to build upon them and grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ (2 Pet. 3:18). Paul was not one to minister only the basics. He ministered the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27), and sought to nurture men to perfection in their sanctification (Col. 1:28). If we stick with the basics, we have only the foundation; if we press on, we have both foundation and edifice in the house we should be erecting upon the rock of our salvation (Lk. 6:48).

Sunday, May 27th - Hebrews 6: 1, 2

The foundational things of our lives in Christ begin with death and life. We die to sin through our repentance from our dead and deadening transgressions. This negative work is followed by a positive work, namely, our living by faith in God. These basic doctrines and their sanctifying dynamic in our lives we never outgrow. However, they should be like roots from which fruits are produced, or like a foundation, hidden but upholding a house. We can live upon a foundation, but not in it. The things of theology into which we are to grow should never be viewed as mere dispensable extras. They shelter and comfort us as the foundation upholds us.

Monday, May 28th - Hebrews 6: 1, 2

Rudiments of the gospel are necessary, but they are things upon which we should build. Faith and repentance are listed as such rudiments. We are never to abandon or ignore them, but neither are we to be perpetually or exclusively taken up with them. They are doctrines upon which we build. So are the other things mentioned in v.2. Baptism is the purifying rite of initiation. Here the word is plural—baptisms—as though to signify several things, such as the rite of water baptism, the baptism of the Spirit, and baptism of sufferings. The point is that initiations are essential, but life and growth must follow. The laying on of hands may refer to apostolic conferring of gifts of the Holy Spirit, or to the ordination to office in the Church. Vital and important as such conferrings or commissionings are, they, too, are but the beginnings of service, from which beginnings true progress should be made. The resurrection from the dead and eternal judgment are true, vital, and fundamental doctrines, but they are events at the end of time. Our calling is to concentrate upon our growing in the depth and detail of our communion with Christ here and now and throughout the course of our lives. Are we taking in the whole counsel of God in proper proportion and vital depth?

Tuesday, May 29th - Hebrews 6: 1-3

Our retarding our spiritual growth is not approved by our Lord or by any of His faithful ministers. The writer of this letter, having identified and with loving faithfulness challenged the spiritual dullness of his readers, now tells them that he intends to revisit the depths of teaching about Melchizedek, and he expects his readers to commit themselves to following the precious and potent doctrine. Yet, he does not intend to bash on by force of his own will, or to lash his hearers on to a submissive listening. His humble yet confident commitment and expectation are grounded in the enabling grace of God, who works in us to will and do His good pleasure as we work out the unsurpassed treasures of our salvation.

Wednesday, May 30th - Hebrews 6: 4-6

One who indulges a slothful sticking at the beginnings of the Christian life does not and cannot remain stuck on the basics. Spiritual dullness, if not remedied, will lead on to deadly refusals in the course of our pilgrimage. The writer has already alluded to this when he cited the matter of Israel's refusal to enter Canaan at Kadesh-Barnea (Heb. 3:7-11; Num. 13,14). It is a fact of spiritual life that as many are called and few are chosen, so of the many who begin the pilgrimage to glory, fewer persevere to the end. The history of the Church is littered with many sobering examples of those who professed faith, but failed to perform by faith.

Thursday, May 31st - Hebrews 6: 4-6

Spiritual growth and advancement in knowledge, understanding, graces, and virtues are not trivial extras which we may take or leave in the Christian life. Those refusing to grow in Christ and advance in godliness place themselves in danger of their slipping into apostasy. This is a mortal danger against which the writer here faithfully and lovingly warns us. Let us carefully heed this warning, and hence come nowhere near this terrible danger.

Friday, June 1st - Hebrews 6: 4-6

These verses are not only sobering but also vexing. Bible scholars have wrestled over the question of whether the individuals considered in this passage are true believers or hypocritical professors having had only a temporary, rather than a saving, faith. Had the Holy Spirit inspiring this writer intended to make perfectly clear the answer to this question, He could have and would have done so. Instead, we are left with a most serious and penetrating admonition which no true disciple can read without asking searchingly: *Lord, is it I?*

Saturday, June 2nd - Hebrews 6: 4-6

The writer is addressing those who are dull of hearing (Heb. 5:11). Spiritual deafness can lead to spiritual death, if not corrected. What we will not do today, we may find that we cannot do tomorrow. Jesus calls upon us to believe in the light in order that we might become sons of light (Jn. 12:36). John records that those who would not believe, soon could not believe (Jn. 12:37,39). The point of this serious admonition is to prevent any professing believer from falling away from the light and life of the living Christ. Let us use whatever sense of hearing we have to hear and heed more about the Savior.

Sunday, June 3rd - Hebrews 6: 4-6

Those to whom the writer refers show evidence in all of their privileges that they are true believers. It is their performance and lack of perseverance where they fall short. Five precious privileges are listed in vv. 4,5. The first is that they were once enlightened. By this we should understand that they came under the enlightening sound of the gospel. Not only so, but the eyes of their hearts must have been, at least to some extent, opened as well. Not only did they see the light of salvation, but they fed upon the potent pleasures of the gospel as well. They tasted the gift of salvation, they fed upon the ministry of the Holy Spirit, they took in the Word of God, and they experienced tokens of the power of glory. Who were those to whom this writer refers? They are ones who have experienced all that we, who profess saving faith in Christ, experience. Let us, therefore, learn not to rest upon our privileges or presume that our possession of them will compensate for our lack of performance by them.

Monday, June 4th - Hebrews 6: 4-6

These verses do not contradict biblical teaching regarding assurance of salvation and perseverance. They do, however, challenge presumptuous faith and false assurance. We may be inclined to emphasize the

impossibility of true believers ever falling away from the Lord (Jn. 10:27-29). Yet here the Holy Spirit places emphasis upon the impossibility of those who spurn their heavenly privileges being renewed to repentance. From some sins there is no deliverance (1 Jn. 5:16,17), and so our safety lies in our never committing them.

Tuesday, June 5th - Hebrews 6: 4-6

The reference to those who have fallen away implies not the occasional slip or distracted wandering from Christ, but rather a confirmed, final, irreversible spiritual death resulting from a perverse and persistent refusal to follow Christ fully. Such apostasy is not one's standing in, on, with, or for Christ, but away from Him. It is a state dreadful to contemplate, and worse than deadly to enter. None of those originally reading these sobering words surely were in such a state, nor is it likely that any of us so reading these words are in such a state. Let us be grateful to God, and determine by His grace never to come near to being in such a state.

Wednesday, June 6th - Hebrews 6: 4-6

Believers may slide, drift, wander, and be distracted from Christ and, by God's graciously convicting them, be brought back to an obedient walk with Christ. However, never has and never will an apostate, who with open eyes sees and rejects the Christ glorified by the ministry of the Holy Spirit, be renewed to repentance. Spiritual dullness is no light or laughing matter.

Thursday, June 7th - Hebrews 6: 4-6

We may wonder why it is impossible to renew the apostate to repentance. Are not all things possible to God? In answer, we should note that apostates reject the very source and power of renewal and repentance. They do with their minds and hearts, what the Jews before Pilate did with the Romans as instruments in their hands, namely, cry out for the crucifixion of Jesus and call for the responsibility of His death to be upon them. Those who would re-crucify the One already crucified cast themselves beyond the pale of redemption.

Friday, June 8th - Hebrews 6: 4-6

Lest we think the sentence pronounced by God upon apostates is too hard, we should consider things from the perverse perspective of the apostate. No one guilty of this sin will ever want to repent of it. No apostate will seek forgiveness from the Lord and be refused that which he sincerely seeks. The attitude of the apostate is well captured by John Milton in *Paradise Lost* with the satanic words: "Better to reign in hell, than serve in heav'n."

Saturday, June 9th - Hebrews 6: 7, 8

In these verses, the writer illustrates the principle of apostasy with an agricultural image. What he writes is very similar to what Jesus taught in the parable of the sower (Mt. 13, Mk. 4, Lk. 8). In the parable, the gracious application of God is seen in the seed scattered. Here, in Hebrews, it is evident in the frequent showers from heaven. Yet, if godly privileges generously conferred yield varying results, the difference is to be attributed not to the grace of God, but rather to the condition of the heart receiving and responding to that grace. Fruitful vegetation is the goal of agriculture, whereas thorns and thistles are incidental productions fit only to be destroyed. The fault lies in the soil, or to apply the image, in the hearts of those who are half-hearted in their devotion to Jesus. Half-heartedness manifests itself in half-measures with the Lord, where one accepts only those bits and pieces of the Savior which do not seem to call for the radical mortification of the sin within the heart. From this image, we see that nature itself daily portrays the principle that it is only the pure in heart who see God.

Sunday, June 10th - Hebrews 6: 7, 8

Grace is seen in the frequently sent showers of this image. Grace is further seen by the phrase, *close to being cursed*, where the cursing is yet suspended, thus allowing time for repentance. As deeply penetrating, searchingly strong, and painfully admonishing as the words of vv.4-6 are, they are not without traces of divine grace given to keep us all from falling into the hellish pit of apostasy.

Monday, June 11th - Hebrews 6: 9

After his having written some of the most sobering and strongly challenging words found in Scripture, the writer offers relief. In fact, vv.4-8 and vv.9ff form two complementary parts of a single incentive issued to arouse believers from their spiritual dullness. The negative part of this incentive has been given in vv.4-8. There we are told the awful fate of those who refuse to follow the Lord fully. Now we are given the positive incentive, namely, the encouragements and comforts one encounters in the way of obedience. It is necessary and to our benefit that we know both the comforts of obedience and the curses which disobedience deserves.

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The writer has spoken plainly and strongly. It may seem that he was, exaggerating the seriousness of his readers' dullness, seeking thereby to terrify them and condemn them. In truth, he sought lovingly and faithfully to warn them of the very real danger of apostasy, which men such as Judas—but not only him—have actually committed. Now the writer makes explicit that love which implicitly prompted his issuing of the faithful admonition. He calls his readers *beloved*, for so they are loved of this writer, and, more importantly, of God. He has confident expectation that his strong warning will not catapult his readers into despair, but rather will arouse them to more sanctified living. Those truly saved can profit from the most painful truths delivered as faithful wounds by their loving friends.

Wednesday, June 13th - Hebrews 6: 9, 10

Weak faith is still faith. This fact, the writer acknowledges when he speaks of the godly fruits evident in those to whom he writes. We may wonder, then, why the grim and terrifying words were employed in vv. 4-8. Those who most faithfully serve the One who will not break a bruised reed or quench a smoking wick will seek effectively to stimulate, not smother, the low burning flame of faith in others. That stimulation may entail the speaking of some pretty strong and painful words. Yet, when both the necessary words of terror and tenderness are spoken to ones who have spiritual ears to hear, the response on their part is always one of revived commitment to the Lord and gratitude to the faithful servant who aroused them from their spiritual slumbers. The truth spoken in love never is uttered in vain and never returns to the Lord void.

Thursday, June 14th - Hebrews 6: 9, 10

These words of encouragement do not cancel, but complement the words of challenge spoken in vv.4-8. Therefore, we should note how consistent plain and painful admonitions are with love given and received. The admonishing writer speaks as he does, not because he hates the spiritually dull ones he addresses, but rather because he loves them. Love never withholds necessary correction. Nor should we, when we receive such, ever think ourselves to be anything but beloved of the Lord and His faithful servants.

Friday, June 15th - Hebrews 6: 9, 10

If vv.4-8 were intended to challenge false assurance of salvation, these verses are intended to strengthen true assurance. At first reading, it may seem that the writer makes our performance of obedience to Christ to be the basis of such assurance. Yet, in fact, he rightly declares that our assurance, comfort, and hope are grounded in the holy love and equity of God. In short, he says that his readers have already manifested in

good works evidence of their saving faith, and that the Lord never fails to recognize and reward fruits of His saving grace (Mt. 25:31-46).

Saturday, June 16th - Hebrews 6: 10-12

The writer makes clear that he is not calling his readers to take up some loathsome duty or to submit to the joyless drudgery of a loveless tyrant. Rather, he is recalling them to their first love, from whom their sluggishness had for a time distracted them (Song of Sol. 5:2,3). He is appealing for them to return to being their truest, highest, and best selves in Christ. He urges them to return to an attitude of loving gratitude, and to produce sweeter fruits of obedience toward the last steps of their pilgrimage than they did at their first steps in that way which leads to life and love and glory.

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Sunday, June 17th - Hebrews 6: 10-12

The spiritual dullness of these Hebrews, and their consequent poor performance in their serving their Savior, resulted from their having lost sight of the justice and love of God. When we rightly apprehend God's justice, we will know with a vivid and animating clarity that sinful slowness in our growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord is something to be dreaded and avoided at all costs. When we rightly apprehend God's grace, we will not allow ourselves to slump into dullness in our knowing and growing in Christ. Rather, we will hunger and thirst to know our gracious, loving Savior, and be increasingly eager to serve for His glory.

Monday, June 18th - Hebrews 6: 10-12

When the true grace of God is rightly apprehended by faith, the result in our lives is not dullness but diligence, not glib presumption but gallant performance. Thus, we find the Apostle Paul speaking of his laboring and, "...striving according to His power, which mightily works within me." (Col. 1:29). Similarly, Paul writes of our working out our salvation as a result of God working in us to will and work for His pleasure (Phil. 2:12,13). If we truly are growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord, we will attempt more and greater, not fewer and lesser, feats of faith, while our deeds of loving service will grow sweeter, purer, and more effectual, even as they increase in frequency.

Tuesday, June 19th - Hebrews 6: 11, 12

Sluggishness is never a virtue, but especially is it vile when we are sluggish in the things of the Lord. He who was eager to know and to do the will of God (Ps. 40:6,7; Heb. 10:5-7), though His doing it cost Him immeasurable sufferings unto death, is worthy to be served with our highest zeal and greatest diligence, springing from our profoundest gratitude. Faith does not make us dull and sluggish. Faith prompts us to spend ourselves in the service of the One who poured out Himself without reserve for us (Is. 53:12). Far from our response of imitating Christ's sacrificial service exhausting us, we find that it invigorates us with resurrection power. Who could be sluggish when we are called to such enriching and empowering service?

Wednesday, June 20th - Hebrews 6: 12

Saving faith prompts us out of dulling preoccupation with ourselves. It also awakens us from delusions that we are or must be original in our thinking and acting. Such delusions distract us from hearty endeavor and sap us of our strength. Faith fixes us upon set and certain courses, and fires us to be imitators of those who have successfully run those courses. Such faith makes us wise in the way, as well, for we are not always to be running or working, but should at times walk or even wait. That is where patience comes into play. The final result obtained by the exercise of faith is our inheriting the great and glorious provision promised us by God. Sluggishness is not even remotely so exciting in the way or enriching in the end as is the path and prize of faith.

Thursday, June 21st - Hebrews 6: 12-15

The writer has sought to awaken his readers to the spiritual gold mine which was theirs in Christ and upon which they were sitting with growing ignorance. He has also expressed his confidence that Christ in them would empower them to respond to the challenge, enabling them to persevere fruitfully to the end of their pilgrimage. His mention of faith and patience and his call for his readers to imitate those who inherited the

divine promises, leads him to mention the supreme example of a faithful man, namely, Abraham. Yet here we detect a significant shift in perspective. With all that the writer has said regarding our striving and our need to be diligent and on guard against falling away from Christ, we would expect him in his dealing with Abraham to continue in the vein of human experience and responsibility. However, the emphasis shifts from Abraham's example of faith to the utter faithfulness of God, which is the source and foundation for the faith of Abraham and all of his spiritual descendants. Here is assurance that is unshakable and incentive for faithful living which is unequalled.

Friday, June 22nd - Hebrews 6: 13-15

The faithfulness of God is here specified in two most significant aspects, namely, God's promise and His oath. Our experience with the promises of men teaches us that others may have good intention but lack ability to make provision. The promise of God manifests His gracious, loving, and exceedingly generous intention toward us. His oath confirms His absolute commitment to make good His promise—a commitment which we see wrought out in the life of Abraham, and which shall be likewise wrought out in our lives.

Saturday, June 23rd - Hebrews 6: 13, 14

These verses show the grounds for the patient perseverance of the faithful. Our patient expectation of blessing from our God is based upon His gracious promise. Our perseverance through all trials and tribulations issues from the certainty of the Lord's promises, since they are confirmed by divine oath. Thus, Abraham believed God's promise that he would have a son, and God gave him a son. So thoroughly did Abraham come to believe the promise of God, that even when God told him to offer Isaac as a sacrifice, Abraham obeyed. It was after that supreme obedience that the Lord swore to Abraham, who may at that time have been tempted to think that God had changed His promise to secure the patriarch's enjoyment of Isaac and all he represented (Gen. 22:16-18). The more severely our faith is tested, the more strongly we find the Lord committed to securing for us His blessings.

Sunday, June 24th - Hebrews 6: 15

Waiting does not tend to produce results as working does. Yet, for the highest and most enduring blessings men cannot work. For us to possess and enjoy the blessings of God we must with humble yet confident expectation wait on the Lord to provide for us what He promises. Thus, we are told that the father of the faithful exercised patience, rather than the powers of his own flesh. For many years, Abraham waited for a son. His waiting was not in vain, for God blessed him with Isaac. For many more years, Abraham endured trials and tests with respect to Isaac and the promised land. In the end, Abraham obtained the promise of God, having Isaac, the land of Canaan, and, above all, a saving grasp of the Savior to come (Jn. 8:56), and eternal life in Him. Abraham's faith gave him such a vital interest in all the promises of God, that he enjoyed the benefit and consolation of those promises even prior to his possession of their fulfillment. Thus, he grew strong in his faith, and obtained by his waiting upon God more than for which he could ever have worked.

Monday, June 25th - Hebrews 6: 16, 17

The word of men cannot be relied upon with confidence. Men may promise that which they have no intention of providing. Men also promise things which, when they duly consider the cost of their performing on the promise, they do not provide. The way men confirm their giving of such potentially unreliable promises is by an oath, in which they call upon God to witness and confirm their promise and to impose sanctions should the one swearing fail to perform on his promise. God's Word is not like that of men. His Word is perfectly reliable. Yet, He condescends to confirm that which should need no confirming

by adding His oath to His promise. The Word of the Lord is not as good as gold...it is infinitely better (Ps. 19:7-10; 119:72, 127).

Tuesday, June 26th - Hebrews 6: 16, 17

With finite, fallible men, an oath puts an end to all doubt and dispute pertaining to a promise given. So much more should the oath of God lay to rest our disputes with His providence, when we conceive that He is providing for us contrary to what He has promised.

Wednesday, June 27th - Hebrews 6: 17, 18

When God told Abraham to put Isaac to death as a sacrifice, it must have seemed to the father of the faithful that the Lord had changed His purpose to bless and multiply him. However, when the Lord swore by Himself that He would surely bless and multiply Abraham (Gen. 22:16-18), He made clear His strong desire and sure determination to fulfill His promise. So, too, when we behold the One who promised to all who believe in Him eternal life (Jn. 5:24), Himself dying on the cross, we may be tempted to think God has changed His purpose to save His people. Yet, with another oath rendered by God, that purpose is shown to stand fast, when the Lord swears that Jesus should be a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek (Ps. 110:4).

Thursday, June 28th - Hebrews 6: 17, 18

The love of God for poor, doubting sinners whom He chooses to save, is so great that He condescends to meet the requirements for validation of a matter between finite and fallible men. He gives us two witnesses to establish the trustworthiness of His intention. First, we have the Lord's promise, whereby we learn that the holy, immutable purpose and unfailing omnipotence of God are committed to our salvation. The value of this promise is to be reckoned by its veracity, which is certain, for it is impossible for God to lie. Thus, the promise alone should be sufficient to give us strong encouragement patiently to wait upon, trust in, and obey the Lord. Yet, to this promise is added by God a second word of testimony, namely, the divine oath. That oath confirms and places so far beyond doubt the promise that the one who does not believe the promise is said to make God a liar (1 Jn. 5:10), which it is impossible for the holy God of truth to be. It is impossible for us to have too much certainty in God's great and precious promises, signed and sealed as they are by His oath, His covenant, and His blood.

Friday, June 29th - Hebrews 6: 17, 18

The divine promise alone should be enough to give us perfect encouragement to persevere in our trust that the Lord will save us. There is nothing defective or insufficient about promises given by One who cannot lie and whose arm of strength cannot fail to perform what He promises. Yet, we are all like poor, uncertain Gideon in the matter of our trusting the Word of the Lord. Twice did Gideon employ the fleece to attain his assurance, and twice God speaks to us with His promise and His oath to give us assurance. Thus, we should understand and appreciate with profound gratitude the fact that the divine oath was given not to complete an insufficient promise, but rather fully to vanquish our persistent unbelief, giving us strong encouragement and consolation in the hope set before us of eternal life.

Saturday, June 30th - Hebrews 6: 18

The promise of God gives us encouragement, and the oath gives us strong encouragement. We may take consolation from the words of men and from the legitimate possession of earthly things, yet such consolation is weak and transitory. For men's words change, and earthly possessions pass away. The consolation we have in Christ is strong and prevailing. It withstands opposition from anything in creation, and even warrants and fortifies us to withstand the testing trials of our God, when He seems to be not for us, but against us. By God's promise and oath we stand in the evil day (Eph. 6:10ff), and declare when even the Lord's hand seems turned against us, *Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him.* (Job 13:15).

Sunday, July 1st - Hebrews 6: 18

We are in need of strong encouragement, for we are a people who know we need a refuge. Our sin has made us vulnerable to the exploitation of Satan and to the holy wrath of God. The refuge we have sought, by God's grace, is God Himself through Christ. In other words, we have been awakened to our great need. For security we no longer trust in our delusional suppression of the truth that we are vile and guilty rebels against the King of glory. Nor do we maintain our sinful confederacy with the devil who lured our first parents into sin. Instead, we run to the God whom we have offended, who has power not only to kill the body, but also just authority to cast our souls into hell. For us to seek refuge from Him whom we have offended requires a holy boldness which only He can and does give to us.

Monday, July 2nd - Hebrews 6: 18-20

The promise and oath of God together give us not only strong encouragement and consolation in and through all of our trials and tribulations, but also serve as roots from which the fruit of hope grows. As heirs of the divine promise and oath we are not as those without warrant to have the glorious excellencies of God. Yet, as heirs, our title to those excellencies is held in trust by our heavenly Father during the course of our sanctifying pilgrimage. Thus, our hope is not like our wishful but unfounded thinking. It is certain and safely reserved in heaven not from but for us.

Tuesday, July 3rd - Hebrews 6: 19, 20

The realization of hope we have, by the grace of the Lord, set before us. We do not yet possess the fullness and perfection of salvation, for, as Paul teaches us, *hope that is seen is not hope...* (Rom. 8:24). What we do currently have is hope, and that is no small or insubstantial possession. We possess the pledge of the glorious fullness to come (Eph. 1:13,14). The hope we now have is the key to the heavenly mansions (Jn. 14:2), the claim check for the prize of eternal glory, or, as v.19 tells us by use of a very concrete image, it is the soul's anchor set firmly in the heavenly places.

Wednesday, July 4th - Hebrews 6: 19, 20

The hope of glory which we have in Christ lifts and anchors our souls in heaven. Where our hope—or treasure—is, there will our hearts, souls, strength, and minds be. Thus, we are told that if we have been raised up with Christ, we should set our minds on the things above, where our truest, highest, most satisfying and lasting interests lie (Col. 3:1-4).

Thursday, July 5th - Hebrews 6: 19, 20

The anchor we have for our souls is a good one, which will not fail in its purpose. Our writer tells us that in itself, it is safe and sure. It cannot be lost or stolen, nor is it set precariously in the highest heaven. In its functioning, we are told that the anchor of our soul is firmly steadfast. It can and does withstand all that would buffet and seek to break it. As the hymn rightly says, the glorified spirits in heaven may be more happy, but not more secure than are we who struggle here on earth in the Church militant.

Friday, July 6th - Hebrews 6: 19, 20

Our anchor is set in the place most vital and valuable for our souls. Our hope in Christ penetrates the veil of heaven. Here the writer mixes his metaphors and overrides bad literary expression with good theology. He tells us, via the nautical image, that the anchor of hope is cast not downward into a pitching sea to be set fast to the rocks, but rather it is cast within the veil of the temple. This ecclesiastical image presents our hope set within the Holy of Holies, where God dwells, sitting upon the mercy seat. Of course, the writer is using the temple as a symbol to point to the reality that our hope lies not in a provisional religious type, but

rather in the heavenly reality. Our souls could not be more happy and secure than when they are anchored to the height of the glorious throne of God's grace.

Saturday, July 7th - Hebrews 6: 19, 20

The object of our hope, and the forger of the anchor of our soul, and of each link in the chain securing us to that anchor, is Jesus. The writer briefly mentions to us four things concerning Jesus. 1) He is our forerunner. Jesus is our pathfinder, the One who goes before us to find the way for us and to prepare our welcome at our destination. 2) Jesus is a forerunner *for* us. He has ascended to heaven on our behalf, so that we, in Him, might be raised up to be where He is forever. 3) Jesus has attained an eternal high priesthood. In this, our Redeemer is unique, in that all other priests who mediate between God and man are themselves sinners, subject to death. 4) The high priesthood of Jesus is not according to the provisional Aaronic priesthood, but rather is according to the eternal priesthood of Melchizedek. With the mention of Melchizedek, we are prepared to return to the subject from which the writer detoured beginning at Heb. 5:11, due to the spiritual dullness of his readers. The more we are willing patiently to learn about our Jesus, the more happy, secure, and useful we shall be in our devotion to Him and service for Him.

Sunday, July 8th - Hebrews 7: 1-3

The writer began to draw teaching about Jesus (the substance) from the Old Testament character, Melchizedek (the shadow). He sensed impatience from his readers, resulting from their spiritual dullness. Accordingly, he took a detour through a strong challenge to their dullness (5:11-6:8) and the comfort of their assurance of salvation (6:9-20). Now he returns to write of Melchizedek, drawing vast amounts of precious and vital truth from that relatively obscure Old Testament character. Scripture records all we know of Melchizedek in Gen. 14:17-20, and mentions him in Ps. 110:4 as heading a priesthood superior to that of Aaron. Due to the brevity of notice given Melchizedek in Scripture, we may wrongly assume that he is a character of minor significance. The truth is that due to his person and work he is the most significant man in the Old Testament. More about the person and work of Christ shines forth from him than from any other character prior to the incarnation of the Son of God. We therefore do well to follow closely and apply vitally to ourselves all that this inspired writer has to say about this man who shows us so much of the Son of Man.

Monday, July 9th - Hebrews 7: 1

The first thing noted about Melchizedek is his dual office. He was a king and a priest. These two offices were combined in no other Old Testament character, except temporarily in Moses, who functioned as a king as he led the people out of Egypt, and consecrated Aaron as high priest. Melchizedek was not only a priestly mediator between God and man, he also ruled over his fellow men as the earthly sovereign typical of the regal King of kings who rules over all men in all times. As unique and wonderful as was this shadow, it but points to that One who is our prophet, priest, and king. The great man comes before and shows us aspects of the greatest—indeed the perfect—Man whose priesthood righteously redeems us and whose Lordship pacifically rules us.

Tuesday, July 10th - Hebrews 7: 1

Melchizedek did not confine himself to ruling over only the citizens of Salem. He came to meet Abraham, who was not a citizen of Salem. The patriarch had, with an inferior force, set out to rescue his relative, Lot, and prevailed in the venture by the blessing and power of God (Gen. 14:19,20). This king of Salem and priest of God mediated blessing to Abraham, and blessed Abraham's God, the source of all true blessing. In this, the shadow acted in conformity with the Substance. For Jesus is our King, who possesses for all believers in every place and in every age every spiritual blessing, reserved in His own person in heaven, to be dispensed to His people upon appropriate occasions (Eph. 1:3).

Wednesday, July 11th - Hebrews 7: 1

Abraham had slaughtered wicked kings who had taken captive Lot, his family, and many others. Upon his return from battle, in which he delivered the captives, Abraham was met and blessed by a godly king, to whom he submitted in reverent gratitude. Our Savior comes to us with no slight blessing, but rather with the bounteous blessing of a king. It is the blessing of our Lord that not only makes us rich (Ps. 10:22), but that also makes us to be more than conquerors (Rom. 8:37). The blessings of our King Jesus are inexhaustible and unsearchable.

Thursday, July 12th - Hebrews 7: 1

Melchizedek was a priest to God who reigns supreme over all things. As such, Melchizedek was a man, neither an angel, nor a pre-incarnate manifestation of Christ. But he was a man who, according to the calling and appointment of God, represented in many richly significant details, the person and work of Christ. Thus, Melchizedek offered typical and shadowy sacrifices to God, whereas Jesus offered the single perfect sacrifice. If Melchizedek represents Christ, we should understand that Abraham, as the father of the faithful, represents all believers in every age. The transactions between these two men, thus, represent to us the transactions between ourselves and our great High priest, who is Lord of lords.

Friday, July 13th - Hebrews 7: 1, 2

The writer correctly makes much of the person and work of Melchizedek, and of the actions of Abraham in relation to this king and priest. Thus, we are reminded that Abraham, having received the blessing of Melchizedek, gave to Melchizedek a tenth of all the spoils taken in battle. If we have received the lavish blessing of Christ, we shall become cheerful and grateful givers, returning to Him a portion which in itself is small, but which represents the consecration to Him of all that we are and all that we have.

Saturday, July 14th - Hebrews 7: 1-3

In vv. 2b, 3 the writer draws out for us the typical significance of the person of Melchizedek. He begins with the unfolding of his redemptively rich name. Melchizedek means *king* (

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In vv. 2b, 3 the writer draws out for us the typical significance of the person of Melchizedek. He begins with the unfolding of his redemptively rich name. Melchizedek means *king* (מֶלֶךְ, *m, l, k*) of *righteousness* (חֲדָשׁ, *h, d, c*). This king rules not by ruthless power but by sovereign principle. The type so ruled, no doubt, imperfectly, but our King Jesus, the antitype, has righteousness and justice as the foundation of His throne (Ps. 89:14). All that He does in His sovereign reign is righteous. He is Himself righteous, and He clothes His people in His own righteousness imputed to them. At times, His righteousness may be hidden, as a foundation is hidden beneath the building, but it is no less real and operative because of that.

Sunday, July 15th - Hebrews 7: 1-3

In his person, Melchizedek was king of righteousness; in his office he was king of Salem. The word, *Salem*, is derived from *Shalom* (שָׁלוֹם, *~AIV'*), meaning *peace*. This typical man and his office point to the perfect King of righteousness, who in His person was righteous and in His sacrificial offering satisfied the righteous demands of the divine law for His people. The result is peace between the righteous God and His redeemed and reconciled people. The sovereign rule of Christ over His people does not impose misery and suffering, but rather peace which passes understanding and joy inexpressible.

Monday, July 16th - Hebrews 7: 3,4

From the first part of v.3, some understand Melchizedek to have been an angel or a pre-incarnate manifestation of Christ. But from vv.3b,4 we learn that the king of Salem was, in fact, a man. As such he did have earthly parents, and there was a beginning and end to his life. However, the point the writer here draws out is that in the way Scripture portrays Melchizedek, he typifies an eternal person. In Gen. 14, he appears without any genealogical introduction, and there is no record in Scripture of his death. What Scripture implies by its silence with respect to the shadow, is explicitly, clearly, and repeatedly affirmed in the Word of God concerning the Substance of our salvation. Melchizedek, being a type, was *like* the Son of God. Jesus, the antitype, *is* the eternal Son of God (Jn. 1:1-3).

Tuesday, July 17th - Hebrews 7: 4

The writer would have us to note the greatness of the shadow in order that we might form true and appropriate understanding regarding the immeasurable greatness of the Substance of our salvation. The greatness of Melchizedek is manifested by the great father of the faithful having honored him with a tithe of the choicest spoils of his victory. There is far more in this giving and receiving of tithes than at first is apparent to us. Thanks be to God that He has inspired this writer to open this treasury of truth for us in the verses which follow. At this point we should observe that the greater a man is in God's grace—in this case, Abraham—the more determined he demonstrates himself to be to recognize and honor those greater than himself. Such a gracious man does not envy but honors those eminent in grace, and, above them, he honors the source and giver of all grace and blessing, the Lord of glory.

Wednesday, July 18th - Hebrews 7: 4

The greatness of Melchizedek is shown in his relation to others, particularly Abraham. He who was the friend of God (Jas. 2:23), and the father of the faithful, who had been chosen and separated from his natural relations by the grace of God, and was settled in Canaan by the direction, promise, and power of God,

showed his homage to one greater than himself by his giving a tithe to that one. When Abraham devoted to Melchizedek a tenth of the choicest spoils of the battle, he was confessing that God was the One who gave him the victory, and that Melchizedek was the Lord's representative through whom righteousness reigned and peace was restored. Abraham gave such tithes gratefully but not graciously or generously. Abraham was duty bound to demonstrate by his giving to Melchizedek that he was a debtor to the grace of God, whom he honored by honoring the Lord's priest.

Thursday, July 19th - Hebrews 7: 5

What Abraham did, prompted by a spontaneous holy regard for the Lord's priest, the Jews were later instructed to do by the express commandment of God. Tithes were to be given to the Levites for the service they rendered to God for the people and to the people for God. This tithe, the Levites collected from their brethren, not because they were essentially greater than those from whom they received the tithes, but rather because God instituted the arrangement to compensate them for their religious service on behalf of the people of God. Our God is a God of order, not confusion. His arrangement is ever most blessed, even among equals, like brethren, but especially between superior and inferior, such as Melchizedek and Abraham, or Christ and His people. God commands and empowers us rightly and blessedly to related to those above, equal to, or beneath us.

Friday, July 20th - Hebrews 7: 6, 7

The greatness of Melchizedek is made evident not only by Abraham's giving a tithe to him, but also by Melchizedek's receiving the tithe. The king of Salem and priest of God was due the tithe, not only on account of his office and function, but also on account of his eminence as a person. Melchizedek's priesthood was not due to inheritance from his fathers, but was his by the immediate commissioning of God. He was not Abraham's equal—a brother amongst brothers, as was the case with the sons of Aaron and the rest of the Jews. Though Abraham was great, he honored one and was blessed by one greater than himself.

Saturday, July 21st - Hebrews 7: 8

In the case of the Levites, tithes were given for the maintenance of men who were born and who die. With Melchizedek, appearing as one with no beginning or end, the tithe was given to one greater, namely, to one who signifies the eternal Son of God. The way Scripture reveals Melchizedek, he has no birth or death. Thus he serves as a symbol of Christ superior to that which the Levites typify. There is more of Christ to be seen in the single person of Melchizedek than in the entire system of Levites and Aaronic priests. It is no wonder that the writer labors to expound the significance of the king of Salem, while challenging his readers to follow closely his line of teaching. We should especially pay attention to this shadow, for he represents with highest resolution the substance of our salvation.

Sunday, July 22nd - Hebrews 7: 9, 10

The priesthood of Melchizedek was superior to the Levitical priesthood by many magnitudes. This fact may also be drawn from the action of Abraham having given a tithe to Melchizedek. For from Abraham descended all of the Levites. Accordingly, our writer correctly observes that those who were in Abraham and who would later descend from him were paying a tithe to Melchizedek. Thus, for many reasons, we should understand that Melchizedek is the supreme shadow of Christ found in the Old Testament. He is the perfect shadow of Christ in every way, and, hence, we do well closely to study him and vitally to apply to ourselves all we learn about him.

But because he is a shadow, we must ascend in our consideration to the Substance, who is in Himself ineffable, but who reveals Himself to us through types and shadows. That ineffable One we may, through Scripture, perceive adequately, but not exhaustively. Until we behold our Redeemer's face in glory, we must see Him as though we were looking dimly through a mirror (1 Cor. 13:12). Far from this making any

of the biblically related details about our Savior insignificant, we should seize and savor each iota of information as being a precious component of revelation regarding the One who has loved us and whom to know by faith is salvation.

Monday, July 23rd - Hebrews 7: 9,10

The unique perfection of Melchizedek as a type of Christ may be understood when we consider his offices of priest and king, his apparent eternity, and his receiving tithes from Abraham and blessing him. That perfection may also be seen when we consider where he met Abraham. Salem was in Canaan, and perhaps was the city later known as Jerusalem. Abraham had been called by God from Ur to Canaan, yet so vile, ungodly, and idolatrous were all the Canaanites that Abraham and Isaac charged their sons to take wives not from the Canaanites but from their relatives in Haran. Thus, it may seem that God called Abraham out of a bad spiritual situation in Ur, into a worse one in Canaan. Yet, there in Canaan, amidst practically universal wickedness, was the saintly Melchizedek. If for no other reason, it would have been sufficiently wise, loving, and holy for God to have called Abraham into Canaan there to meet this unique man who so fully portrayed Jesus. Likewise, it vindicates the divine wisdom, love, and power that we should be called to pass through many tribulations in the course of our coming one day to see the face of our Redeemer.

Tuesday, July 24th - Hebrews 7: 11,12

In vv.11-25, the writer begins to move from detailing the shadow of Melchizedek to showing the substance of Christ. The argument is full and somewhat complicated, but brilliant and, for us, richly vital. The writer has clearly indicated in vv.9,10 that Melchizedek's priesthood came before and was superior to the Levitical priesthood. In vv.11,12, we are told that the order of Melchizedek's priesthood, if not the man himself, endured after the Levitical priesthood, and that the One declared by God to be a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek, perfects what the sons of Aaron and their priesthood could but dimly portray. Our assurance, sense of security, and humble, holy confidence should grow when we rightly understand the superior, unique, perfect, and enduring priesthood of our Lord Jesus.

Wednesday, July 25th - Hebrews 7: 11,12

These verses give full weight to the significance of Ps. 110:4 (cited in Heb. 5:6 and Heb. 7:17,21). They deal with the fact that perfection was neither in nor resultant from the Levitical priesthood. The point is made that the imperfection of the Levitical order is seen in the fact that long after that priesthood had been instituted by God's Law, the psalmist, David, writes by inspiration from God that the Lord would appoint another priest to serve according to the order of Melchizedek. Therefore, the Law itself teaches us to look for the coming of an order higher and more enduring than that of the sons of Levi. The Levites served by God's appointment in great numbers. Yet, they were provisional. The perfection would come in a unique, qualitatively superior individual, whom we know to be our Lord Jesus Christ. Our God ever regards perfect quality, never abundance of imperfect quantity.

Thursday, July 26th - Hebrews 7: 11,12

The singular and unique character of the perfect priest to come after the time of the provisional service of the Levites is seen in the wording employed by our writer. In Greek, there are two words for our English word, *another*. One word, *allos*, means another of the same sort. The other word, *eteros*, means another of a different sort. The Ps. 110:4 citation here speaks of a priest of a kind different from (*eteros*) the Levitical priests. Jesus is like the shadows of the Law, since He Himself is the source of the Law. Yet, Jesus is as different from and superior to those types as a living man is superior to his own shadow. It is, then, no wonder that in contradiction to what men say today about there being many ways to God, the Lord declares that other than Jesus, there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved (Acts 4:12).

Friday, July 27th - Hebrews 7: 12

The provisional nature of the Levitical priesthood becomes apparent to us when we observe that it has been superseded by another priesthood. This change, moreover, makes apparent a change in the entire system of law by which the Levitical priesthood was instituted and regulated. The old law was of promise and provisional effect. The new law is of fulfillment and eternally enduring effect. There is nothing provisional about our perfect Savior and His perfect salvation.

Saturday, July 28th - Hebrews 7: 12-14

The change of law spoken of in v.12 means a change of operating principle. The Levitical priesthood was instituted by God speaking face to face with Moses (Ex. 33:11). However, God prepared His people to look beyond that priesthood by what is recorded in His Word concerning Melchizedek in Gen. 14 and Ps. 110. Those Scriptures, rightly understood, indicate that the Levitical system was imperfect and provisional. When Christ came, He who was the true Law-giver came not to publish the Law, neither to assume an imperfect and provisional office instituted by the Law, but to fulfill the Law perfectly and to pay the penalty for His people's violations of the Law. We therefore stand before God not on the basis of promise and an imperfect provisional priesthood, but rather on the basis of fulfillment and a perfect, perpetual priesthood.

Sunday, July 29th - Hebrews 7: 12-14

If the Levitical priesthood was imperfect and provisional, it follows that the perfect and perpetual priest would arise not from the tribe of Levi, but from some other tribe. Thus, as Melchizedek, who was himself not Levitical (vv.4-10), foreshadowed this perfect priest, so neither was the Messiah, the substance of salvation, from the tribe of Levi. That which at first appears a defect in Christ's priesthood, namely that He was not descended from the priestly tribe, in truth manifests the perfection of His priesthood. Jesus fits and fulfills every detail of Scriptural prediction of the perfect priest.

Monday, July 30th - Hebrews 7: 13,14

Jesus did what no one had ever done. Those serving in the priesthood instituted by God through Moses merely pointed to the perfect priesthood. His was the perfect priesthood. The priestly service of our Lord may have seemed to violate the Law of God, when, in fact, it was according to and manifested a principle higher than the Law. That higher principle was the determination of God not merely provisionally to cover the sins of His people, but effectually and eternally to wash away their sins. Jesus did this, not by His officiating at the temple's altar and there offering animal sacrifices, but rather by His giving Himself as the perfect and perpetually effective sacrifice, offered to God upon the cross.

Tuesday, July 31st - Hebrews 7: 14

Moses wrote nothing about a priest from any tribe but Levi, except in what he briefly records concerning Melchizedek in Gen. 14. That tiny and mysterious hint was opened a bit further by David, a man after God's heart, in Ps. 110. Moses, the lawgiver, was not allowed by God to announce the promise of the perfect priest, who would arise from Judah's tribe. That is because the Word of the Law convicts, but does not convert sinners. It is the living Word (Jn. 1:1) who both convicts and converts sinners. His coming far exceeded in its nature and effects what we deserve, what we could ask, or even what we could imagine from God's Word in the Old Testament. The best wine was saved for the last days.

Wednesday, August 1st - Hebrews 7: 15, 16

The likeness of the perfect priesthood was manifested not by the Levites, but by Melchizedek. Jesus not only fit this likeness, He has exceeded it, as a man's substance exceeds in every respect his shadow. The

priesthood of Christ was not based upon a principle of physical descent, as He was not born of the tribe of Levi. His priesthood was based upon His own perfections. In this, he outshines even Melchizedek. For the king of Salem really did die, though for typological reasons Scripture does not record his death. But Jesus, though He was put to death, was raised up victorious over death, He being indestructible due to His being divine and sinless. Any improvements upon the perfections of the person or work of our Redeemer are unnecessary, impossible, and inconceivable.

Thursday, August 2nd - Hebrews 7: 15, 16

The indestructible life of our Lord mentioned in these verses as the basis of His priestly office and service can refer to His humanity, His divinity, or to both. Fundamentally, it must refer to His divinity, which is indestructible. That indestructibility fit our Lord to bear the burden of His people's sins which would have crushed any mortal man. It was this ability the Lord had to bear the awful load which fit Him to accomplish that perfect priestly service whereby His people would be delivered from sin and death. However, in His humanity as well, our Lord had the power of an indestructible life. Though He died for our sins, death could not hold Him, for He was personally sinless. Hence, this God/Man who was dead but is alive forever more (Rev. 1:18), ever lives to fulfill His priestly intercession for us. Our lives are secured for as long as He lives—which is forever.

Friday, August 3rd - Hebrews 7: 17

Once again the writer cites Ps. 110:4, indicating that Christ served as a priest, not in violation of the divine Law which instituted the Levitical priesthood, but rather in accordance with the highest divine determination to make Christ the perfect substance of which the Levites were but shadows. As such, we learn of the eternal continuance of Christ's priesthood. Believers will be secure for all time and eternity through this eternal Priest and His perpetual priestly service. The Jews cried to Pilate, "We have no king but Caesar." Our cry is that we have no king, prophet, or priest but Jesus.

Saturday, August 4th - Hebrews 7: 18, 19

The commandments of God established and regulated the Levitical priesthood and the whole Old Testament economy of promise, types, and shadows designed to tutor the people of God in the school of Christ. As such, the old regulations were good, right, and holy. But they could only convict men of their sins, and implicitly point them to divine mercy. They could not convert sinners, still less could people born with original sin and heaping up countless transgressions of their own keep the Law as a means of salvation. In short, the Law was weak, not in itself, but in the matter of its being a means to save sinners (Rom. 8:3). Accordingly, we find the change, intended and accomplished by our merciful God, whereby the Law, which convicted and repelled us from God, is followed by the explicit, living hope of the gospel of Christ. This hope does not merely describe a righteousness which we lack, it graciously confers upon us an imputed righteousness and provides for us a perfect Advocate, so that we delight in and are enabled to draw near to God.

Sunday, August 5th - Hebrews 7: 18, 19

Though the Law is inadequate to convert, it does contain an implicit hope. When the Ninevites heard the convicting pronouncement of doom from Jonah, they rightly reasoned that a God who would announce judgment before executing it was manifesting mercy by giving sinners time for repentance. This implicit hope is more fully drawn out in the whole Old Testament. But with the coming of Christ, the day of explicit hope dawned. The types and shadows indicate the approaching love of God; the Son of God dying for us while we were yet sinners openly and undeniably manifests the immeasurable and unchangeable love of God, whereby we are drawn to our loving heavenly Father.

Monday, August 6th - Hebrews 7: 20-22

The commissioning declaration of God, whereby Christ was appointed the perfect and perpetual priest, has been quoted already by our writer (Heb. 5:6; 7:17). Yet, in both of those citations, he mentioned only the second half of Ps. 110: 4. Now he cites the entire verse, including the part containing the divine oath. Christ was made a priest by the most solemn declaration of God possible. By the Lord swearing, He pledges Himself to uphold Christ in His priestly office, to accept His priestly service, including His justifying death and sanctifying intercessions for His people. In every way, the priesthood of Jesus is declared to be eminent and efficacious. Our standing in Christ before God is as sure as is God Himself.

Tuesday, August 7th - Hebrews 7: 20-22

The oath of God, with which He confirmed the commissioning of His Son as the perfect and perpetual priest, gives us assurance of the Lord's commitment to redeem us. However, we find our assurance and security to be deeper and stronger when we bear in mind that God was under no obligation to appoint Christ a priest, let alone to confirm the appointment by His swearing to do it. What lies behind the oath of God is the love of God. In Christ, and through all pertaining to Christ, we discover that the Father Himself loves us (Jn. 16:27).

Wednesday, August 8th - Hebrews 7: 20-22

The manifold security we have in our Savior and His salvation is made clear to us in these verses. We are told positively that the Lord has pledged Himself by an oath to save us through Christ. We are told negatively that the Lord will not change His determination so to save us. We are told that the Father appointed His Son to be to us what we most need, a priest of the highest order, serving a priesthood of eternal duration. Viewed from any and every angle, our salvation in Christ is solid, sure, and enduring.

Thursday, August 9th - Hebrews 7: 20-22

The sons of Aaron were called by God to serve as priests. This was a gracious, divine institution, whereby the people could draw near to God. The people were not put to death according to their sinful deserving, but, by the ordinance of God, the priests put animals to death in their place. As good as this gracious arrangement was, it was imperfect in several ways. First, there was no divine oath establishing the Levitical priesthood; then, although by the ministry of those priests the people could draw near to God, they still were separated from God by the veil in the Tabernacle (and, later, the Temple). Christ was appointed the perfect and perpetual priest, and God swore to confirm that appointment. Through Christ's death, we are brought into most intimate communion with God (Rom. 8:15-17; Gal. 4:3-7), and through His living and interceding for us we are drawn into ever deeper intimacy with God. The new covenant of provision is thus better than the old covenant of promise, because the One who has guaranteed the new covenant is perfect in Himself and has accomplished a perfect redemption.

Friday, August 10th - Hebrews 7: 23,24

The critical factor in the evaluation of God is ever quality, never quantity. The Levitical priests were far more numerous than the single priest appointed by divine oath to serve according to the order of Melchizedek. That this single priest should be compared with so many Levitical priests would seem to show that the Levites had a great advantage by their numbers. In truth, they had to be more numerous because their priesthood could only be perpetuated by successive generations of Levites arising to serve in place of those who died. Moreover, they died because they were sinners, death being the wages of sin (Rom. 6:23). In contrast, Christ abides forever, He being personally sinless and thus free from death's claims. Accordingly, this perfect priest lives and thus serves as our great high priest forever. We need no other priest but Jesus.

Saturday, August 11th - Hebrews 7: 25

The writer, having labored long and hard to teach us about the singular superiority of Christ's priesthood (Heb. 5:1-7:24), begins in this verse to sum up and make for us personal application of this rich truth. Christ's perfect and perpetual priesthood is not merely a wonderful truth over which we are to marvel; it is the basis of our salvation from sin and of our eternal life with and for God. This perfect priest saves His people perfectly, fully, completely, and perpetually (eivj to. pantele.j, literally, *into all completeness*). Our highest and eternal interests are found only in Him.

Sunday, August 12th - Hebrews 7: 25

Christ alone is able to save completely and forever. We dare not trust in our endowments, attainments, positions, or possessions for such salvation. Nor does Christ save all men. Rather, He saves only those who draw near to God through Him. Let us, therefore, since we have so great a Savior and such a perfect salvation in Him, not be reticent or slack in our approach to God through this perfect priest.

Monday, August 13th - Hebrews 7: 25

Christ's priesthood did not end when He perfectly accomplished our redemption. He continues to be our great high priest, as He lives forever, constantly to intercede for us. How secure we are, and should feel ourselves to be, when we live, move, and have our being all through the preserving and sanctifying intercessions of Christ. It is no wonder that Paul declares himself content in all circumstances (Phil. 4:11), for he knows that Christ empowers him (Phil. 4:13), and causes all things to work for his good (Rom. 8:28), as all things in his life are ordered according to Christ's intercessions for him. The same is true for us, if we are in Christ.

Tuesday, August 14th - Hebrews 7: 26

It was fitting that we should have such a magnificent high priest, not because we deserved to have Him, but because the appointment of such a priest was fitting to manifest the glory of the amazing grace of our God. Truly where our sin has increased, God's grace has abounded all the more, to the praise of the glory of His grace (Eph. 1:6).

Wednesday, August 15th - Hebrews 7: 26

The high priest we have to save us forever is thoroughly fitted to save us to the uttermost. We are not delivered from our sins, only then barely to scrape into heaven, smelling of the fires of hell from which we narrowly have escaped. We are led victoriously as more than conquerors into the glory of our God. This is so not by our deserving or doing, but by the manifold attributes and actions of our Redeemer. He is holy, and thus all of His deeds are holy, especially that of His atoning work on our behalf. He supplies us with His holiness. We are guilty, but He is innocent, covering us with His righteousness. We are corrupt, but He is undefiled, cleansing us by His blood. For every need we have, our high priest has an attribute and action to supply that need. Moreover, the attributes mentioned in this verse are but representative, not exhaustive. When we are finally brought into glory, we shall then see the full fitness of Christ to save us, and shall exclaim with the Queen of Sheba, "Not the half has been told me!"

Thursday, August 16th - Hebrews 7: 26

Our high priest is separated from sinners. Aaron and his sons were, by their office, separated from their brethren and consecrated to the Lord. However, they remained themselves sinners. Jesus was separated from sinners not by His office only, but by the sinlessness of His being. Aaron and the Levites were exalted above their brethren by their calling and priestly service. Jesus is exalted above the heavens as reward for His having humbled Himself to the point of death on a cross (Phil. 2:8-11). All of this, however, was for His redeemed people (Jn. 17:19). Negatively, He was separated from sinners, so that He could call sinners to Himself and give to them peace with God and rest for their sin-wearied souls (Mt. 11:23-30). Positively,

He is exalted above the heavens, so that we who are in Him may be raised to that height with Him (Col. 3:1-4).

Friday, August 17th - Hebrews 7: 26,27

In v.26, attributes regarding the person of our Savior, which so perfectly fit Him to be our high priest, were mentioned. In v.27, it is His work that receives attention. Specifically, the singular perfection of His atoning sacrifice is contrasted with the successively imperfect shadows of the old economy. The reasons for the two sacraments (baptism and the Lord's Supper) of the Church of the New Covenant being bloodless, is that the perfect, atoning blood has been shed by our Savior. His sacrifice is better, supremely so, uniquely so, perfectly and perpetually so, than the multitude of sacrifices offered by countless Levites over the course of many centuries. The repetition of their sacrifices testifies to their provisional and imperfect nature. His single sacrifice is perfect, final, definitive, and sufficient for all of His people for all time and for eternity.

Saturday, August 18th - Hebrews 7: 28

The Law of God appoints priests in greater quantity, but that bespeaks no advantage. Their numerical abundance is necessary because they are themselves sinners subject to death, the wages of sin. Not only so, but they were powerless to cleanse the consciences of those to whom and for whom they ministered. Hence, we can see their weakness in these flaws. But the living God issued an oath in Ps. 110:4, centuries after Moses promulgated the Law. That oath appointed the Son of God, not to contradict the Law, but to complete it by fulfilling it, negatively by paying in His sufferings for its violation by His people, and positively by His keeping it perfectly. The Son of God did this as Man, who, in the course of His life, death, and resurrection, became our perfect Mediator, Redeemer, and High Priest.

Sunday, August 19th - Hebrews 8: 1

Our author brings us now to explicit, personal application. There is a main point to all he has been writing about the priestly orders of the Levites and Melchizedek, and how Christ is the substance of those shadows. That point is not that the supreme excellency of Christ should be displayed as a theological nicety, or a truth we admire as spectators. Rather, the point is that we have this richly endowed, perfect, and perpetual high priest as our Savior. Christ, with all of the excellencies of His person and work, has come to us laden with blessings for us, the greatest blessing being Himself. How can any Christian rightly complain of any lack in his life, when he has so great a Savior as His portion in this life and inheritance in life after this life?

Monday, August 20th - Hebrews 8: 1,2

Our possession of the person of the Savior is stressed in the first half of v.1. From there through the end of v.2, the place in which our Lord exercises His priestly ministry is mentioned. This perfect priest, having accomplished a perfect redemption for His people, has taken His heavenly seat, His posture indicating that He has completed His work of redemption, and that His work on our behalf has been accepted by His Father. When Jesus slept in the boat, there was no need for His disciples to fear even a terrible storm. Now that Jesus sits in heaven, we have no need to fear anything in heaven or on earth, neither need we, should we, nor can we add anything to His finished work of salvation.

Tuesday, August 21st - Hebrews 8: 1,2

Jesus, our high priest, is not only seated, thus indicating that His accomplishment of our redemption has been completed, He is seated in the place of supreme honor and authority and power. The honor is that He sits with His divinely majestic Father. The power is evident by His sitting at God's right hand. The authority is seen by His sitting as co-occupant of the heavenly throne. There is no person or power in heaven or on earth having power and authority greater than that of the Son of God who loved us and gave Himself for us, and who now reigns most blessedly over us.

Wednesday, August 22nd - Hebrews 8: 1,2

Although Christ is majestic Lord over all, He continues to condescend to attend to our needs. Thus, we are told that this majestic Lord is even now ministering for us. He, having accomplished our redemption, now superintends its application to us. This He does not in the shadows of this cursed earth, but in the perfect light of the heavenly sanctuary. His ministry prevails not in earthly and imperfect copies of sacred places where God is imperfectly worshipped by His people, but in the perfect, heavenly, original sanctuary, wherein holy communion is established between God and man. Our worship of and work for our God is sustained on an infinitely higher level than we, without Scripture's testimony, could imagine.

(The following notes were first published in January 1991)

Thursday, August 23rd - Proverbs 3: 11, 12

The discipline of the Lord is administered through His Word and works. The aspect of that discipline we are most likely to reject is when the Lord reproves our waywardness through His providentially ordaining a course of suffering for us. We can see no farther than the unwanted pain we feel in affliction, and hence we see no good purpose superintending or issuing from our trials. But we should ever reckon the hand of our loving heavenly Father to be using our afflictions for our good. Far from rejecting His discipline, we should embrace it as a proof of our adoption (Heb. 12:4-11), as a means to save us from greater harm while at the same time forcing us to rely more completely on divine grace (2 Cor. 12:7-10), as an instrument for the refinement of our faith (1 Pet. 1:6,7), and as a servant working to produce for us an eternal weight of glory (2 Cor. 4:17,18).

Friday, August 24th - Proverbs 3: 13-15

Divine wisdom is incomparably precious, as it confers delight and blessing which nothing else can even remotely provide. Sometimes men find such wisdom, as though accidentally running across it, and sometimes they must search diligently for it. The word translated *gains* in most English versions of v.13 has the idea of drawing out some hidden treasure. However we come to possess this pearl of greatest price, we should know that we can never over-value it. Instead, we must guard against under-valuing it, lest we find ourselves distracted by the cheap glitter of this world, which is cold, dead, and deadening.

Saturday, August 25th - Proverbs 3: 16-18

In contrast to the lifeless riches of this world, wisdom is personified as a living, life-giving and empowering force. She not only dispenses long life, but so equips her possessors with knowledge, skill, courageous confidence, and grace that they avoid needless conflicts, with the stress and concern which accompany them. When conflict is unavoidable, she inspires peace within, thus fortifying us so that we weather the storms. This adds delight to the duration of life. Nor are true riches ever lacking. For wisdom enables us to perceive, pursue, and attain solid joys and lasting treasures. But we must hold her fast to be so blessed by her.

Sunday, August 26th - Proverbs 3: 19,20

Paul tells us that every man perceives the eternal power and divine nature of God through the created order (Rom. 1:19,20), while David declares that the heavens are telling of the glory of God (Ps. 19:1). These things are evident to man because the Lord employed wisdom in creating the earth and sky. The universe is no lifeless assortment of random forces. Every atom, every mountain, every star, every river, every aspect of creation cries out with testimony to divine plan, purpose, and skill. The world was not only established,

but it is now upheld by the word of Christ's power (Col. 1:16,17). The redeemed soul can not only recognize but also rejoice in the truth that every iota of this world of time and space is established and governed by his Lord.

Monday, August 27th - Proverbs 3: 21,22

Once more, with a Father's love, the Lord admonishes His children to attend diligently to the cultivation of godly wisdom and that discretion which acts in accordance with it. Such wisdom and discretion are not to be sought out only occasionally; instead, they are to be ever our focus. We are constantly to attend to them not only because our heavenly Father bids us do so, but also because they transfuse into our soul His life, with all of its wonder and glory. That life also shines out of us, thus adorning us with heavenly beauty amidst even the most mundane circumstances here below.

Tuesday, August 28th - Proverbs 3: 23,24

Godly wisdom fills our lives with beautiful heavenly glory. It also enlightens and empowers us to live in the most secure and fruitful way here on earth. The wisdom of God enables us to make progress in our way, however difficult that way may at times become. Whatever obstacles we encounter, this wisdom provides such a true and deep and expansive context of understanding, making us all the while conscious of manifold divine resources, that we continue taking steps when progress seems impossible. Those steps prove to be sure, too! Likewise, when the time comes to wait, to rest, we do so without fear of being overtaken by evil, even when it surrounds us with gathering strength as a storm. Think of Peter sleeping in prison (Acts 12:6), or Jesus asleep in the storm-tossed boat (Mk. 4:38).

Wednesday, August 29th - Proverbs 3: 25,26

To the indicatives of vv.22-24 is now added an imperative. Those possessing and pursuing divine wisdom are directed not to fear. When we fear God, we shall have no other fear. He will ever be with us to fortify us within and to serve as a shield and refuge without. He can never be caught by surprise, so we need not fear sudden threats. He cannot be overpowered by hosts of the wicked, hence we need not fear overwhelming odds against us. He has various ways of enabling us to escape danger (e.g. David eluding Saul), or to neutralize threats (e.g. Elisha's dealings with the Syrian armies in 2 Kings 6:15-23).

Thursday, August 30th - Proverbs 3: 27,28

Divine wisdom not only protects us from the attacks of evil, it also directs and empowers us to do good to all men, so that we overcome evil with good. Godly confidence begets magnanimous living. We should not seek selfishly to hoard our powers or possessions, even when we are able to do so, and certainly never when what we have we owe to another as his due. Nor are we to procrastinate in our giving. Needless delay is in the eyes of the Lord equivalent to unrighteous denial.

Friday, August 31st - Proverbs 3: 29-33

Withholding good due to others is one form of sin in which godly wisdom will not allow us to indulge. The evil of doing our neighbor harm is also prohibited. We must neither contend with him without just cause, nor mentally devise ways to hurt him. We can only consider such harmful attitudes and actions when we remove our focus from the Lord and look enviously upon ruthless pragmatists, who advance themselves at the expense of others. But such men of violence, far from being strong and truly enviable, are crooked and cursed. They not only are strangers to the blessed intimacy with the Lord which the upright enjoy, but also render themselves and their households abominable subjects of His curse.

Saturday, September 1st - Proverbs 3: 34,35

Selfish pride puffs up a man so that he thinks and acts contemptuously toward others, including the Lord. Furthermore, pride is a dynamic force, which does not stop with scoffing, but goes on, if unchecked, to murder. Such a destructive evil is opposed most consistently and righteously by our just and loving God. Scripture most clearly reiterates this truth, not only in the expressions of James (Jas. 4:6) and Peter (1 Pet. 5:5), but also through the examples of God's dealings with Satan (Is. 14:12-15), with the builders of the tower of Babel (Gen. 11:4-9), with Pharaoh (Ex. 3:19,20), and many other such proud opponents throughout history. Yet, to those humbled by their afflictions and the consequent awareness of their need, the Lord gives grace which powerfully transforms them from being puffed up, self-deceived fools, who glory in their shame, to being inheritors of the honor and glory of the Lord.

Those who would erect their own thrones will find their efforts serving to dishonor and destroy themselves, much as did Haman's gallows do to himself (Esth. 7:10). But those who embrace the crucified Redeemer and His cross never fail to inherit a matchless crown.

Sunday, September 2nd - Proverbs 4: 1-9

To the words of The Father respecting the virtues and powers of wisdom is now added the testimony of a father, Solomon. He tells us that from his own experience he has discovered the truth of the claims of God's Word and wisdom, and has enjoyed the reward thereof. Such blessed experience he desires to see being repeated in the lives of all those spiritually akin to himself.

The written Word of God repeatedly urges us to pursue the narrow way which leads to life and blessing. The Word made flesh in the lives and experiences of God's people does likewise. No one who in good faith and resolute commitment has submitted himself to learn the lessons of divine discipleship has ever stood to testify of disappointment.

Monday, September 3rd - Proverbs 4: 4-9

Godly and loving fathers should aim not primarily at the head of their children (i.e. their mental education), nor at their hands (i.e. their outward behavior), but at their hearts. We should never rest until our children embrace with true, inner conviction and delight, the glorious revelation of God in the gospel. Only as they treasure the fear of the Lord, and love His Word because they love Him, will they be properly motivated to learn more about Him and themselves and the world in which they live, acquiring the gracious, noble, and beautiful mind of Christ as the fruit of such edifying endeavor. The ring of truth comes through such penetrating urgings to our children only when Christ is truly treasured in our own hearts.

Tuesday, September 4th - Proverbs 4: 10-13

The invitation becomes more personal here. From sons in v.1, Solomon addresses us as individuals, as though each one sat before him hearing the call, *My son*. Such an earnest call is not issued for our harm, but for our good. The Lord and His servants call us to pursue a wise, righteous, and life-bestowing course. The godly path into which we are summoned is also the only way of true efficiency and felicity through our pilgrimage here and now. For when we are equipped with the wisdom of the Almighty, nothing can stop our progress or even slow it when the pace quickens. Because this wisdom is so valuable and potent we should spare no effort in our quest to attain and maintain our grasp of it. If we let this treasure slip away, we let our lives go with it.

Wednesday, September 5th - Proverbs 4: 14-17

Wickedness and wisdom are mutually exclusive. To choose one is to forsake the other. Of course wicked men attempt to appear wise and would thus entice us into their way. But the Word of God in strongest, reiterated, and categorical terms tells us to avoid the path of the wicked, which, as we proceed on it, opens up into an engulfing way. For wickedness is a destructive obsession which we do well to resist, to reject, to

avoid altogether, as a wise seafarer would give wide berth to a maelstrom, the force of which intensifies as one is drawn nearer to its center.

Thursday, September 6th - Proverbs 4: 18,19

What a contrast between the way of the righteous and that of the wicked. The righteous proceed in a narrow path as opposed to a wide way. Yet each step the godly man takes in obedience to the Lord empowers him to go on in that way which leads to life. His path grows brighter and more blessed with each step, as the brightness of God's Word and the energizing ministry of His Spirit increase towards perfection. Yet the seemingly wide way of the wicked is dark and dangerous. The godless do not see the obstacles strewn in their way, and thus they constantly are stumbling. The righteous may have their wills crossed by the narrow confines of God's path, but that path directs to blessing. The wicked likewise have their wills crossed by things in their way, yet those things are not the confines of a path leading somewhere, but rather are a random assortment of pitfalls which the wicked do not see, which lead to nowhere, and from which the wicked, even once they fall into them, learn nothing.

Friday, September 7th - Proverbs 4: 20-22

The steps of the righteous are confirmed by repeated instruction and admonition from God's Word. We are to hear and heed the sayings of the Lord. We are to make His Word the constant focus of our attention, and we must be satisfied with nothing short of the deepest recesses of our being longing for and living out that Word. Heart and head, attitude and action must ever go together in the school of discipleship. The result is that we are made alive and whole in every level of our being, by the pure, powerful, and everlasting life of God growing in our souls.

Saturday, September 8th - Proverbs 4: 23-27

Pretend piety is concerned only with outward appearance. True piety is concerned with reality. As a man thinks in his heart, so is he. Hence, the Word of God places priority upon the condition of the inner man. When we successfully guard our hearts from Satan's attacks and from the seductions of the world, it then naturally follows that our outer life will testify to the inner victory. Our words will be true, our faculties will be concentrated upon godly responsibilities, our actions will be in accordance therewith, and our accomplishments will be many and enduring. Where there is a godly will, the way will be godly. Yet, though the spirit may be willing, the flesh remains weak. Thus, we must guard not only our hearts, but also our walk, resisting the distractions and deviations which lead only to evil.

Sunday, September 9th - Proverbs 5: 1-6

Here is a warning against adultery which we may apply either literally, spiritually, or both. We should remain faithful to our own—our own spouse, and in a higher sense, our own Lord. There are for all of us powerful and seductive temptations toward infidelity. Our only hope of resistance is in our attending to God's Word, which not only warns us, but forearms us with a true and penetrating sketch of the tactics and true nature of such seducers. The adulteress sweetly and smoothly promises intimate enjoyment, but she essentially remains a strange woman, seeking to allure us from those who love us purely, legitimately, and with true intimacy. Despite all she promises, she can only provide bitterness, destruction, death. Her nature and ways are essentially opposed to the life and solidifying integrity which we seek in Christ. Knowing this, let us beware!

Monday, September 10th - Proverbs 5: 7-14

Solomon knew from experience something of the bitter fruit of infidelity (1 Kings 11:1-8). He would spare us the same experience by urging us to stay as far as possible away from the bewitching spells of seduction. For loss of happiness and honor await all who succumb to the strange woman. We lose our strength and our years, not to find them as when we lose our lives for Christ's sake (Mt. 10:39), but only to lament their

irretrievable loss. The seducer promises gain, only to provide wasteful loss. The strange woman draws us into a company of strangers who loot us and leave us. When we have nothing more to give, we are abandoned by them, left only with the tormenting thoughts of our determined and perverse refusal to profit from the godly warning and instruction offered to us by true and loving teachers, who sought only to enrich us with the Word of life and health and peace.

Tuesday, September 11th - Proverbs 5: 15

Godly warnings against adultery deprive us of nothing but bitterness, loss, harm, destruction, and death. At the same time they prompt us to reflect upon and enjoy the pure, refreshing and invigorating joys which the Lord has given us in our own spouse, and, in the highest sense, in Himself. Can anyone who is unfaithful testify of receiving true and lasting delight? Can anyone faithful to the Lord and the life's partner given by Him tell of lasting disappointment? Never in both cases!

Wednesday, September 12th - Proverbs 5: 15-18

From the more still and passive cistern and well, signifying a man's wife, the image changes to springs, streams, and fountain—active sources of water, signifying the husband. Whereas v.15 contemplates the man's enjoyments of pure refreshment when he remains faithful, vv.16-18 consider the loss a man inflicts upon his wife when he is unfaithful. She, too, is refreshed by his love, and he should reserve for her that most intimate dimension of his love which is, by God's institution, rightly due her. Yet notice that a man's joy is found not only in his receiving his wife's love, but also in giving his love to her. We and our marriage partner are both blessed when we maintain godly relationships; no one is blessed when we do not.

Thursday, September 13th - Proverbs 5: 18,19

If men would discipline themselves to concentrate upon and cultivate contentment with what the Lord has given them, they would find a far greater source of delight than they have capacity to enjoy. This is particularly true in human marriage, but it also applies to friendships and situations which we all have, including the unmarried, in the Lord. His gifts always look better on closer inspection. This is especially true when we contemplate the Lord Himself. He and His gifts are truly best and most delightful for us.

Friday, September 14th - Proverbs 5: 20-23

Why do men exchange the pure and purifying pleasures afforded them in the provision of the Lord, for a wayward and wearisome pursuit, which leads only to bondage and death? The answer is that they despise the Lord. When we do not consider the hurt we cause others by our unfaithfulness, and the damage we inflict upon ourselves thereby, it is because we have ceased considering the Lord, who knows and considers our every action and attitude. Yet when we care supremely for Him, we find His watching and weighing of our lives to be a loving watch-care for our good and joy.

Saturday, September 15th - Proverbs 6: 1-5

In our fallen world, we must guard against not only the enticements of enemies, but also the unwarranted and unwise entanglements of friends. It is not that we are never to become surety for a neighbor. The good Samaritan, commended by Jesus, did that (Lk. 10:35). But the younger and more inexperienced a person is, the more likely he is to feel that the range of his good will is equal to the wherewithal which may be required to pay a debt. Thus rash commitments are made, from which we do well to extricate ourselves as soon as possible. Better for us, for our neighbor, and for the honor of the Lord to admit our mistake as soon as possible, than to prove ourselves eventually to be deceptive clouds without water.

Sunday, September 16th - Proverbs 6: 1-5

We are not the Lord, who with His infinite store of grace and power can and did stand as surety for those in infinite debt. Although He spurs us to express generosity, He also warns us against making commitments which the limitations of His providence for us will not allow us to keep. Thus, if we overreach in our commitments, divine wisdom dictates that we humbly admit our mistake, informing our neighbor that we are not the Lord, whom we to some degree impersonate by our grand, unwarranted promises, and beg our leave from that which would bind us and, if applicable, our families to crushing loss.

Monday, September 17th - Proverbs 6: 6-8

If one desires truly to be generous, he will do well not to offer vain, ill-considered promises to his neighbor, but rather to work diligently so that he will acquire resources to share with those in need (Eph. 4:28). It is a shame that indolence reduces a man to the point where even a small insect, by its instinct, lives more wisely, responsibly, and fruitfully than he. But if a man is willing to humble and apply himself, he may learn valuable lessons even from the tiniest aspects of God's creation, and profit immeasurably thereby.

Tuesday, September 18th - Proverbs 6: 9-11

The sluggard does not invest his time and energy in preparation for anything. He cares only about present comforts. He will not stand to walk or unfold his hands to work. His limbs hang as useless burdens which drain his energies. He reasons that the resultant weariness justifies his pleas for a little more slumber. He asks only for a little more sleep, but when that little bit is used he wants a little more. He deceives himself into thinking that his disgraceful repose may be protracted indefinitely without consequence. But his failure responsibly to redeem his allotted time will bring upon him most dire consequences. His refusal to walk does nothing to stop the advancing steps of poverty, which threatens to overtake him; his refusal to work will not stop need from robbing even current ease. Indolence is no precious luxury, but is a life-destroying sin of omission.

Wednesday, September 19th - Proverbs 6: 12-15

The indolence of the sluggard renders him worthless. The activity of the wicked man does likewise and worse. For his mobility serves only to spread evil and strife. All of his faculties are pressed into the perverted use of nefarious and stealthy communication. His wicked heart drives such expressions, the design of which is to confuse and destroy others. But although he injures others, in the end it is himself who is damaged beyond repair. We certainly should not be such, and we should also avoid being in the company of such mischief-makers.

Thursday, September 20th - Proverbs 6: 16

The fool's opinion is that there is no God (Ps. 14:1). But there is a God, and He has definite opinions about man. The closer He examines depraved humanity, the more things He finds to hate, until the measure is filled to perfect hatred. How fearful to be an object of such perfectly deserved divine wrath! How wonderful is our salvation from it!

Friday, September 21st - Proverbs 6: 17-19

Behold the portrait composed of those attitudes and actions which are abominable in the sight of the Lord. He hates people who look down on others, who lie to others, and who injure the innocent. God abhors an evil heart which feeds pride and directs the feet to hasten in their carrying out of the heart's wicked dictates. He hates that man who, through carelessness or malice, serves by his false testimony not to heal wounds between differing parties, but rather to deepen them, contributing to decided division and strife, even amongst brothers. In contrast, the Lord loves those who count others as better than themselves, treating them accordingly (Phil. 2:3,4), and who desire above all to be sanctified in the truth (Jn. 17:17).

Saturday, September 22nd - Proverbs 6: 16-19

The Bible teaches that we are all by nature (though differing in degrees), children of divine wrath (Eph. 2:1-3). We are all born with bad hearts, which manifest such fruits as are in this passage counted abominable by the Lord. Read further about such divinely condemned works of the flesh in Gal. 5:19-21. How eternally grateful we should be for the interposed blood of Jesus, which cancels sin, and removes our condemnation (Rom. 8:1), and for the indwelling Holy Spirit, who transforms our hearts into soil bearing godly fruits (Gal. 5:22-25).

The discipline of the Lord is administered through His Word and works. The aspect of that discipline we are most likely to reject is when the Lord reproves our waywardness through His providentially ordaining a course of suffering for us. We can see no farther than the unwanted pain we feel in affliction, and hence we see no good purpose superintending or issuing from our trials. But we should ever reckon the hand of our loving heavenly Father to be using our afflictions for our good. Far from rejecting His discipline, we should embrace it as a proof of our adoption (Heb. 12:4-11), as a means to save us from greater harm while at the same time forcing us to rely more completely on divine grace (2 Cor. 12:7-10), as an instrument for the refinement of our faith (1 Pet. 1:6,7), and as a servant working to produce for us an eternal weight of glory (2 Cor. 4:17,18).

Friday, August 24th - Proverbs 3: 13-15

Divine wisdom is incomparably precious, as it confers delight and blessing which nothing else can even remotely provide. Sometimes men find such wisdom, as though accidentally running across it, and sometimes they must search diligently for it. The word translated *gains* in most English versions of v.13 has the idea of drawing out some hidden treasure. However we come to possess this pearl of greatest price, we should know that we can never over-value it. Instead, we must guard against under-valuing it, lest we find ourselves distracted by the cheap glitter of this world, which is cold, dead, and deadening.

Saturday, August 25th - Proverbs 3: 16-18

In contrast to the lifeless riches of this world, wisdom is personified as a living, life-giving and empowering force. She not only dispenses long life, but so equips her possessors with knowledge, skill, courageous confidence, and grace that they avoid needless conflicts, with the stress and concern which accompany them. When conflict is unavoidable, she inspires peace within, thus fortifying us so that we weather the storms. This adds delight to the duration of life. Nor are true riches ever lacking. For wisdom enables us to perceive, pursue, and attain solid joys and lasting treasures. But we must hold her fast to be so blessed by her.

Sunday, August 26th - Proverbs 3: 19,20

Paul tells us that every man perceives the eternal power and divine nature of God through the created order (Rom. 1:19,20), while David declares that the heavens are telling of the glory of God (Ps. 19:1). These things are evident to man because the Lord employed wisdom in creating the earth and sky. The universe is no lifeless assortment of random forces. Every atom, every mountain, every star, every river, every aspect of creation cries out with testimony to divine plan, purpose, and skill. The world was not only established, but it is now upheld by the word of Christ's power (Col. 1:16,17). The redeemed soul can not only recognize but also rejoice in the truth that every iota of this world of time and space is established and governed by his Lord.

Monday, August 27th - Proverbs 3: 21,22

Once more, with a Father's love, the Lord admonishes His children to attend diligently to the cultivation of godly wisdom and that discretion which acts in accordance with it. Such wisdom and discretion are not to be sought out only occasionally; instead, they are to be ever our focus. We are constantly to attend to them

not only because our heavenly Father bids us do so, but also because they transfuse into our soul His life, with all of its wonder and glory. That life also shines out of us, thus adorning us with heavenly beauty amidst even the most mundane circumstances here below.

Tuesday, August 28th - Proverbs 3: 23,24

Godly wisdom fills our lives with beautiful heavenly glory. It also enlightens and empowers us to live in the most secure and fruitful way here on earth. The wisdom of God enables us to make progress in our way, however difficult that way may at times become. Whatever obstacles we encounter, this wisdom provides such a true and deep and expansive context of understanding, making us all the while conscious of manifold divine resources, that we continue taking steps when progress seems impossible. Those steps prove to be sure, too! Likewise, when the time comes to wait, to rest, we do so without fear of being overtaken by evil, even when it surrounds us with gathering strength as a storm. Think of Peter sleeping in prison (Acts 12:6), or Jesus asleep in the storm-tossed boat (Mk. 4:38).

Wednesday, August 29th - Proverbs 3: 25,26

To the indicatives of vv.22-24 is now added an imperative. Those possessing and pursuing divine wisdom are directed not to fear. When we fear God, we shall have no other fear. He will ever be with us to fortify us within and to serve as a shield and refuge without. He can never be caught by surprise, so we need not fear sudden threats. He cannot be overpowered by hosts of the wicked, hence we need not fear overwhelming odds against us. He has various ways of enabling us to escape danger (e.g. David eluding Saul), or to neutralize threats (e.g. Elisha's dealings with the Syrian armies in 2 Kings 6:15-23).

Thursday, August 30th - Proverbs 3: 27,28

Divine wisdom not only protects us from the attacks of evil, it also directs and empowers us to do good to all men, so that we overcome evil with good. Godly confidence begets magnanimous living. We should not seek selfishly to hoard our powers or possessions, even when we are able to do so, and certainly never when what we have we owe to another as his due. Nor are we to procrastinate in our giving. Needless delay is in the eyes of the Lord equivalent to unrighteous denial.

Friday, August 31st - Proverbs 3: 29-33

Withholding good due to others is one form of sin in which godly wisdom will not allow us to indulge. The evil of doing our neighbor harm is also prohibited. We must neither contend with him without just cause, nor mentally devise ways to hurt him. We can only consider such harmful attitudes and actions when we remove our focus from the Lord and look enviously upon ruthless pragmatists, who advance themselves at the expense of others. But such men of violence, far from being strong and truly enviable, are crooked and cursed. They not only are strangers to the blessed intimacy with the Lord which the upright enjoy, but also render themselves and their households abominable subjects of His curse.

Saturday, September 1st - Proverbs 3: 34,35

Selfish pride puffs up a man so that he thinks and acts contemptuously toward others, including the Lord. Furthermore, pride is a dynamic force, which does not stop with scoffing, but goes on, if unchecked, to murder. Such a destructive evil is opposed most consistently and righteously by our just and loving God. Scripture most clearly reiterates this truth, not only in the expressions of James (Jas. 4:6) and Peter (1 Pet. 5:5), but also through the examples of God's dealings with Satan (Is. 14:12-15), with the builders of the tower of Babel (Gen. 11:4-9), with Pharaoh (Ex. 3:19,20), and many other such proud opponents throughout history. Yet, to those humbled by their afflictions and the consequent awareness of their need, the Lord gives grace which powerfully transforms them from being puffed up, self-deceived fools, who glory in their shame, to being inheritors of the honor and glory of the Lord.

Those who would erect their own thrones will find their efforts serving to dishonor and destroy themselves, much as did Haman's gallows do to himself (Esth. 7:10). But those who embrace the crucified Redeemer and His cross never fail to inherit a matchless crown.

Sunday, September 2nd - Proverbs 4: 1-9

To the words of The Father respecting the virtues and powers of wisdom is now added the testimony of a father, Solomon. He tells us that from his own experience he has discovered the truth of the claims of God's Word and wisdom, and has enjoyed the reward thereof. Such blessed experience he desires to see being repeated in the lives of all those spiritually akin to himself.

The written Word of God repeatedly urges us to pursue the narrow way which leads to life and blessing. The Word made flesh in the lives and experiences of God's people does likewise. No one who in good faith and resolute commitment has submitted himself to learn the lessons of divine discipleship has ever stood to testify of disappointment.

Monday, September 3rd - Proverbs 4: 4-9

Godly and loving fathers should aim not primarily at the head of their children (i.e. their mental education), nor at their hands (i.e. their outward behavior), but at their hearts. We should never rest until our children embrace with true, inner conviction and delight, the glorious revelation of God in the gospel. Only as they treasure the fear of the Lord, and love His Word because they love Him, will they be properly motivated to learn more about Him and themselves and the world in which they live, acquiring the gracious, noble, and beautiful mind of Christ as the fruit of such edifying endeavor. The ring of truth comes through such penetrating urgings to our children only when Christ is truly treasured in our own hearts.

Tuesday, September 4th - Proverbs 4: 10-13

The invitation becomes more personal here. From sons in v.1, Solomon addresses us as individuals, as though each one sat before him hearing the call, *My son*. Such an earnest call is not issued for our harm, but for our good. The Lord and His servants call us to pursue a wise, righteous, and life-bestowing course. The godly path into which we are summoned is also the only way of true efficiency and felicity through our pilgrimage here and now. For when we are equipped with the wisdom of the Almighty, nothing can stop our progress or even slow it when the pace quickens. Because this wisdom is so valuable and potent we should spare no effort in our quest to attain and maintain our grasp of it. If we let this treasure slip away, we let our lives go with it.

Wednesday, September 5th - Proverbs 4: 14-17

Wickedness and wisdom are mutually exclusive. To choose one is to forsake the other. Of course wicked men attempt to appear wise and would thus entice us into their way. But the Word of God in strongest, reiterated, and categorical terms tells us to avoid the path of the wicked, which, as we proceed on it, opens up into an engulfing way. For wickedness is a destructive obsession which we do well to resist, to reject, to avoid altogether, as a wise seafarer would give wide berth to a maelstrom, the force of which intensifies as one is drawn nearer to its center.

Thursday, September 6th - Proverbs 4: 18,19

What a contrast between the way of the righteous and that of the wicked. The righteous proceed in a narrow path as opposed to a wide way. Yet each step the godly man takes in obedience to the Lord empowers him to go on in that way which leads to life. His path grows brighter and more blessed with each step, as the brightness of God's Word and the energizing ministry of His Spirit increase towards perfection. Yet the seemingly wide way of the wicked is dark and dangerous. The godless do not see the obstacles strewn in

their way, and thus they constantly are stumbling. The righteous may have their wills crossed by the narrow confines of God's path, but that path directs to blessing. The wicked likewise have their wills crossed by things in their way, yet those things are not the confines of a path leading somewhere, but rather are a random assortment of pitfalls which the wicked do not see, which lead to nowhere, and from which the wicked, even once they fall into them, learn nothing.

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Sunday, September 23rd - Hebrews 8: 1, 2

In chapters 8-10 a new section of this great letter is developed. We are taught through these chapters that Christ is superior to the sacrificial rituals of the old economy. To this point in the letter, the primary emphasis has been upon the person of Christ. Now, the writer begins a more detailed analysis of Christ's work. In the next several chapters, the writer will relate the High Priest of our salvation to His function, namely, His atoning for our sin. We have a perfect High Priest who has done His work perfectly. That is the crowning point of this letter, and of the entire Bible.

Monday, September 24th - Hebrews 8: 3

Divinely sanctioned high priests offered gifts and sacrifices. Generally, sacrifices were required, entailed the shedding of blood, and were applicable to the sins of those for whom they were offered. Gifts tended to be voluntary, representing gratitude or free-will devotion of those presenting them. The point is that no worshipper ever approached God in the old economy, except through a priest, and even then, the priest slaughtered the worshipper's sacrifice or rendered his offering for him. These shadows point to our High Priest. If the shadows necessarily involve sacrifices and offerings, the substance must also involve them. Our High Priest has offered the perfect sacrifice for our sins when He offered Himself on the cross. This was His passive obedience. He also brought a perfect life of perpetual obedience as a free-will, love offering on our behalf. This was His active obedience. Christ not only had something to offer, He had the substance of atoning perfection which He offered.

Tuesday, September 25th - Hebrews 8: 4, 5

The perfection of Christ's offering was alluded to in v.3. The place where He performed His priestly service again comes into consideration in vv.4,5. Jesus did not offer Himself as a sacrifice in the temple, but rather on the cross. The tabernacle, and later the temple, were instituted by God and housed activities and contained in their arrangement, materials, and furniture many wonderful facets pertaining to salvation. Yet, all of these earthly things were but copies and shadows of a higher reality. Christ wrought our redemption not in the shadowland of this cursed earth. The Levitical priests, being themselves but shadowy types, served their priestly functions on earth. Christ, the substance of salvation wrought our salvation in the realm of light, glory, and true substance. The sons of Aaron did but represent the reality of our communion in the worship of our holy God—a communion into which we could enter only by the blood of the Lamb of God.

Wednesday, September 26th - Hebrews 8: 4, 5

The dimensions, materials, and all components of the tabernacle were given to Moses by God's direction (Ex. 25-27). Before Moses gave the people instruction regarding the building of the tabernacle, he was given, on Mount Sinai, a vision of the heavenly reality (Ex. 25:40). That is to say that Moses was given a vision of that perfection of worship which God graciously provides for His people through Christ and by the Holy Spirit. Moses did not invent the tabernacle; he copied it, by divine direction, from the perfect, heavenly original. Moses was shown what God had decreed to certain fulfillment through Christ from the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:3-14), namely, the new, perfect, and glorious bride of Christ in holy, worshipping communion with her God. Moses but portrayed this tabernacle; Christ produced that perfect temple, composed of living stones.

Thursday, September 27th - Hebrews 8: 6

The office of Christ is superior to that of the Aaronic high priests, due to the perfection of Christ's person. The ministry of the sons of Aaron was excellent, though in their persons they remained themselves needy

sinners, because that ministry had been instituted and sustained by God. Yet, as Christ's person is superior to any and all Aaronic priests, so Christ's ministry outshines the excellence of the ministry of those priests for three reasons given in this verse: 1) He is the Mediator; 2) He mediates a better covenant; and 3) His ministry stands on better promises. The substance of our salvation is not barely better than the shadows, but greatly exceeds in excellence those shadows.

Friday, September 28th - Hebrews 8: 6

Strictly speaking, the Old Testament priests were not mediators, but rather were ministers of the mediation of Christ. A true mediator (

In chapters 8-10 a new section of this great letter is developed. We are taught through these chapters that Christ is superior to the sacrificial rituals of the old economy. To this point in the letter, the primary emphasis has been upon the person of Christ. Now, the writer begins a more detailed analysis of Christ's work. In the next several chapters, the writer will relate the High Priest of our salvation to His function, namely, His atoning for our sin. We have a perfect High Priest who has done His work perfectly. That is the crowning point of this letter, and of the entire Bible.

Monday, September 24th - Hebrews 8: 3

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The office of Christ is superior to that of the Aaronic high priests, due to the perfection of Christ's person. The ministry of the sons of Aaron was excellent, though in their persons they remained themselves needy sinners, because that ministry had been instituted and sustained by God. Yet, as Christ's person is superior to any and all Aaronic priests, so Christ's ministry outshines the excellence of the ministry of those priests for three reasons given in this verse: 1) He is the Mediator; 2) He mediates a better covenant; and 3) His ministry stands on better promises. The substance of our salvation is not barely better than the shadows, but greatly exceeds in excellence those shadows.

Friday, September 28th - Hebrews 8: 6

Strictly speaking, the Old Testament priests were not mediators, but rather were ministers of the mediation of Christ. A true mediator (mesi,thj) is one who stands between two opposing parties to bring them together. The opposing parties are the holy God and sinful men. The sons of Aaron were themselves sinful men in need of redemption. That is why, for example, the high priest, on the day of atonement, offered a bull for a sin offering for himself and his household (Lev. 16:6,11,17). Neither Aaron nor his sons could be true mediators. But the Lamb of God, the Lion from the tribe of Judah, being without sin, could and did mediate between God and man, He being both God and man in His person, and satisfying God by His atoning death on behalf of His sinful people. Thus, we have one mediator between God and man, namely, Christ Jesus our Lord (1 Tim. 2:5).

Saturday, September 29th - Hebrews 8: 6

Our mediator has perfectly served the interests of both parties for whom He acts. He has preserved the glory and honor of God, while accomplishing the redemption of sinful man. This mediatorial work was enacted upon the basis of the covenant of sovereign, divine grace. The writer here refers to it as a better covenant. This better covenant is in vv.8ff cited from Jeremiah 31:31, and is called the new covenant, to distinguish it from the covenant given at Sinai, wherein the people obliged themselves to do all which the Lord had spoken (Ex 24:3,7). The covenant at Sinai was gracious and good, but in that it could only prescribe and not provide perfect righteousness, it lacked that perfection of the new covenant, wherein our mediator provides us with His own perfect righteousness.

Sunday, September 30th - Hebrews 8: 6

The new covenant, wherein God purposed and agreed to accept the penal substitution of a mediator on behalf of His chosen people, has been enacted on promises better than old covenant. The promise of God's blessing in the previous covenant was conditioned by the obedience of the Lord's people. The promise of blessing in the new covenant depends upon the perfect and perpetual obedience of our mediator, imputed to us in our justification and imparted to us through the process of sanctification. This perfect new covenant is enacted on perfectly fulfilled promises.

Monday, October 1st - Hebrews 8: 7, 8

The covenant enacted at Sinai seemed perfect, and, considered in itself, it was perfect. However, the woeful failure of Israel to do all the things which the Lord had spoken, as they had pledged themselves to do, revealed the inadequacy of the first covenant to empower the people to keep their promise to obey the Lord. The historical books of the Old Testament give extensive demonstration of this inadequacy of the first covenant. Jeremiah summarizes this faulty first covenant in his prophecy (Jer. 7:21-26). The fault lay, however, in the people whose sinful natures could not rise to the challenge of perfect obedience. Thanks be

to God that Jeremiah, later in his prophecy, announces a new covenant (Jer. 31:31), and that Jesus enacted it by His death and resurrection.

Tuesday, October 2nd - Hebrews 8: 8-10

The sinful failure of the people of God to keep their promise to obey the Lord led to the division of the covenant people into two nations, namely, Israel and Judah. Sin alienates man from God and it alienates man from his fellow man. It would have been good and right had the people redeemed by God's gracious power from their slavery and bondage in Egypt obeyed their redeeming God. Instead, they repaid the costly and tender mercies of the Lord with only initial covenant commitment, and then they went on to fail in their continued obedience. God could justly have forsaken His sinful people, yet He graciously promised them a new covenant which would effect reconciliation between Himself and His people, as well as effecting reconciliation amongst the sin fractured people themselves. Thus, in the fulfillment of the new covenant, there is no mention of two nations, Israel and Judah, but only the one Israel of God. We have received divine grace upon grace in Christ, as we have been reconciled to God and to our brethren in Him.

Wednesday, October 3rd - Hebrews 8: 10-12

In vv. 7-9 the shortcomings of the first covenant were touched upon. In vv. 10-12 the manifold and precious perfections of the new covenant receive treatment. As ever, our gracious Lord saves the best wine until last.

Thursday, October 4th - Hebrews 8: 9, 10

In both covenants, the gracious initiative of God is apparent from the words, *I made* (v.9), and, *I will make* (v.10). The covenant of grace is conceived, progressively revealed, perfectly fulfilled, and wisely and lovingly administered by God. Both the Sinaitic covenant and the new covenant were enacted by God according to His gracious purpose. The new covenant contains both the perfect demands of the first covenant and the perfect fulfillment of those demands by the Son of God, our mediator. The new covenant, made and kept by our God, is the final covenant because it is the perfect covenant.

Friday, October 5th - Hebrews 8: 10

There is divine design in the enacting and administration of the first covenant followed by the new covenant. By the phrase, *after those days*, we are to understand a period of demonstration of the weakness of the first covenant. By the design of God, perfect terms would be offered in the covenant at Sinai, but the shadowy, provisionary nature of that covenant would become clearly manifested by centuries of the demonstrated failure of the people of God to be faithful to that covenant. Such humbling experience sharpens our appetite for the substantial perfection of the new covenant, and should deepen our gratitude for God's having promised and provided it in Christ.

Saturday, October 6th - Hebrews 8: 10

The promise of the new covenant was made centuries after the first covenant was given. In the dark days of Judah's apostasy, just prior to her Babylonian captivity, the prophet Jeremiah announced the promise of this new covenant. That covenant would be enacted *after those days*, meaning, after the dispensation of provisionary ceremonial shadows, and after centuries of the people of God demonstrating by their continued and increasing infidelity to their Lord that their possession of divine revelation was not enough. What became abundantly clear *after those days* was that God's people needed new hearts, enlightened and

empowered by His indwelling Holy Spirit, and such provision God graciously promised to His people while they were at their worst. Our Lord graciously provided it while we were worse than at our worst (Rom. 5:8,10).

Sunday, October 7th - Hebrews 8: 10

The new covenant is better than the first covenant in several ways. Its foremost superiority lies in the fact that through it God's law is not only presented to our minds for information and recollection (Dt. 6:6-9), but implanted in our hearts (Ezek. 11:19,20). With the first covenant, the people promised: *All that God has spoken we will do.* (Ex. 24:7). But the sad fact, demonstrated over the course of centuries, was that the people lacked the heart to do God's will. As the apostle Paul rightly declares, the earlier covenant was not weak in itself, but was weak through the flesh (Rom. 8:3). Thanks be to God that such weakness has been remedied in the new covenant. Now we work out our salvation with the assurance that God is in us to will and do His good pleasure (Phil. 2:12,13).

Monday, October 8th - Hebrews 8: 10

The essence of the covenant of grace is expressed in the words: *I will be their God, and they shall be My people.* In our verse we learn that the first, or former covenant—that enacted at Sinai through Moses—is really the early administration of the covenant of grace. The new covenant, enacted through our Lord Jesus, is the perfect fulfillment of the covenant of grace. The former covenant and the new covenant, though different in administration, are the same in essence. Through the covenant of grace, God restores and perfects that loving and holy relationship between Himself and His people which we shattered by our sin. God created our first parents very good; He makes His chosen people to become new creatures when they were at their worst. How great and wonderful is His grace!

Tuesday, October 9th - Hebrews 8: 10

The covenant of grace is essentially and unchangeably personal. In it, the living God pledges Himself to give Himself to His people and to adopt them unto Himself. In the Sinaitic administration of the covenant, this remained the essence of the covenant, but the power to effect and maintain this relationship was still promissory, and thus potential. With the new covenant has come new power to effect this holy communion between God and His people. The new covenant has actually pacified God's holy wrath and empowered His people with new hearts that are willing and able to do His good pleasure. Great are the advantages which we, who live under the new covenant, have over those who lived under the first covenant.

Wednesday, October 10th - Hebrews 8: 11

The new covenant has a further advantage over the first covenant, in that the new covenant makes the knowledge of God to be a matter of personal, intimate experience. There are no priests and no veils to come between our God and us. Through the ministry of the Holy Spirit—the gift of the Father under the new covenant (Lk. 24:49; Acts 1:8)—we know the Lord by direct intuition, and not by external persuasion (Rom. 8:16; Gal. 4:6; 1 Jn. 2:20; 5:6-12). This does not render ministers of the Word unnecessary, but rather informs us that when they proclaim the Word of God, we hear and heed not man, but rather the voice of God (1 Thess. 2:13). Under the first covenant, men were taught and edified by many outward, tangible ordinances which were graciously instituted by God. Yet, the lack of outward substance under the new covenant argues not an impoverishment but an improvement in the edifying power of the ordinances of the Lord.

Thursday, October 11th - Hebrews 8: 11, 12

Nothing promotes a true knowledge of God more deeply and vitally than an apprehension of the Lord's merciful forgiveness. Man's plight is such that he does not need therapy for his body, or soothing for his emotions, so much as he needs an atoning sacrifice for his sins. The arrangement of these two verses is

significant. Man's knowing of God (v.11) is based upon the forgiveness of God (v.12). Thus, we learn that a true, personal knowledge of God flows from one's experience of God's saving mercy in Christ. It is our sin, not any lack of information, that impedes our knowledge of the Lord.

Friday, October 12th - Hebrews 8: 12

In this verse, cited from Jer. 31:34, we are told precisely why the new covenant is the covenant better than the old. The first covenant promised divine forgiveness and delivered provisionary ordinances for man's sin. Hence, the animal sacrifices and temple ritual were concrete indicators that God was mercifully committed to offering Himself a sacrifice for the sins of His sons. But by all of those sacrifices—from Abel's, through Abraham's offering even of Isaac, to the last sacrifice made prior to Christ's crucifixion—all of those sacrifices merely covered the sins of God's people. However, with the sacrifice of Jesus, the Son of God literally offered Himself as an atoning, sacrificial lamb. Through that sacrificial offering, the sins of all the people of God were no longer provisionally covered, but were so thoroughly and permanently cleansed from them that not even the omniscient God Himself is capable of knowing that they ever existed.

Saturday, October 13th - Hebrews 8: 12

The thorough and lasting divine forgiveness proceeds from the mercy of God, and is in no way a response to the merit of man. In fact, by God's mercy the earlier covenant, which provisionally covered Israel's sins, was given, and thus we rightly understand it to be an administration of the covenant of grace. Yet, in the earlier covenant, God revealed His name to Moses as the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, etc. after the ratification of the covenant (Ex. 34:5-7). With the new covenant, the mercy of God and assurance of forgiveness are expressly written into the prophetic promise of the covenant. Such divine compassion and mercy are what we sinful people need above all things, and we should overflow with gratitude that our God has so acted towards us according to such gracious qualities.

Sunday, October 14th - Hebrews 8: 12

There is a discernable manward and Godward reference in this verse. The manward reference has to do with expiation—the cleansing of man's sin through the merciful provision of Christ. The Godward reference has to do with propitiation—the pacifying of God's holy wrath aroused in response to man's sin. Neither of these references was accomplished under the first covenant, but both were promised by the God whose Word is as good as His deeds. Yet, under the new covenant, God actually has provided His merciful forgiveness, and has actually accomplished the assuaging of His wrath. Thus, there is now not potentially but actually no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:1), for God has mercifully not only covered our sins, but cleansed them and provided His Son as a propitiation for His wrath (Rom. 3:25,26).

Monday, October 15th - Hebrews 8: 12

When Scripture tells us that God will remember our sins no more, we should understand that the biblical concept of remembering involves far more than mental recollection. It also involves active participation, for good or ill. Thus, God's not remembering our sins expresses His active acceptance of His people for good. That is why we may and must have confident access to our heavenly Father, who accepts us in His beloved Son, treating us as His beloved sons in whom He is well pleased.

Tuesday, October 16th - Hebrews 8: 13

God Himself revealed by His prophetic Word that the first covenant was provisionary when He promised a new covenant. As is usual with our God, His provision exceeded His promise. The new covenant is more excellent than the first covenant (8:6), as it was promised by divine oath, and accomplished by the person and through the work of Christ (7:26-28). The results of the new covenant are superior to those of the first covenant in that by the new, God's law is implanted in our hearts (8:10), we have direct, personal

knowledge of God (8:11), and divine forgiveness has been thoroughly accomplished for us (8:12). And while we do well gratefully to reflect upon the first, provisionary covenant, we should not cling to or revert to it at the expense of a vital experience of the new covenant. Thus, any revival of the more sensual aspects of worship contained in the old covenant represents not spiritual advance and enrichment, but rather spiritual reversion and impoverishment. Now as never before, the Father calls and enables His true worshippers to worship Him in Spirit and truth (Jn. 4:23).

Wednesday, October 17th - Hebrews 9: 1-5

Prior to the writer's treatment of the covenant, he had mentioned the tabernacle (8:1-5). He, having considered the covenant, now returns to the matter of the earthly sanctuary. He does this to instruct us in the truth that as the new covenant is superior to the old, so the new house of God, composed of living stones (1 Pet. 2:4,5) is superior to the more sensual but less spiritual tabernacle of the old economy. Our true blessing is found not in our adding to or taking away from the new covenant, but in our accepting it, understanding it, and gratefully standing and serving by it as the perfection that it is.

Thursday, October 18th - Hebrews 9: 1

The Old Testament ordinances, based upon and issuing from the first covenant, were outwardly more substantial, but spiritually less so, than what we have in the new covenant. Yet, even these blessed shadows are not without their significance, so long as we trace them to the true substance of Christ, refusing to mistake them as being the substance. The first covenant was excellent in so far as it pointed to the more excellent new covenant (8:6).

Friday, October 19th - Hebrews 9: 2

The writer here begins to provide for us a summary sketch of the tabernacle. For the full and detailed drawing, see Ex. 25-27. He concentrates upon the tabernacle as opposed to the temple which later replaced it because the moveable character of the tabernacle better shows the essentially temporary character of the old dispensation. In this verse, he concentrates upon the outer court of the tabernacle, with its furnishings of the lamp stand and table of show bread, representing the enlightening and empowering virtues of God's Word, whereby men are called to faith in the Lord. Even the outer traces of the Old Testament ordinances contained wonderfully significant elements.

Saturday, October 20th - Hebrews 9: 3, 4

There were two compartments in the tabernacle: the outer one, which was larger and seen by all worshipping Israelites, and the inner compartment, which was smaller and entered into only by the high priest, and even by him only on one day in the year, the day of atonement. As graciously significant as was the outer court, the smaller and much less frequented inner court was clearly more significant. It is ever the case that with our God the inner, unseen reality is the more determinative one. Just as many more numerous, precious, and potent features were contained in the Holy of Holies, so we should understand that our blessings and our lives are now hidden with God in Christ (Eph. 1:3; Col. 3:1-4).

Sunday, October 21st - Hebrews 9: 4-5

The most precious and potent articles were contained within the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle. The altar of incense, showed that the Israelites' prayers ascended to the very presence of God. The gold covered ark of the covenant portrayed the divinely given and preserved blessings of salvation. In it were tokens of grace and glory. There was the pure and precious divine provision of the miraculously provided bread of heaven, the miraculously budded rod of Aaron, representing the divinely granted authority of his priesthood, and the tables of the moral law written by the finger of God and given to Moses. Yet, the central and most significant feature of the Holy of Holies was the mercy seat of God, indicating that all of the divinely

instituted ordinances, pointing to salvation and promoting sanctification, issued from God's mercy and not man's merit.

Monday, October 22nd - Hebrews 9: 5-7

The writer intends to sketch the tabernacle, not so that we become engrossed in its details, but so that he might make his main point regarding the superiority of Christ's ministry on behalf of His people. To that end, what our writer makes of the two courts of the tabernacle is how they show the contrast between the valuable, necessary, ordinary, and regularly perceived ministry of the outer court, and the much more vital essence of the extraordinary ministry of the inner court, which no one but the high priest perceived on a singular day in the year. Thusly does the tabernacle itself point beyond its own tangibly perceived, provisionary significance, to the eternal and glorious substance of the saving ministry of our great High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, whose ministry is hidden from common view and perceived only by faith.

Tuesday, October 23rd - Hebrews 9: 6-7

The fact that the priests were continually performing divine worship in the outer court of the tabernacle shows that man's daily life is in need of divine regulation and should be lived to the glory of God (Rom. 12:1,2; 1 Cor. 10:31). The fact that such daily worship was offered through priests shows man's perpetual need for a mediator. Yet, there was a veil separating the outer court from the inner Holy of Holies. That veil shows that man is separated from God, and that each and every day the way to the deepest fellowship with God was barred to man. Only on the Day of Atonement could men, in the representative person of the high priest, enter into the deepest and most vital and significant fellowship with God. Moreover, such entrance into that holy communion took place only through a priest and a sacrifice. Rich and meaningful as these details are, they but portray the shadowy outline of that perfect access to God which we have through our great high priest, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Wednesday, October 24th - Hebrews 9: 8-10

These verses make the important point that despite the gracious divine institution of the tabernacle, the regulation of its worship, and rich significance of all it was and of all that went on within it, the tabernacle and its ritual were mercifully provisional, not perfectly efficacious. Through the tabernacle, men could approach God, but they could not be accepted and embraced by Him. The tabernacle provided only the outer traces of salvation; the divine Word, who became flesh and tabernacled amongst us (Jn. 1:14), conveys to us salvation's inner essence.

Thursday, October 25th - Hebrews 9: 8-10

The first indication that the tabernacle and its ritual were mercifully provisional and not perfectly efficacious in conveying salvation to man is that the Holy Spirit designates the tabernacle a sign, which points beyond itself to more substantial realities. The sign draws our attention to something distant from us. It indicates direction and distance to the desired place, but so long as it stands we know that we are not in the desired place. A man driving home from a distant location is relieved and excited when he first encounters signs bearing the name of his home city, indicating which routes he should take to get there, and telling how many miles he has yet to drive. As welcome as such signs are for a time, eventually the man tires of seeing them, for the fact that they are posted declares that he is not yet home. Those wanting to return to the more sensual ritual of the tabernacle are wanting to head not closer to, but farther from, the salvation of the Lord.

Friday, October 26th - Hebrews 9: 8-10

Not only was the tabernacle a symbol, rather than a reality, but the gifts and sacrifices offered in it served only to point to, not provide, salvation. No one sacrifice, nor all sacrifices combined, which were offered in the tabernacle, or, later, in the temple, were perfect enough to remove the barrier veil between God and man. That was because those sacrifices lacked the virtuous perfection and transferable potency to penetrate and transform the inner essence of the worshipper. They could cover sin, but never cleanse it. They could give the worshipper a provisional standing before God, and one needing constantly to be renewed, but they could not reform the character of the worshipper into the likeness of Christ. They pointed to the necessity and the certain coming of such reformation, but lacked the capacity to impart it. The Jews of old, who had the shadows of salvation, were blessed; we who have its substance are more greatly blessed.

Saturday, October 27th - Hebrews 9: 11-14

These verses deal with the perfection of the atoning work of Christ. That work makes His people perfect. Whereas there is continuity between the old tabernacle and priesthood and Christ—those shadows of old pointing to and indicating His coming—there is also great contrast between those shadows and the substance having arrived in Christ. Indeed, the contrast is far greater than the continuity, as the difference between a man and his shadow is far greater than the similarities they share. Shadows cease where the substance commences. Our salvation has not faded over time, but has intensified since the coming of Christ.

Sunday, October 28th - Hebrews 9: 11, 12

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Sunday, October 28th - Hebrews 9: 11, 12

Christ did not simply come (ε;rcetai) to us, He became one standing beside us for our defense (parageno,menoj). He came to our side as that which we needed most, namely, a high priest. Nor was He a high priest like Aaron or Melchizedek, as excellent as were those men and their priesthoods. Christ came as the substantial and perfect high priest, that He might lead us in the perfect and acceptable worship of God, thereby restoring us to that for which we were made, but from which we, in Adam, fell, namely, lives and service which glorify and enjoy God forever.

Monday, October 29th - Hebrews 9: 11, 12

Christ came as high priest of the good things to come. Both His coming and the coming good things share the same root word in v.11 (gi,nomai). A literal translation of the first part of v.11 could read: *But when Christ became the one standing for us (parageno,menoj) as high priest of the good things which were becoming (tw/n genome,nwn avgaqw/n)....* Understood this way, our writer is expressing the truth that our Redeemer came to us clothed in and conveying to us every good spiritual blessing (Eph. 1:3). When Christ comes, all the good components of our blessing come with Him. Where Christ is, there are only and all good things for us, even though they may for a time appear to us as bad things (Rom. 8:28).

Tuesday, October 30th - Hebrews 9: 11, 12

Christ's coming initiated the coming to us of all good things. Yet those good things were conveyed to us not merely by Christ's coming to us in His incarnation, but supremely through His costly, atoning work which He accomplished for us. The supreme perfection and eternal efficacy of His work—and hence, the

enduring security of our possessing the good things—are pointed out to us when we are informed that Christ performed His ministry not in the shadowy tabernacle, but in the true and substantial tabernacle. Our salvation results from a person and his work accomplished in a place far beyond the apprehension of sense. Our rich redemption was accomplished in a place apprehended only by faith, that power which gives us vital and empowering conviction of things unseen (Heb. 11:1).

Wednesday, October 31st - Hebrews 9: 11, 12

There are two senses in which we are to understand the reference to the true tabernacle in which Christ accomplished our redemption. The first reference is to the tabernacle of the body of our Lord. This is the sense in which John speaks when he comments upon the prediction Jesus made about His raising up the destroyed temple in three days (Jn. 2:18-22). It is the sense further developed in Heb. 10:5, 20. What our Savior accomplished in His person has enabled us to draw more intimately near to God than the earthly tabernacle ever enabled the people of God to do.

Thursday, November 1st - Hebrews 9: 11, 12

The second sense in which we are to understand the reference to the true tabernacle is that of the heavenly glory. This place in which our high priest accomplished our redemption has been referred to in Heb. 8:5 and Ex. 25:40. Our justification has been accomplished in the court of supremely high and absolutely sovereign jurisdiction, by the perfect Advocate. Not only so, but His priestly ministry in that glorious place ensures our entrance into that place, as well as our ceaseless dwelling with Him there (Jn. 17:24). The One who accomplished our redemption and the place where His offering was rendered and accepted doubly ensure our inheritance of every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places (Eph. 1:3).

Friday, November 2nd - Hebrews 9: 11, 12

Christ ministered for us in the true tabernacle, made by God, not man. He further ministered on the basis not of animals which foreshadowed the one substantial and efficacious atoning sacrifice. He ministered on the basis of His own sacrificial death. His sinless and perfectly holy life poured out for us secured eternal access to the heavenly glory not for Himself—for His entrance thereunto was really a re-entry—but for all who trust in Him with saving faith. Our perfect high priest has entered heaven once for all, meaning finally and forever, and as the representative of all His people. The Head of the Church is in heaven; the body is sure to follow (Col. 3:1-4).

Saturday, November 3rd - Hebrews 9: 11, 12

The phrases, *once for all*, and, *eternal redemption*, signal the unshakable certainty of our salvation. All of the good things of our salvation are as lastingly and unchangeably ours as our God, the Giver of those things, is eternal and unchangeable.

Sunday, November 4th - Hebrews 9: 13, 14

These verses give a preliminary summary of the contrast between the shadowy ritual of the tabernacle and the substantial ministry of Christ. In short, v. 13 admits that the priestly ritual and animal sacrifices of the old economy accomplished their intended ends in their time. The old sacrificial system, because it was instituted by God, was an excellent provision in its day. However, in the person and through the work of Christ, we no longer have a provisional system, but one which is perfect in every way. The ministry of Christ has done infinitely more for us and in us than the ministry of the old types and figures ever could do.

Monday, November 5th - Hebrews 9: 13

The old sacrificial system was more than adequate; it was excellent in its day. It sufficed to establish and maintain fellowship between God and His people. It did this in several ways. First, the old sacrificial system established a working mystery respecting man's sin. Through it a sinful people could approach their holy God with animal sacrifices which were put to death, resulting in the people remaining alive in the presence of the God who is a consuming fire (Heb. 12:29). Then, the old sacrificial system was a tutor, leading the people to look to Christ to come for their salvation. The system was one of shadows, but they were shadows prefiguring the approach of the saving God of grace and glory. Therefore, even now we must endeavor to understand, appreciate, and respect those shadows as they are still traced for us in God's Word.

Tuesday, November 6th - Hebrews 9: 13, 14

The superiority of Christ's death on the cross over the tabernacle and its ritual is stunningly declared in these verses. The tabernacle system accomplished a ceremonial cleansing for the worshipper whereby he could draw near to the holy God by means of sacrificial animals. In Christ we have not only the Son of God condescending to assume our humanity, but humbling Himself to the point of taking onto Himself the penalty of death due our sins. Nor was the Christ alone in His life and death. He was empowered by the Holy Spirit of God, with whom He was anointed without measure. He offered Himself as a sacrifice on our behalf to God the Father, and the Father has accepted the sacrifice. Thus, we are accepted by the Father in His beloved Son. Our salvation is thus seen to be infinitely costly to our triune God, whose immeasurable love for us prompted Him to bear the cost that He might have us to Himself for eternity. Christ's sacrifice is thus infinitely more precious than the sacrifice of animals.

Wednesday, November 7th - Hebrews 9: 13, 14

Not only is the sacrifice of Christ infinitely more precious than the sacrifices of the old tabernacle ritual, it is also infinitely more powerful in its effect. The old sacrifices rendered a man ceremonially acceptable, so that he could approach God in worship and not be consumed by the Lord's holy glory. Yet, the effect the sacrifice of Christ has on a man is that it produces a total and revolutionary transformation of the man. The man is not merely cleansed outwardly, but is made a new creature (2 Cor. 5:17), having a godly heart oriented away from sinful and deadening thoughts, words, and actions and set upon the service of the Lord. We not only perceive the substance of salvation in Christ, we possess it now and forever.

Thursday, November 8th - 9: 13, 14

These verses argue from the lesser to the greater. If the sacrifices of the old economy accomplished their purpose of designating a sinner at least ceremonially clean before God, how much more will the perfect work of the three persons of the Trinity succeed in accomplishing the purpose of making us partakers of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4)? Nothing higher than this could be, nor could we ask for or think of anything higher.

Friday, November 9th - Hebrews 9: 11-14

Christ, our high priest, ministers where it counts for time and eternity, namely in the heavenly tabernacle (v.11); He there offered the perfect offering in His own sacrificial death (v.12); and the effects of His priestly service are perfect, being thorough and enduring (vv.13,14). The precious value and perfecting power of Christ's saving work is absolute. Nothing greater need be nor can be done for us.

Saturday, November 10th - Hebrews 9: 15, 16

The perfection of Christ's work was considered in previous verses. Now, from v. 15 to the end of this ninth chapter, the writer teaches us about the necessity for Christ's sacrificial work. He deals with this theme under three distinct headings: 1) that of legal analogy (vv.16,17); 2) that of typological foreshadowing (vv.18-22); 3) that of ontological necessity (vv.23-28). The accomplishing of redemption by Jesus is not only something beautiful which makes sense. It is something absolutely necessary for our deliverance from

sin and hell, and for our justification, adoption, sanctification, and glorification. Redemption is no mere moving spectacle, it is the only vital necessity for sinful man (Lk. 10:42).

Sunday, November 11th - Hebrews 9: 15

The perfection of His person and the powerfully prevailing effects of His work vindicate the wisdom, power, and love of God in His having made Christ the mediator of the new covenant. The key phrase in this verse is *for the redemption of the transgressions*. This alerts us to the fact that Christ's death was substitutionary. He died not for His own sins (for He was without sin) but for ours. We are also informed of the intention, effect, necessity, and perfection of our Lord's substitutionary sacrifice. The intention was to free us from an eternal debt. We have sinned against our infinite and eternal God, and thus our sin has eternal consequences from which we could never even begin to free ourselves. Our perfect Surety, the infinite and eternal Son of God, the mediator of the new covenant, gave Himself as the only adequate purchase price for our redemption. The effect of this transaction is our being acquitted of sin and freed from justly deserved divine condemnation. The necessity of this transaction is understood when we recall that we were unwilling and unable to relieve ourselves of the enormous debt of sin. The perfection of Christ's work is seen in the Father's acceptance of it, and His consequent accounting us not as transgressors, but as righteous in His sight. So much life and glory has resulted from the death of our mediator!

Monday, November 12th - Hebrews 9: 15

The redemption of the transgressions refers to Christ actually Himself bearing, as our substitute, the full penalty due for all of our sins. The price He paid is staggeringly beyond our comprehension. Every actual transgression in thought, word, or deed of every one of His people through all the ages of time He paid for in His suffering and death. The result was not like that under the first covenant. Under that covenant, sinful men in their near approach to a holy God were kept alive through animal sacrifice. But they were not kept alive eternally. Just as we do, they had to look beyond this life for their eternal inheritance. Christ has generated by His death that eternal inheritance. Christ has provided what for the old testament believers was an eternal inheritance promised both in its attainment and application to them. Under the new covenant, that eternal inheritance is actual in its attainment, and promissory only in its full and final application to us. How supremely blessed are we who live under the new covenant.

Tuesday, November 13th - Hebrews 9: 16, 17

There is a fundamental question we may ask with respect to the atonement Christ accomplished for us: Did Christ have to die to provide our salvation? Could God not have provided fiat forgiveness, saying the word and it would be done? In answer, our writer explains the necessity for Christ's death in the accomplishment of our redemption. In these verses he employs a legal analogy, namely, that of testament (*diagh,kh*), or settlement. The point of the analogy is that the beneficiary has no title to the inheritance before the death of the benefactor. Such human laws reflect the much deeper determination of God to make His Son the benefactor, possessing every spiritual blessing (Ps. 72:1,17,18), and conveying the title to those blessings to us at the death of the benefactor (Jn. 16:7; Eph. 1:3). Worthless sinners inherit divine wealth from the death of the Son of God.

Wednesday, November 14th - Hebrews 9: 18-20

From legal analogy (vv.16,17) the writer goes on to speak of typological foreshadowing as manifested in the sacrificial system under the first covenant. Death pervaded the ritual of the old economy. True, it was the death of animals, and not the death of the Son of God which we have under that economy. Yet, the animals had to be clean, perfect, without defect, and to that extent they foreshadowed the coming of the one perfect Son of Man. Even the ancient Israelites knew that the sacrificial animals, by whose death they could approach God and not be consumed by the fire of His just wrath, had no virtue inherent in themselves. They pointed beyond themselves to the perfection to come in Christ. The first covenant was inaugurated with shed blood (Ex. 24:3-8), and was sustained in its operation for centuries with shed blood—all making

the graphic point that a substitutionary death was absolutely necessary in order for man to live and be richly blessed.

Thursday, November 15th - Hebrews 9: 21, 22

Shed blood, the symbol of death, was applied to everything pertaining to worship under the first covenant. It was real death, but because the animals sacrificed lacked the necessary virtue to be effectively atoning sacrifices for sinful man, they served only as shadows pointing to the saving death to come. The clearest truth portrayed by such constant application of death was the necessity not of the signs and shadows, but of the coming substance to die in order for sinful man to live eternally, blessedly, abundantly. The death of Christ is not one grim facet of our redemption, it is the central glorious necessity. It is, then, no wonder that Paul determined to know nothing except Christ crucified (1 Cor. 2:2), and why we, in the Lord's Supper, proclaim His death until He comes (1 Cor. 11:26).

Friday, November 16th - Hebrews 9: 23

We have seen a legal analogy (vv.16,17) and the typological foreshadowing of the sacrificial system under the first covenant (vv.18-22) indicating to us the necessity of Christ's death for our life. From v.23 to the end of this ninth chapter we learn that behind this analogy and the shadowy sacrificial system stands something real and absolute. There is an ontological necessity for the death of Christ. Something in the being of God and man makes that death essential if man is to have the inheritance of forgiveness (vv.15,22). Our redemption by the death of the Son of God is not a sentimental story or a moving expression of love, but is the inescapable and essential reality and requirement of sinful man to have fellowship with the living, holy God. The death of Christ was not simply selected by God as one among a number of ways we could have been saved. As it is the only way whereby we come to God, so it is the only way God could have come to us.

Saturday, November 17th - Hebrews 9: 24

When we properly consider the parties involved in our redemption, we should see that the transaction of a holy God forgiving a sinful people presents great problems. How can a holy God be reconciled to sinful man and remain holy? How can sinful man be accepted by a holy God without being consumed by His holy wrath? Our sin must be taken seriously, because our God takes it seriously. In terms of extent of the problem, we not only do sin, but we are sin! The singular solution to this insurmountable problem lies in the death of the divine Testator. The inheritance of the Son of God is the Son of God Himself, as the God/Man in a right and perfect relationship with God. Only this perfect God/Man, whose person and work have infinite and perfect value, could bear the payment of the penalty for our sin against an infinite God. Only this perfect God/Man could and did appear before the throne of divine glory and judgment to plead His death for our acquittal. Only He by that death could and did bequeath to us His own perfect, empowering, glorious life.

Sunday, November 18th - Hebrews 9: 25, 26

The absolute necessity of Christ's death for our salvation has been finally and fully met. The work which only He could do, He did do completely. He did not offer shadows which, because they lacked inherent virtue and value, had to be offered repeatedly. He did not offer gifts apart from Himself. What He offered was Himself as the perfect God/Man, whose divine infinitude invested His offering with infinite virtue and value, and whose humanity was given to bear suffering and death in our stead. The result was that He did not simply cover our sins, but took them away from us by taking them unto Himself to be destroyed in His death.

Monday, November 19th - Hebrews 9: 25, 26

Our Redeemer has paid the immeasurable price for our salvation. He has put away sin from us. The barrier between God and His believing people is gone. Now, with our sin put away, we may draw near to our God as to a loving Father. We need not be ashamed, for we have clean hands and a pure heart by Christ's doing. We need fear no judgment, for the Judge has given Himself to be judged in our stead. What an amazing and wonderful change our Christ has wrought for us by His death.

Tuesday, November 20th - Hebrews 9: 26-28

Men do not simply wear out and die due to natural design. Death is laid up for us (avpo,keitai) as the wages due our sin. So awful is this destroying fruition of sin that all men dread it and do all they can to avoid it. But death is not the worst thing we sinners must experience. After death comes divine judgment, where a perfectly just reckoning takes place. Few sinners can face death with a steady eye; no sinners can rightly contemplate that divine judgment wherein they receive what they justly deserve. Yet, believers can face death and judgment not with dread, but with anticipation of perfected delight. This is so because Christ has graciously and victoriously interposed Himself for us, taking our death and bearing our judgment for us. That which is the end of this life and its transient joys for the unregenerate, is the commencement and consummation of life and joy inexpressible for those in Christ.

Wednesday, November 21st - Hebrews 9: 27, 28

Men die but once. Christ died for His people. Our death has been died. We are judged but once. Christ has borne our judgment for us. God does not impose double jeopardy. Therefore, our exit from this life will prove to be an entrance not into judgment and eternal condemnation, but into infinite gain (Phil. 1:21) and incomparable glory (Jn. 5:24; Rom. 8:18).

Thursday, November 22nd - Hebrews 9: 27, 28

Sinners dread the God whom they have offended. They suppress the knowledge of Him and of the death and judgment He appoints for all men. But we who are in Christ find our relief, refuge, and delight in our God. For we know that He has sent His Son to bear our death and judgment. Thus, we do not dread death, but accept it as the portal through which all shadows flee away, disclosing to us the face of the Son of God who loved us and gave Himself for us. We eagerly await His coming, whether He comes to call us to Himself through our death, or returns Himself at the end of time. We shall see Jesus again, not as we see Him now by faith (1 Pet. 1:7-9), but we shall behold Him face to face (Rev. 22:4). And when we see Him again, He will not be suffering for our sins, but will be our splendid and glorious bridegroom, taking us in marriage to Himself forever. For this joy we eagerly wait.

Friday, November 23rd - Hebrews 10: 1

This tenth chapter concludes a major section (chs. 8-10) of this great letter, wherein the writer's object is to show his readers the supremacy of Christ over the sacrificial ritual of the old economy. Despite the seemingly substantial character of the Old Testament sacrifices—with hosts of animals presented to the priests, and gallons of blood from those animals being shed daily—the old system was but a shadow compared with the incarnation of the Son of God. That is why it is so wrong for us to revert to a more sensual and less spiritual worship (2 Pet. 2:1, 2).

Saturday, November 24th - Hebrews 10: 1

The Old Testament system of worship was excellent, as far as it went. Yet, it but promised and pointed to that which Jesus has provided. The old system was a shadow, which raised the expectation of God's people

and their anticipation of the good things which have now come to us in Christ. It is Christ having come clothed in His redemptive blessings who is the form (

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Sunday, November 25th - Hebrews 10: 1

The substantial supremacy of Christ over the shadows of the old sacrificial system is evident in three most significant ways. First, the incarnation of the Son of God is infinitely more excellent than countless sacrificial animals, physically perfect through they were. Then, His singular, once-for-all, sacrifice has infinitely more value than what the priests of Israel offered daily, weekly, and yearly. Finally, respecting effect, the old sacrifices pointed to salvation and made the worshippers ceremonially clean, but Christ has provided a justification whereby we are truly and vitally accounted perfect in the estimation of God. The supremacy of Christ over the old shadows is not one of slight degree, but rather of infinite magnitude.

Monday, November 26th - Hebrews 10: 1

The *good things to come* refer to Christ's perfect sacrifice and to His present intercession. Together these procure for us deliverance from the guilt, bondage, corruption, and condemnation of our sin. They also grant to us an eternal redemption, an immeasurably loving adoption by God, and free, intimate access to Him, as well as the indwelling, empowering Holy Spirit. These things were *to come* from the perspective of the Old Testament saints, but have come to us, forever to transform and bless us.

Tuesday, November 27th - Hebrews 10: 1-3

In these verses, the writer asserts that the very existence of the old sacrificial system manifests its provisional nature. That system was effectual in pointing to and promising salvation; it was ineffectual in providing salvation. That is why the sacrifices had continually to be offered. None of them, nor all of them taken together, could touch and transform the character of those offering them. They were signs, perpetually pointing to the fact that man was a sinner, but that God had mercifully promised and would, through His perfect Lamb to come, provide salvation.

Wednesday, November 28th - Hebrews 10: 3, 4

The inadequacy of the elaborate sacrificial system, given by God through Moses, is seen in one critical point, namely that the sacrifices themselves were inadequate. Animals had no moral virtue, and were, apart from the gracious and provisional acceptance of God, incapable of serving as penal substitutes for sinful man. All of those sacrifices did nothing to touch man's sin, let alone take it away. They served as reminders, so long as their blood was shed, that man's life was still forfeited, due to his sin, until the perfect Lamb of God should come to take away the sin of the world (Jn. 1:29). They were a humbling reminder

that sin made us not as gods, but more like beasts. In contrast, the death of the Son of God transforms worms into sons of God (Jn. 1:12).

Thursday, November 29th - Hebrews 10: 4, 5

From a consideration of the shadowy and inadequate nature of the sacrifices offered under the Law, the writer turns to consider the manifold perfections of the Lamb of God, whose very name, Jesus, means that He saves His people from their sins (Mt. 1:21). In these and the following verses, there are four distinct facets of the person and work of the Savior set out: 1) His incarnation (v.5); 2) His active obedience (vv. 6-9); 3) His passive obedience (vv.10-12,14,19,20); and, 4) His resurrection (vv.12,13). By all that He is and by all that He has accomplished for us, we have a salvation composed of manifold grace and blessing.

Friday, November 30th - Hebrews 10: 4, 5

The inadequacy of the Old Testament sacrificial animals to save was due to the inadequacy of their relation to sinful man. It was not animals, but man who sinned against God. Therefore, while animals, through their sacrificial death, could indicate what man deserved apart from God's saving provision of a perfect substitute (to whom they pointed) those animals could not themselves serve as a penal substitutes for men. The only adequate penal substitute for man could be a man. But all men since Adam had been born sinners. They could not, therefore, save themselves, still less others. But God promised in His Word that the Savior would be a man (v.5). God would fashion a second Adam to save those objects of divine election who had sinned in Adam and in their own right. That second Adam would be very God of very God, whose perfection and infinitude would suffice to save many, and pay fully the price for man's having offended an infinite God. He would also be truly man, in mind and emotions, as well as in His physical body. This Son of Man could and would take away the sins of His people.

Saturday, December 1st - Hebrews 10: 4, 5

Sacrificial animals, however ceremonially clean and physically perfect they were, could not take away the sin of men. Such animals were not responsible for man's sin; they could not willingly assume the payment for sin; they had no moral perfection to substitute for man's corrupt nature. Jesus graciously assumed our humanity in every respect except sin (Phil. 2:5-8). As the Son of Man, He assumed responsibility and undertook payment for the transgression for His people. This He did voluntarily, and, because of His inherent perfection and infinite being, He had effectual ability as well as loving willingness to pay a price satisfactory to the infinite and holy God whom our sins had offended. The substance of our salvation is infinitely superior to the shadows of it.

Sunday, December 2nd - Hebrews 10: 5-7

The Son of God became man not simply to demonstrate His love for man or to provide a perfect moral model for man to imitate. Jesus is our example (1 Pet. 2:21), and His incarnation does manifest the love of God (Jn. 3:16). However, the Son of God assumed humanity above all because it was, in the holy and gracious economy of God, necessary that a perfect Man bear sin's penalty for those whom He would save. The Son of God became man actually to accomplish something. By His humbling Himself to obey and fulfill the Law of God perfectly, He provided for His people that positive, active obedience which they miserably failed to render to God. By His suffering a judicial execution, He bore the penalty His sinful people deserved before the judgment seat of the throne of God. In His becoming man and doing perfectly the will of God, this second Adam abundantly succeeded to live for God's glory and for the good of His people where the first Adam had badly failed.

Monday, December 3rd - Hebrews 10: 6, 7

Animals offered in sacrifice could not do God's will. They lived by instinct, and they were killed as sacrifices without their consent. The holy and just God of heaven and earth could not have His righteous

wrath, which was ignited by man's sin, appeased by such inferior and non-consenting sacrifices. Yet, Jesus, as a man, lived the only perfect human life ever lived. The Son of God came as the Son of Man to do God's will. There never was a moment in all the life of Jesus when He did not submit Himself in thought, word, and action to the will of His heavenly Father. The Son of Man declared: "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to accomplish His work." (Jn. 4:34). Even in Gethsemane, He declared: "Not My will but Thy will be done." (Mt. 26:39). This He declared, under the burden of His bearing the crushing penalty for our sin, as a conscious endeavor to harmonize His holy repugnance of sin with His Father's loving and holy determination to redeem us by making His Son, who knew no sin, to become sin for us (2 Cor. 5:21). Such perfect and monumental obedience not only satisfied, but fully pleased the Father (Mt. 17:5).

Tuesday, December 4th - Hebrews 10: 7

The active obedience of Jesus demonstrated the practical dimension of righteousness. His righteous human character prompted Him to right and holy living. His doing the will of God not only satisfied and pleased His Father, but it saved us as well—an accomplishment done in obedience to the God who graciously willed our salvation.

Wednesday, December 5th - Hebrews 10: 8, 9

In these verses, the writer draws an important point from the Old Testament verses he has quoted in vv.5-7. He took his quote from Ps. 40:6-8, compressing v.8 so that it says simply, "To do Thy will, O God." The point drawn from this quotation is not simply that God prefers obedience to His Word above the sacrifices of burnt offerings (1 Sam. 15:22). Rather, it is that God, by inspiration of the psalmist in Ps. 40, was speaking through that Psalm (vv.5,9) to declare that a time would come when He would no longer graciously accept sinful man's attempts at obedience, preferring those attempts above a heartless sacrificial ritual, and doing so, as it were, on credit drawn from the Lamb of God to come. Rather, the time would come when God would accept the perfect obedience of His Son, incarnated to live as the unique, sinless Man, whose perfect life lived as a Man and offered as a penal sacrifice would render the sacrificial system obsolete. Now that the perfect Son of Man has come and has rendered perfect obedience to God's Law, the sacrifices established under that Law are as taken away by God as are our sins.

Thursday, December 6th - Hebrews 10: 10

With this verse, the writer moves to a consideration of the passive obedience, or the penal sufferings of Christ. Our Redeemer not only perfectly obeyed the will of God as expressed in the moral Law, He also accepted a course of suffering unto death, bearing the penalty we deserved for our having violated God's law. It was not only the moral will of God Jesus fulfilled, but it was also the will of the Father to smite His Son, putting Him to death as a guilt offering for the sins of His people (Is. 53:4-6,10). The result of that death is our life; the result of that divine punishment of our sin imputed to the Son is our justification. Jesus has accomplished what the animal sacrifices only advertised.

Friday, December 7th - Hebrews 10: 10

We learn in this verse something about the will of God the Father and about the willingness of the Son of God. Regarding the Son's willingness, He utterly and voluntarily undertook to pay the awful price for the redemption of His people. The magnitude and nature of the cost He bore for us is inconceivable to us. How can we measure, even with our imagination, the depth of suffering the Giver and Sustainer of life experienced in His death? How can finite men, who but dimly perceive the living and holy God, understand the anguish the infinite Son, who ever, only, and always loved His Father, underwent in His death and His being forsaken by His Father? Not all the redeemed in all ages can begin to plumb the depth of the dereliction of the Son of God, which He willingly bore for us.

Saturday, December 8th - 10: 10

As amazing as is the willingness of the Son of God in His bearing our death for us, the emphasis in this verse falls on the will of the Father. It is *by this will*, namely, by the will of God the Father, that redemption was planned and accomplished. We too easily think that the Father *sent* His Son to die for us, when, in fact, the Father *gave* his Son (Jn. 3:16) at infinite cost to Himself. We rightly marvel in awe at the depth of the Son's commitment to us, as we witness His cry of dereliction from the cross. But at what cost did the Father give His beloved Son to suffer so awfully at the hands of men and devils? What unfathomable depths of love for us moved the Father judicially to punish our sins in the person of our ransom, His own dear Son?

Sunday, December 9th - Hebrews 10: 10

The cost of our redemption was infinitely high. The love of God for us is immeasurably greater than such cost, for we learn that the Father and the Son willingly bore that cost. We further learn that the divine commitment to our plight was fully successful. By the perfection and sufficiency of Christ's death on the cross, we have been sanctified. The imputed righteousness of Christ has been bequeathed to us by His death. That righteousness is now being progressively imparted to us as He ever lives to make intercession for us.

Monday, December 10th - Hebrews 10: 11, 12

These verses contrast the priests of the old economy with the perfect Priest. The sons of Aaron, prior to the coming of Christ, stood at the altar every day offering repeated sacrifices which were ever ineffectual in taking away the sins of the worshipper. Jesus offered the one perfect sacrifice when He gave Himself as the Lamb of God to take away the sins of His people. That Jesus actually accomplished His redemptive aim is evident by His sitting at the right hand of God. The first Adam was never so exalted! The seated posture of Christ at His Father's right hand indicates that the work of redemption's accomplishment is finally and forever completed and accepted at the throne of God's glorious perfection.

Tuesday, December 11th - Hebrews 10: 11,12

The efficacy of Christ's saving work, and its acceptance by the Father should not be judged by its apparent evidence in our lives. The course of sanctification throughout our earthly pilgrimage is full of ups and downs, and in the valleys we may lose sight of what Jesus has done for us. We should judge the efficacy of the work of our Lord for us by His current posture. He would not be seated, nor would His Father have Him to be seated at His right hand, were there aspects of the work of our salvation yet to be accomplished. As the disciples on the stormy sea should have reckoned themselves secure with Jesus sleeping in their boat (Mk. 4:35-41), so we should reckon our security from the fact that our Savior is seated in heaven at the right hand of God (Col. 3:1-4).

Wednesday, December 12th - Hebrews 10: 12,13

With these verses, our writer moves to the aspect of Christ's resurrection and ascension. We may note three things in relation to this dimension of the work of Christ. First, our Savior's resurrection and ascension give us clearest indication of God's seal of approval on the words of Jesus. The claims of our Lord, that He laid down His life for our sins and gave His life as a ransom for many (Mk. 10:45), are undeniably verified by His having been raised from the dead and taken up into heaven to sit at the right hand of God.

Thursday, December 13th - Hebrews 10: 12, 13

Christ's resurrection and ascension indicate the divine seal of approval upon the claims of Christ, but also make evident God's acceptance of the work of Jesus. The sacrifice our Savior offered was perfect not only in its power to take away our sins, but also in its efficacy to appease the holy wrath of God which was aroused due to our sins. The work of our Redeemer not only washed us of our sins, but also made us

acceptable to God in His beloved Son (Eph. 1:6). It is, then, no wonder that we are taught to set our minds in heaven, where Christ is and where we are in Him (Col. 3:1-4).

Friday, December 14th - Hebrews 10: 12, 13

The third thing that the resurrection and ascension of our Savior indicate to us is the effect His intercession for us at God's right hand has for us. The Son of God waits upon His heavenly throne until all of His enemies are subdued. He need not go forth to subdue them, for He has accomplished their final and full defeat on Calvary's cross (Col. 2:13-15). Those enemies now are permitted by God to live, only so that they might render unwitting service for our good (Rom. 8:28). Our realizing this and living accordingly makes us to reign in all circumstance and to stand against all foes as more than conquerors (Rom. 8:33-37).

Saturday, December 15th - Hebrews 10: 14

This verse gives a concise summary of the perfect result of Christ's saving work. By the one God/Man, offering Himself on the cross as the singularly perfect sacrifice, He has perfected those made partakers of His saving work. He has perfected us, having removed our sins, and having brought us into an everlastingly loving and holy communion with God. By the application of His redeeming work to us, we are sanctified in at least three senses. We are: 1) set apart for God, 2) justified in God's sight, and 3) have the righteousness of Jesus progressively imparted to us. What ritual slaying of animals could accomplish all of this?

Sunday, December 16th - Hebrews 10: 15-17

The sanctified perfection which the saving work of Jesus has accomplished for us is applied to us by the Holy Spirit. The mode through which the Holy Spirit operates is His illuminating and empowering us through Scripture. Hence, in these verses our writer adds the testimony of God's Holy Spirit through Scripture to confirm our understanding concerning the perfection of Christ's work. That testimony clearly indicates to us that unlike the ceremonial, provisional, and temporary cleansing worshippers received through the sacrifices of the old economy, we are truly cleansed without and transformed within by the Spirit's application to us of Christ's atoning work.

Monday, December 17th - Hebrews 10: 15, 16

The precious fruit issuing from the atoning and sanctifying death of Christ is a true, lasting, inward transformation for His people. Our hearts are changed, so that we love and strive to obey God's holy Law (Phil. 2:12,13). Our minds are transformed, so that we have the mind of Christ, the wisdom of God (Rom. 12:2). This is the Lord's doing, and it is wonderful in our sight.

Tuesday, December 18th - Hebrews 10: 15, 16

The essence of what the writer here quotes from Jer. 31:33 is that Christ will dwell in His people. Our minds will be filled with His truth, and our hearts filled with His love because He Himself will dwell in us by His Holy Spirit. This is precisely what Jesus promised His disciples when He told them that He would not leave them as orphans, but that He would come again to them after His death and resurrection in the person of the Holy Spirit of truth, and would accordingly dwell in them (Jn. 14:16-18). As the essential form (cf., v.1, eivko,na) of this one good thing vitally dwells in us, we are changed into the very form of Christ.

Wednesday, December 19th - Hebrews 10: 16, 17

God, by His Holy Spirit, promised in the new covenant that we would become transformed people. He also promised that the consequences of what we were prior to our becoming new creatures in Christ would also be finally and fully dealt with by the death of Jesus. These promises are provided now in Christ. Through

Christ dwelling *in* us (v.16), we are inwardly formed into His holy likeness. Through Christ's suffering *for* us (v.17), the sinful fruits issuing from our sinful characters have been forever forgotten by God. Therefore, in Christ, both our person and our works are accounted righteous (Rom. 5:1; Rev. 19:8).

Thursday, December 20th - Hebrews 10: 16, 17

The writer is quoting two verses from Jeremiah (Jer. 31:33,34). Yet, what is implied in Jeremiah's prophecy is here made explicit. In the new covenant, a deep, extensive, thorough, and lasting change takes place in God's people. The effect of our inward transformation issues from the cause of the forgiveness of our sins. The ultimate cause upon which this blessed proximate cause and effect operates is the saving work of Jesus. To that work nothing can be added, nor should anything be taken away.

Friday, December 21st - Hebrews 10: 18

The conclusion is obvious: with such perfect and lasting forgiveness of our sins by God on account of Christ's redeeming work, there is no need for us to retain any of the old ritual of sensual worship and animal sacrifice. Now that the perfect has come, the provisional must pass away, for if we retain its practice we do not add to but take away from the perfect work of our gracious and glorious, blessed and blessing Redeemer.

Saturday, December 22nd - Hebrews 10: 18

What can be added to the perfect work of Christ's salvation? Complete and everlasting forgiveness of our sins, transgressions, and iniquitous deeds of lawless rebellion requires nothing to augment its perfection, potency, and infinitely precious value. Likewise, Christ indwelling and transforming us by His Holy Spirit stands in no need of sensual helps, such as elaborate ritual in worship. Our bloodless liturgy bespeaks not a weak, degenerated worship, but rather tells of the perfect life having been lived and imparted to us. It also tells of the perfect sacrificial death having been died for us. Let us then in profoundest gratitude learn to worship our God in Spirit and truth, and to serve Him with diligent devotion, not being paralyzed by thoughts which tell us that we need to add ritual or our own carnal attempts at self-reformation to the perfect work of Jesus. By our Savior's perfect work, we are being sanctified unto perfection.

Sunday, December 23rd - Hebrews 10: 19-22

With these verses, the final major section of this great letter begins. It is the section of application. The magnificent truths expressed in depth, detail, and with such logical arrangement throughout the previous sections of this letter are not only expressed for our information, but ultimately for our reformation. The reality of the person and work of Christ being for us should have deep and abiding impact on how we think, feel, speak, and act. Our right apprehension and application of these things should draw us ever nearer to our God, engage us more fully in His service, and bind us more lovingly together with our brethren.

Monday, December 24th - Hebrews 10: 19-21

These verses sum up all that has been previously taught about the superiority of Christ and the perfection of His work. His incarnation, perfect life, atoning death, and justifying resurrection and ascension have provided the only access to heaven available to us. Moreover, by the perfection of His saving work and its application to us by His intercessions, we have a perfect access to God, and we are sustained abundantly in our growing intimacy with the Father in holy fellowship.

Tuesday, December 25th - Hebrews 10: 19

The blood of Jesus signifies the life of the Redeemer given for our forgiveness. This sacrifice of the perfect God/Man not only provides a way for sinners to approach God, but it produces confidence in those sinners hearing and heeding the effectual call of the Lord, beckoning them to enter into this way (Mt. 11:28-30; Jn. 14:6). The Law did not provide God's people with confidence, but rather served to convict them. Nor did the Law provide God's people with access to God, but kept them in a provisionary state wherein they perceived God through tangible representations, types, and shadows—all of which pointed to salvation, but none of which were the substance of salvation. Under the Law, the worship of the people was mediated through priests; none of the people could enter into the Holy of holies except the high priest representing them on the one day of atonement each year. Now, through the blood of Jesus, we have the right and privilege to enter in our worship into the immediate presence of our God. The way to our God may be singular, but it is sure. It is the way which inspires increasing holy boldness in all who enter by it.

Wednesday, December 26th - Hebrews 10: 20

Jesus has provided for us a new way to God. It is the way of the new covenant. It is the first and only way that gives us intimate access to God. The death and resurrection of Jesus inaugurated for the people of God the only way out of their sin and death, and out of the shadows of salvation, into the very substance of eternal and glorious life in intimate communion with God. This way was not only initiated by Jesus, and thus it came freshly through Him, it remains ever new to us. It will be found to be as fresh, vital, and empowering to believers on the last day as it was on its first day.

Thursday, December 27th - Hebrews 10: 20

The way Jesus opened for believers to God is new and living. The old way, whereby believers approached God through priests and sacrifices, was a way marred by death. Not only were the animals sacrificially offered, but the priests themselves aged and died, having to be replaced by other priests. No priest ever was resurrected, nor was a single animal, having been sacrificed, raised from the dead. Yet, Jesus, though He died, was raised again to live forever (Rev. 1:17,18). He died for sin, once for all, but He lives forever to make effectual intercession for us. Therefore, it is not only the way which is living, but those in the way are made alive, having received eternal life (Jn. 5:24). They continue growing in vigor throughout their pilgrimage (Is. 40:29-31).

Friday, December 28th - Hebrews 10: 20

The new and living way Jesus inaugurated for us by His death did what no other divinely instituted provisional way (still less any way of man's invention) could do. The way of Jesus penetrated the veil separating God from man. In the first tabernacle, the veil separated the people from God. Only the high priest could pass through the veil into the Holy of holies. But at the death of Jesus, that veil, then in the temple, was torn from top to bottom (M5. 27:51; Mk. 15:38; Lk. 23:45). By the manifested initiative of God, through the atoning death of Jesus, the way to God is now open for all who have justifying faith in Christ (Rom. 5:1).

Saturday, December 29th - Hebrews 10: 20

It is somewhat unclear whether the words, *His flesh*, refer to the veil or to the new and living way. If His flesh is the way to God, we should then think of His incarnation, His holy life, His merciful deeds, His authoritative teaching. In the days of His flesh, Jesus so clearly manifested God that He could say of the one perceiving Him that such a one also perceived the Father (Jn. 14:9). If His flesh is the veil, then the emphasis falls not upon His life, but rather upon His atoning death. His body must be broken, His blood shed, His life poured out, and His soul torn by death from His body, in order to open the way of perfect access to God, the way wherein we not only perceive the Father, but possess Him as well. Of course, both of these truths hold together. By the incarnation we began to behold the glory of the Father as never before (Jn. 1:14; 1 Jn. 1:1-3), and by the death of Christ we come to perceive and possess the God of manifest justice, mercy, and love.

Sunday, December 30th - Hebrews 10: 21

We not only have an effective high priest mediating between ourselves and God, we have a great high priest. Jesus is infinitely exalted above all other high priests; He is majestic and glorious; He has and exercises power and authority to save His people to uttermost degree. Perhaps the greatest aspect of His high priestly office and service is that He mediates so perfectly that we are brought by Him into the most intimate relation with the Father (Jn. 16:23-27).

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Our great priest serves over the house of God. The house of God, of course, is the Church, composed of living stones (Eph. 2:19-22). Thus, we are reminded that the ascended Christ orders all things to serve for the glory of God and for the good of His people. This is true at all times, in all places, in all circumstances, but is especially true with respect to our gathering as the Lord's people for worship. Our great priest teaches us for what we should pray (Mt. 6:5-13), and He empowers us by His Holy Spirit to pray to and praise our God with loving zeal (Rom. 8:26). Our great priest also makes our worship in His name to be acceptable to God (Rev. 8:3-5). It is our great privilege, joy, and security to have this great priest reigning over us in every detail, especially those details of greatest importance, namely, the elements in our worship of God.

Tuesday, January 1st - Hebrews 10: 22-24

From the summary truths regarding the person and work of Christ (vv.19-21), our writer draws out three positive exhortations, and one negative one in vv.22-24. The Word of God and the work of Christ are not for our mere information, but for our reformation. These great truths should set us free from low, selfish concerns and sinful bondage, to thoughts and actions which are high, godly, righteous, loving, and lasting. Let us think and act in the light of God's Word and by the power of what our Redeemer has done for us.

Wednesday, January 2nd - Hebrews 10: 22

The first exhortation calls us to draw near to our God. Christ came to us neither to condemn us nor to confirm us in our sinful separation from God. He came to reconcile us to our God, whose holy honor we have offended by our sin. He did not come to indulge us in our sin, but to deliver us out of it, lifting us to the height of heaven. He calls and conveys us to the very throne of our loving and glorious God (Col. 3:1-4).

Thursday, January 3rd - Hebrews 10: 22

The mediating priesthood of Christ transforms us inwardly and outwardly, the priority being first upon the heart, then upon the works of the hand issuing from the heart. That which God provides for us through Jesus, He requires of us in our worship of and communion with Him. Thus, we are exhorted to draw near to God with true hearts (

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outward formalities, or a hypocritical imitation of holy zeal. We must be thoroughly true with the God of truth.

Friday, January 4th - Hebrews 10: 22

We are to draw near to God with true hearts. We are also exhorted to draw near to Him in full assurance of faith. If we are not sincere in our holy aspiration or if we lack the assurance of faith, we cannot enjoy that freedom of access to and loving intimacy with our God which is the chief result of our redemption. Our faith should give us such a full confidence in the efficacy of Christ's saving work for us that we cast off all reluctance and timidity in our approach to our heavenly Father (2 Tim. 1:7). Faith enables us to make far more of the work of Christ than of our own sinful unworthiness.

Saturday, January 5th - Hebrews 10: 22

The sprinkling of the heart refers to the perpetual cleansing of our inner man—our thoughts, emotion, will—by the Holy Spirit's fresh and sanctifying application of the benefits of Christ's atoning death. The washing of our bodies refers to the same application of Christ's atoning death to our actions. As sinners, our consciences are evil, meaning that we suppress the truth, deceive others, and we have a natural appetite for wickedness, and are defiled by guilt and corruption. All of this changes when we become new creatures in Christ. We put on the Lord Jesus Christ, applying His holy character and sanctifying work to our attitude and actions. Thus, our writer speaks of sprinkled hearts and washed bodies. Because we are changed, we think and act as changed people (Rom. 6:2,11-13). Without such a transformation, we cannot draw near to God. With this transformation we have free and bold access.

Sunday, January 6th - Hebrews 10: 23

We are to draw near to our God through faith in the saving work of Jesus. While it is true that we have a freedom of access to God and a holy intimacy with Him which exceed what believers in the old economy enjoyed, we still do not perceive the Lord except by the means of His grace through which we apprehend Him. This we do by faith. We are saved in hope of future glorious fruition (Rom. 8:24,25). In our earthly pilgrimage, we are sustained by the Lord's great and precious promises (2 Pet. 1:4), in the sure expectation that one day we shall know as we are known (1 Cor. 13:12), and see the glorious face of our Redeemer (Rev. 22:4). To this hope, formed within us by the faithful promises of our God, we should hold fast by a faith that does not waiver. There is no comfort, no peace, no security, no joyful blessing apart from our cleaving by faith to the Word of our saving God.

Monday, January 7th - Hebrews 10: 23

We are exhorted to hold fast the confession of our hope, or according to the King James version, our faith. The differing versions are insignificant, since our confession is one of both faith and a hope maintained by faith. The more important point to note in this exhortation is that we are to hold fast, by faith, our hopeful expectation in the faithful promises of the Lord. We should understand from this exhortation that our confession often comes under attacks that are subtle or obvious, enticing or intimidating. We do not manufacture the substance of our confession—that has been done for us by our God—but we must maintain it amidst much opposition. If we take our eyes off Jesus, we sink under waves of doubt, fear, and hopelessness. The Word of God never commends a casual and occasional grasp of the ordinances of God's grace. Only a holding fast to the Savior's promises is commended to us by our faithful Lord.

Tuesday, January 8th - 10: 23

Saving faith is characterized by total commitment to God, absolute and consistent reliance upon Him, and a persevering cleaving to His Word of promise to the end of our pilgrimage. This may make it appear that our salvation ultimately depends upon our grasping God rather than upon His gracious grasp of us. Yet faith ever, only, and always grasps the God Who has planned and accomplished salvation for His people,

and is ever applying that salvation to them. We are saved not by our holding fast to faith, but by our faithful commitment to the God who is Himself faithful, and who is the giver of faith (Eph. 2: 8,9). It is this God who works in us, not making us lax in our walk with Him, but rather enabling us, by faith, to will and to do His good pleasure (Phil. 2:12,13).

Wednesday, January 9th - Hebrews 10: 24, 25

Our drawing near to the Lord (v.22) and holding fast our confession of hope (v.23) together pertain to the vertical dimension of our salvation. This access to and maintenance of our communion with the Lord is the primary aspect of salvation. However, a secondary aspect flows from it, namely, that horizontal dimension wherein we nurture fellowship with our brethren. Accordingly, in v.24 we have introduced by the words, *Let us*, the third exhortation whereby both the writer and all his readers through the ages join together in drawing near and holding fast to the Lord and to each other in Christ. Anyone who claims to know, love, and obey God, while he neglects vital communion with his brethren is not of a superior spiritual order, but is a liar (1 Jn. 4:20).

Thursday, January 10th - Hebrews 10: 24, 25

In true fellowship, into which we are exhorted to enter and remain by these verses, there is no apathetic tolerance or polite but cold civility. We are to be vitally and vigorously engaged with each other. The word translated *stimulate*, or in King James, *provoke*, is the same word found in Acts 15:39 where Paul and Barnabas are said to have had a sharp dispute (paroxusmo.n). In Christian fellowship we are to engage one another passionately.

Friday, January 11th - Hebrews 10: 24, 25

We are to stimulate, or provoke, one another not to trivial or carnal ends. With zeal through our words and deeds we are to stir one another to the mutual exercise of love. Our first priority, so far as our participation in fellowship is concerned, should be to put on a heart of loving compassion toward our brethren (Col. 3:12,13). We stimulate others to love by being ourselves loving. Our Lord commands us to love Him (Dt. 6:5), and to love one another (Jn. 13:34). He also enables us so to love, because He first loved us (1 Jn. 4:19). We do not command others to love us, rather we strongly stimulate them to love by our loving them.

Saturday, January 12th - Hebrews 10: 12,13

The first and great commandment is that we love God, and the second commandment issuing from it is that we love one another. Love is not merely a sentiment or attitude. It moves us to action. Hence, we are further exhorted to stimulate one another to good works. Here, again, we are to lead in the fulfillment of this exhortation by our serving. Nothing encourages our brethren so much in their performance of good works as our own example of such works. Thus we are exhorted to the mutual encouragement and exercise of love and godly service. Nothing can be more good, pleasant, and satisfying to all, including our Lord Himself, as our practice of these two things.

Sunday, January 13th - Hebrews 10: 24, 25

We can hardly fulfill the exhortation to stimulate one another to love and good works if we do not have consistent contact with each other. Nor can we draw near to God and hold fast our confession of hope if we fail to gather as the Lord's people for corporate worship. Yet, even at the time this letter was written, some were withdrawing from public Christian gatherings. The way of the religious hermit may seem very spiritual, yet it does not accord with the call of Scripture. Professing believers may absent themselves from corporate worship for various reasons. Some may be mavericks, some may be snobs, others are lazy, still others are worldly, while yet others are afraid of or proudly rebellious against public order and church officers with authority. It was the early sects which tended to be separatists and isolationists. Gnostics taught salvation by secret knowledge; Essenes taught the supremacy of solitude and self-denial; the

Judaisers taught salvation by legalism. None of them could be bothered with anything so ordinary as loving fellowship and deeds of mercy. The fact is that despite men's penchant for individualism, Scripture enjoins us not to forsake our assemblies. Despite risks of persecution, inconveniences, and, to some, the apparent futility of such gatherings, we need to encourage one another in our doing the right thing, especially as the day draws near when we shall forever be together with the Lord.

Monday, January 14th - Hebrews 10: 26, 27

Concerning Christ and the Christian life, there are really only two starkly different alternatives. We are either for Christ and His people or against them. If we do not draw near to the Lord, hold fast the confession of our hope, and gather in worship and fellowship to practice love and good works, it is because we are sinning. Therefore, these two verses admonish those failing to respond obediently to the exhortations of vv.22-25. It is a most strong and sobering admonition that is here given. By it we are reminded that it is not those who merely hear the truth, or possess it as an intellectual concept, but rather those who perform the truth who are saved. Those hearing and not doing the truth will face an inconceivably devastating judgement. Read about it in Mt. 7:21-27; 25:31ff.

Tuesday, January 15th - Hebrews 10: 28, 29

By clear and repeated divine decree, those who violated the Law of Moses were executed when their violation was confirmed by two or three finite, fallible witnesses. The ceremonial Law was but provisional and typical, pointing to Christ to come. If those demonstrating contempt for the shadows of salvation were dealt with so seriously, so mortally, are we to think that those who demonstrate contemptuous disobedience toward the substance of salvation will be dealt with less severely? Those sinning willfully after they hear the truth of the gospel trample no divine shadows, but the living Son of God, the perfect high priest, and those great and precious divine ordinances by which we come to know and serve the Lord. Furthermore, they not only grieve but offend God's Holy Spirit. No failure of man can begin to compare in magnitude and seriousness with a willful sinning against the light of the known truth of the gospel.

Wednesday, January 16th - Hebrews 10: 30, 31

Behind and above the truth of God's Word stands the living God Himself. He has clearly declared that He will repay the wicked for their unforgiven sins. He has also informed us that His judgment begins with His own household. Whether we face condemnation or chastisement at His hands, the experience will be awesome. When the holy God calls sinful man to account, it is so terrifying that men would rather be crushed by the rocks of the earth's mountains than to face the wrath of the Lamb of God whom they have offended (Rev. 6:15-17). Let us not presume that we shall face no terror from the hands of the Lord; rather, let us work out our salvation with appropriate fear and trembling.

Thursday, January 17th - Hebrews 10: 32, 33

One of the ways the enemy of our souls leads us into willful sinning is by his making us forget the joyful satisfaction of the days of our earlier obedience. Thus, the writer calls his readers to a recollection of the days when they found spiritual sweetness through their obedience, even amidst sorest sufferings. He calls upon all drifting believers to remember the blessed consolations of Christ, which they experienced through their obedience, even when that obedience led them into furnaces of affliction. To the obedient believer, no cost is too great, no affliction too painful, no burden too great, for in his obedience he has fellowship with the Son of Man, who was obedient unto death for the believer. The cost of the world's mocking and persecutions cannot compare with the sweet and strong consolations we find in a careful, obedient walk with the risen Christ. Nor, when we rightly love and serve our brethren, can we be driven to despise them or stand aloof from their persecutions. The obedient saint performs courageous feats of compassion. Such compassionate deeds prompt and empower us, even by our recalling them in memory, for greater obedience now and in the days henceforth.

Friday, January 18th - Hebrews 10: 34

This verse tells why the believers addressed in this letter suffered the afflictions mentioned in vv.32,33. They had and acted by the precious power of loving sympathy with their downtrodden brethren. As Moses chose to endure ill treatment with the Lord's people rather than enjoy the treasures of Egypt without them (Heb. 11:24-26), so these believers had maintained a loving, if costly, commitment to other suffering members of the body of Christ. The consolations they enjoyed for all their pains and loss of possessions and position in this world were loving communion with their fellow believers and, above all, with Christ who was with them and would reward them in glory (Mt. 25:34-40), He Himself being their chief reward. These priceless consolations made them think nothing of the cost they bore. However, this exhortation soberingly reminds them and us that hearts which had been set on heavenly treasures can be moved to have a controlling and spoiling regard for earthly trinkets. Yet, the exhortation also informs us that such hearts can be recalled to their first love.

Saturday, January 19th - Hebrews 10: 34, 35

That which these believers are called to remember is not only a time in the past when they had performed more lovingly and sacrificially. They are also called to remember their having acted on the right priority of seeking first God's kingdom (Mt. 6:33), that better and everlasting inheritance which overwhelmingly compensates for even the most sacrificial cost borne in service to Christ and the suffering members of His body. Finally, these believers are informed that past and current dispositions and deeds have consequences in time and eternity. Their confidence in the Good Shepherd being worthy for them to follow through the valley of the shadow of death would be crowned with inconceivably glorious reward. That confidence, however, can be—and, in the case of the original recipients of this letter, was near to being—discarded along with its reward. How sobering it is for us to realize that we can improve or waste the Lord's calling and equipping us for service which lastingly blesses not only those receiving it, but also those rendering it.

Sunday, January 20th - Hebrews 10: 36

Endurance, or bearing up under pain and pressure, is the vital connection between our receiving the divine promise, our performing good works by trusting obedience, and our possession of the divine reward which is greater than we could ask or think. If loving service is good and right for us to render today, it will be good and right for us to render even in days of dark and painful opposition. The mounting cost of our doing right should not concern us, for our infinite God has infinite stores of compensation to give us so as to overwhelm the greatest cost. Godly endurance rightly reckons this to be so and prevailingly empowers us to complete the course of good service that we have begun in Christ.

Monday, January 21st - Hebrews 10: 36-38

The course of sufferings for the Lord's people and the season of sin's pleasures for the wicked may both seem of long duration while men are in them. Yet, the Lord's coming will be sooner than anyone expects. Before the face of the eternal God we shall realize how few and fleeting have been our days in this vale of tears. When the Lord comes, He will behold and judge what all men have done and have become. Ultimately, all men are in one of two categories of being and acting. They are either by God's grace made righteous, and live by faith that works itself out in love; or they live lives of perpetual retreat from their Creator, from the offer of His salvation, and from loving intimacy with the redeemed. God justly condemns those who are wicked fugitives from His saving grace, and He takes no pleasure in those who put their hands to the fruitful plow of salvation, only to turn away from it when the cost of making true progress in it appears too great.

Tuesday, January 22nd - Hebrews 10: 39

The writer has issued sobering and painful exhortations. Now he states a most comforting truth as the conclusion of his exhortations. It is that true believers may stumble and be for a time distracted from their

high and holy calling in Christ, but they will respond to faithful calls for repentance, however painfully issued such calls may be. The clouds of challenging words and grim admonitions thus clear with the confident and consoling statement that we are not of that company who shrink back from the calling of the King of grace and glory. Instead, we are those who by faith press on to possess the prize of perfected souls made capacious for the grand delights of heavenly glory. Do we, who have begun to live by faith, not find ourselves determined to redouble our commitment to faithful service when we hear and heed these challenges, capped with this blessed assurance?