



# THE THIRD WARNING

By  
Andrew Murray

Revival Classics



**THE THIRD WARNING**  
**Against Sloth, Standing Still,**  
**and Apostasy**



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**and Apostasy**

**Select Chapters Of:**  
**THE HOLIEST OF ALL**

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Cover Image

**Mexican Social Realist Muralist (1883-1949), Jose Clemente Orozco**

Panel 21: Modern Migration of the Spirit, 1933, Epic of American Civilization

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**OTC Publishing**

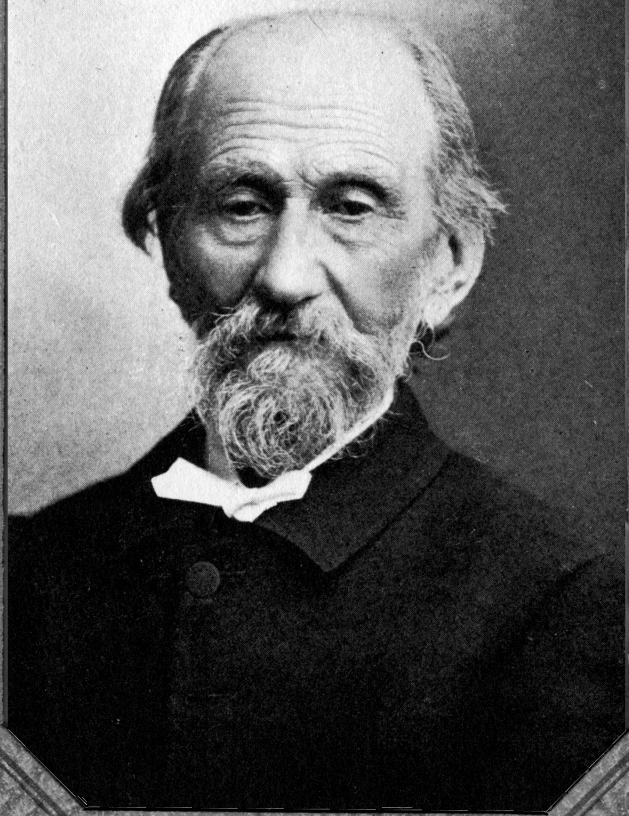
12650 Larch St NW

Coon Rapids, MN 55448

(763)757-8102

2006

*[www.OTCPub.com](http://www.OTCPub.com)*



Andrew Huxley

These several Chapters out of Andrew Murray's The Holiest Of All is published as a separate book and offered unabridged hopefully as a useful tool for those Christians seeking the full salvation offered by our Lord and to provide some direction in seeking a place of complete rest in HIM.

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# **THE THIRD WARNING**

## **Against Sloth, Standing Still, and Apostasy**

**Select Chapters Of:  
THE HOLIEST OF ALL**

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**Andrew Murray**

### TABLE OF CONTENTS.

Chapter 42	The Sin Of Not Growing	195
Chapter 43	Solid Food For The Perfect	199
Chapter 44	Let Us Press On To Perfection	203
Chapter 45	The Danger Of Falling Away	207
Chapter 46	Of Diligence And Perseverance	211
Chapter 47	Inheriting The Promises	215
Chapter 48	The Oath Of God	219
Chapter 49	The Forerunner Within The Veil	223



**THE THIRD WARNING.****Chap. v. 11—vi. 20.****Against Sloth, Standing Still, and Apostasy.****XLII.****OF THE SIN OF NOT MAKING PROGRESS IN THE  
CHRISTIAN LIFE.**

V.—10. Named of God a High Priest after the order of Melchizedek.

11. Of whom we have many things to say, and hard of interpretation, seeing ye are become dull of hearing.

12. For when by reason of the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need again that some one teach you the rudiments of the first principles<sup>1</sup> of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of solid food.

13. For every one that partaketh of milk is without experience of the word of righteousness; for he is a babe.

WE have here the commencement of the third of the five warnings to be found in the Epistle. The first was against indifference and neglect; the second against unbelief and disobedience; the third deals specially with the sloth that prevents all progress in the Christian life, renders the soul incapable of entering into the full meaning of gospel truth and blessing, and often leads to an entire falling away. In the previous part of the Epistle, the author has been dealing with what he con-

<sup>1</sup> Beginning.

siders more elementary truths, the divinity and humanity of the Saviour, and His fitness as a merciful and faithful High Priest for the work He has to do for us. He is about to enter on the higher teaching he has to give us on the heavenly priesthood of Christ (vii.-x. 18), but feels that many of his readers are incapable of following or appreciating such spiritual truth. He feels it needful first to rouse them by words of earnest reproof and exhortation, because no teaching can profit where the heart is not wakened up to hunger for it as its necessary food.

In the Christian Church, there are, alas, too many, of whom we would fain hope that they are believers, who are living in this state. They are content with the thought of pardon and the hope of heaven; they rest in their orthodoxy, their attachment to the Church and its services, their correct deportment. But as to any strong desire for the deeper truths of God's word—they have no conception of what is meant, or why they should be needed. When our author speaks of the power of Jesus' blood in heaven, of the opening of the Holiest of All, of our entering in to dwell there, and then of our going out to Him without the camp, the words find no response, because they meet no need of the soul. Let every reader listen earnestly to what God says of this state.

**We have many things to say, and hard of interpretation, because ye are become dull of hearing.** The writer's complaint is not that they have not sufficient education or mental power to understand what he says. By no means. But spiritual things must be spiritually discerned. Spiritual truth can only be received by the spiritual mind, by a heart that thirsts for God, and sacrifices this world for the knowledge and enjoyment of the unseen One. They were content with their knowledge of the crucified Christ; the heavenly Christ, and His power to draw

them up out of the world, and to give heaven into their hearts, had but little attraction.

He further says, **By reason of the time ye ought to be teachers.** In the Christian life every one who makes real progress feels himself constrained to teach others. Christ's love in the heart must overflow to those around. The Hebrews had been Christians so long that they ought to have been teachers. The very opposite of this, however, was the case. **Ye have need again that some one teach you the rudiments of the beginning of the oracles of God.** So there are numbers of Christians whose Christian life consists very much in always learning. Sermons and books are a delight, but they never get beyond the stage of being fed; they know not what it is to feed others. There is no effort so to appropriate God's word, as to be strong to impart it to others. Or there is no real longing for deliverance from the power of sin, and the great incentive to the fuller knowledge of Jesus and His heavenly power is wanting.

**And ye are become such as have need of milk, and not of solid food.** Where there is no hunger for the solid food (the higher truth of Christ's heavenly priesthood), or unwillingness to use what is received in helping others, the spiritual faculties are dwarfed and enfeebled, and the Christian never gets beyond the use of the milk meant for babes. In the Christian life, as in nature, there are two stages, the one of infancy or childhood, the other of manhood. In nature the growth out of the one into the other comes spontaneously. In grace this is not so. It is possible for a Christian to remain in a sickly infancy all his life, always heeding help, instead of being a help. The cause of this is sloth, reluctance to make the sacrifice needed for progress, unwillingness to forsake all and follow Jesus. And this again is very much owing to the fatal mistake that in religion our only

thought is to be of safety, that we may be content when some assurance of that is attained. Such a soul cares not for the heavenly blessedness of conformity to Jesus, of living fellowship with God, and the Godlike privilege of bringing life and blessing to men.

It is one of the great needs of the teachers in the Church in our day that they should have a clear insight into the feeble and sickly state in which most Christians live, as well as into what constitutes a healthy life that goes on to perfection. As they themselves enter into the full experience of the power of Christ's priesthood, as the Holy Spirit imparts it in the heart, they will be able to reprove with authority, and effectually to help all upright souls into the full salvation Christ has provided. God give His Church such teachers.

*1. Have we not here the reason there is so little earnest pursuit after holiness? so little true consecration to living to bless others? so little of the power of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church? Let us plead with God to discover the evil and to visit His Church. Let us exhort one another daily, to rest content with nothing less than a whole-hearted enthusiastic devotion to Jesus.*

*2. In preparing to go on to the study of the inner sanctuary in what is to follow (vii.-x.), do let us consider it a settled thing, that unless we are really hungering after righteousness, and longing for a very close fellowship with Jesus, our further study of the Epistle will do us very little good. Let us pray God to convince us of our sloth, our contentment with the beginnings of grace, and to stir in us a burning thirst after Himself.*

## XLIII.

## SOLID FOOD FOR THE PERFECT

V.—13. For every one that partaketh of milk is without experience of the word of righteousness; for he is a babe.

14. But solid food is for perfect men, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern good and evil.

WE have here the contrast between the two stages in the Christian life. Of the first we have already spoken. The second stage is that of manhood—the full-grown, mature, perfect man. This does not, as in nature, come with years, but consists in the whole-heartedness with which the believer yields himself to be all for God. It is the perfect heart makes the perfect man. The twenty years needed for a child to become a full-grown man are no rule in the kingdom of heaven. There is indeed a riper maturity and a mellowness which comes with the experience of years. But even a young Christian can be of the perfect of whom our Epistle speaks, with a heart all athirst for the deeper and more spiritual truth it is to teach, and a will that has indeed finally broken with sin, and counted all things loss for the perfect knowledge of Christ Jesus.

The contrast is expressed in the words: The babe is **without experience of the word of righteousness**. He has not yielded himself to the discipline which the word demands and brings; he has not, in the struggle of practical obedience, had experience of what the word can do to search and cleanse, to

strengthen and bless. His religious life has been, as with a babe, the enjoyment of being fed. He is without real experience of the word of righteousness.

With the perfect, the full-grown men, it is the very opposite: **by reason of use they have their senses exercised to discern good and evil.** Just as in nature the use of the limbs, with plenty of exercise for every sense and organ, is one of the surest conditions of a healthy growth, so with the Christian too. It is when the faculties God gives us in the spiritual life are put to the use He meant them for, and our spiritual senses are kept in full exercise, that we pass from feeble infancy to maturity. This exercise of the senses has special reference to that which we have been saved to—a life of obedience and holiness; it is **to discern good and evil.** The eye is exercised to see and know God's way and Him who leads in it; the ear to hear His voice; the conscience to reject everything that is not well pleasing to God or even doubtful; the will to choose and do only what is His will.

It is of the utmost consequence that we should note this well. The capacity for entering into the deeper truths to be unfolded does not depend on talent or study, on sagacity or genius, but *on the tenderness with which the soul has exercised itself in daily life in discerning good and evil.* The redemption in Christ is to save us from sin, and bring us back to the perfect obedience and unhindered fellowship with God. It is as the desire not to sin becomes more intense; and the acceptance of Jesus as an indwelling deliverer from sin more entire; and the surrender to the operation of God in working His will in us more complete; that the spiritual teaching of our Epistle will be appreciated. *It is a holy sensitiveness to the least sin, arising from the faithful use and exercise of the senses as far as*



*there was light, that is the spiritual sense or organ for spiritual truth, the mark of the perfect man.* In the things of God a tender conscience and a surrendered will are more than the highest intellect.

Such are the perfect. The word means here just what it meant when used of Jesus a few verses previously. His perfection came through obedience. Ours comes in no other way—the exercise of the senses to discern good and evil. In temptations Jesus Himself was exercised to discern between good and evil: in the wilderness and the garden He had to fast and watch and pray, lest the lawful desire of His human nature might lead to sin: thus He was perfected. And this is Christian perfection—the fellowship with Christ, through the indwelling Spirit, in His obedience.

**Solid food is for the perfect.** And what is this solid food? The context leaves no doubt as to the answer. It is the knowledge of Christ as Melchizedek, as it is now to be expounded. To know Christ as Aaron, to believe in His atonement on earth, and in pardon through His blood, this is often found with Christians who are content to remain mere babes, entirely slothful and stationary. But to know Christ as Melchizedek in His heavenly priesthood, working in us in the power of an endless life; as a Saviour able to save completely; as the minister of the sanctuary, who has opened the Holiest of All, and brings us in to dwell there; as the Mediator of the new covenant, who does actually fulfil its promise and write God's law in living power in our heart;—this is **the solid food for the perfect.** The teaching in the word is open and free to all, but only those who have given themselves to be perfect, feel the need and hunger for it—only they are capable of receiving and assimilating it; because it is only they who

have in very deed determined to rest content with nothing less than all Christ can do for them, and to count all things loss for the possession of this pearl of great price. All the outward teaching and knowledge of the words of the prophets and of Christ must give way to the inward speaking of Christ in the soul by the Holy Spirit. It is to souls who break through the husk, and hunger to feed on the kernel, on the very life of God in Christ, who will become perfect in Christ Jesus.

*1. These Hebrew Christians are reprov'd for not being perfect. It is not left to their choice whether they are to be eminent Christians. God expects each child of His to be as eminent in grace and piety as it is possible for Christ to make him.*

*2. Till we all attain unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: this ought to be our aim. The motive and the power to seek this we have in our Lord Jesus.*

*3. Let nothing satisfy us but living wholly for Christ; He is worthy.*

## XLIV.

## LET US PRESS ON TO PERFECTION.

VI.—1. Wherefore let us cease to speak of the first principles<sup>1</sup> of Christ, and press on unto perfection; not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God.

2. Of the teaching of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

3. And this will we do, if God permit.

WE have seen how among the Hebrews there were two classes of Christians. They are to be found in every Christian Church—some who, instead of growing up to be teachers and helpers of others, always remain babes, and have need that some one again teach them the rudiments of the beginning of the oracles of God. Others who are perfect or fully-grown men, who have had their spiritual senses exercised in discerning good and evil, and are able to receive the solid food of the knowledge of the perfection of Christ and His work. Let us listen as the word calls us to come out of all sloth and feebleness, and to press on to the perfection Christ has come to reveal.

First we hear what it is we are to give up. **Let us leave the word of the beginning of Christ.** In chap. iii. 14 we were urged **to hold fast the beginning firm unto the end.** These two expressions are not at variance. The beginning is the seed or first principle out of which the farther life must grow and expand into perfection. This beginning, as the root of all that

<sup>1</sup> Leave the word of the beginning.

is to come, must be held fast to the very end. But the beginning, as being only a commencement of something better, must be left. It is a terrible misunderstanding of the words, "Hold fast what thou hast," to imagine that we simply need to preserve what we already have. By no means. We must realise that the knowledge of Christ and the measure of grace we receive at conversion cannot suffice for our farther life. We need each day to learn more of Christ, to make new advances in obedience, to gain larger experience of the power of the heavenly life. There can be no healthy life without growth and progress. We must leave the word of the beginning of Christ.

**Not laying again the foundation.** A builder, when he has laid his foundation, leaves working at it any more, and builds upon it. There are Christians who never get beyond the foundation, who never know what the house is for the sake of which alone the foundation is; what it is to be an habitation of God through the Spirit, and to dwell in the love and the power of God. The writer mentions, in three pairs, six points which belong to the foundation truths, in which the young beginner has to be instructed. **Repentance from dead works and faith towards God:** these are in very deed only the rudiments of the word of Christ. Then follow two points that have reference to the public confession of faith and the connection with the Church: **the teaching of baptism and of the laying on of hands.** And then two more, that relate to the future life: **the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment.** Without these elementary truths one could hardly be a Christian: but the man who rests content with them, and cares not to know more, cannot be a Christian as God would have him, has reason to doubt whether he be a Christian at all.

Wherefore, let us leave the word of the beginning of Christ,

**and press on unto perfection.** It is not difficult to know what perfection here means. Perfect is that which corresponds to its ideal, which is as it should be, which answers to what its maker intended. No parent is content that his child should remain a babe; he educates it to be a full-grown man. God has set before us in His word the life He actually means us to live, and He calls every true child of His to leave the beginnings, and press on to perfection, to press on to be all that He has promised to make us. More God would not have us seek; with less, we dare not be content, lest we deceive ourselves.

In Christ Jesus, and His life on earth, we have the embodiment of that perfection, as it consists in a life given up to obedience to God's will; the proof that it is possible for a true man to live a life that is well-pleasing to the Father; the promise that from His throne in heaven He will now impart and work in us. In suffering He yielded Himself *to God to perfect Him*. In suffering He learned obedience, and *was made perfect*, thereby to be the cause of eternal salvation to us. He is now, as the **Son perfected for evermore**, our High Priest, in heaven working in us, in the power of the heavenly life, that perfection, through which as our Leader He opened the path to glory. Our perfection can be none other than Christ's: His perfection our model, His perfection our life and strength. God desires and can be satisfied with nothing in us but what He sees of His beloved Son, and His perfection through suffering and obedience.

**Wherefore, let us leave the word of the beginning of Christ, and press on to perfection. And this will we do if God permit.** As if he says, The following chapters are to be the teaching of Christian perfection. We will with you press on, and help you on, by giving the solid food which is the nourishment and

strength of the perfect: *the heavenly priesthood of Christ, in the power of an endless life.* His glory and power as mediator of the new covenant, writing God's law into our very heart, the infinite efficacy of the blood as opening the Holiest of All to us, and cleansing us to enter in and serve the living God,—these and such like truths, revealing the perfection that Christ attained in His human life, and into which He lifts us in His divine power, these constitute the solid food for the perfect. The perfection of Christ, as truth revealed, becomes the perfection of the believer, as a life experienced, in those who count all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Him our Lord.

*1. Let us hold fast the distinction between foundation doctrine and perfection doctrine. There are truths of the beginning of Christ, which we have had in the first half of the Epistle—His divinity and humanity, His substitution, tasting death for all, and His entering into heaven, as far as that was typified by Aaron. In the second half we have what is needed for the completion of the Christian life; the power of the heavenly life as it is secured in the heavenly priesthood and the heavenly sanctuary. Wherefore, let us press on to perfection.*

*2. Let us press on to perfection. Do take this as a distinct injunction of the God who speaks to us in His Son. Hear His voice, rest not content with the beginnings—press on—unto perfection, unto the perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.*

*3. Compare Paul (Phil. iii. 13-15): I press on, if so be I may apprehend that for which I also was apprehended of Christ Jesus. Forgetting the things which are behind, I press on toward the goal. Let us, therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded. Let us press on to perfection.*

## XLV.

## THE DANGER OF FALLING AWAY.

VI.—4. For as touching those who were once enlightened, and tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost,

5. And tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the age to come, and then fell away,

6. It is impossible to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.

7. For the land which hath drunk the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them for whose sake it is also tilled, receiveth blessing from God:

8. But if it beareth thorns and thistles, it is rejected and nigh unto a curse; whose end is to be burned.

**Let us press on to perfection.** For as touching those who were once enlightened, and fall away, it is impossible to renew them again. The argument is one of unspeakable solemnity. It is in the Christian life as with all progress amid difficulties. In commerce, in study, in war, it is so often said: there is no safety but in advance. To stand still is to go back. To cease effort is to lose ground. To slacken the pace, before the goal is reached, is to lose the race. The only sure mark of our being true Christians, of our really loving Christ, is the deep longing and the steady effort to know more of Him. Tens of thousands have proved that to be content with beginning well is but the first step on a backward course, that ends in losing all. The whole point of the argument from the case of those who fall away is—**Let us press on to perfection.**

To realise its force we must specially note two things with regard to those who fall away: the height which they may have attained, and the irrecoverable depth into which they sink. As to the former, five expressions are used. **They were once enlightened; tasted of the heavenly gift; were made partakers of the Holy Ghost; tasted the good word of God; and the powers of the age to come.** As to the latter, we are told: **Seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame: it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance.**

The question which always at once suggests itself here has reference to the Scripture truth of the perseverance of the saints, in which so many saints of God have found their strength and their joy. Our Lord Jesus spake of His sheep (John x. 28): "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand. My Father, which hath given them unto me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand." Where He gives the eternal life to a soul, it is a life that cannot be lost.

This is the divine side of the truth. Every truth has two sides. The only way to apprehend the truth fully is to look at each side as if it were the whole, and yield ourselves to its full force. There is a human side too. Scripture speaks most solemn words of warning in regard to the possibility of receiving the grace of God in vain, of beginning well, and then falling away from grace (2 Cor. vi. 1, Gal. v. 4). Our Lord spoke more than once of the man who receives the word with joy, but had no root in himself: he only believes for a while. In a time of revival, of mighty spiritual influences, as in Corinth and Galatia, many were mightily affected and even manifestly



changed, who in after times proved that they never had been truly born again; they had not received eternal life. It is of such our text speaks. It is possible to have the emotions touched and the will affected without the heart being truly renewed. The gifts of the Spirit may be received without His graces. The joy of light in the mind may be mistaken for life in the soul. And so some, who were counted true believers by man, may fall away beyond hope of renewal.

And how, then, are we to know who truly have received eternal life? and what is the mark of its being no mere superficial or temporary change? *There is no mark by which man can decide.* The only sure sign that the perseverance of the saints will be ours is—perseverance in sainthood, in sanctification and obedience. **We are His house, we are become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast, firm unto the end.** My assurance of salvation is not something I can carry with me as a railway ticket or a bank note, to be used, as occasion calls. No, God's seal to my soul is the Holy Spirit; it is in a life in the Spirit that my safety lies; it is when I am led by the Spirit that the Spirit bears witness with my spirit, and that I can cry Abba, Father (Rom. viii. 14-16). Jesus not only gives, but is Himself our life. *My assurance of salvation is alone to be found in the living fellowship with the living Jesus in love and obedience.*

This is what we see in vers. 7 and 8. **The land which hath drunk the rain, and bringeth forth herbs, receiveth blessing from God: if it beareth thorns, it is rejected.** The soul that is content with drinking in the rain, and only seeks its own happiness, without bearing fruit, has every reason to fear. It is in growth and fruitfulness, in the exercising the senses to discern good and evil, in pressing on to perfection, in following our Forerunner in the path in which He was perfected, by

obedience to God's will, that we know that we have eternal life.

**The word of God is sharper than any two-edged sword. Let each one of us yield to its searching power. Anything like sloth, and resting content in our beginnings, is unspeakably dangerous. Nothing will do but to give more abundant heed—to give diligence to enter into the rest, and with our whole heart to press on unto perfection.**

*1. Self-deception is a solemn possibility. Our only safeguard is God, the surrender to His searching light, the trust in His faithfulness, the giving up to His will. At the footstool of the throne no soul can perish.*

*2. To press on unto perfection is a command not meant for a select few, but for all, and specially the backward and feeble ones. Beware of any suggestion that would make you evade the force of this command and immediate obedience to it. Let your only answer be—Yea, Lord. Open your eyes and heart to the state of all around you, who are slothful and at ease, lagging behind, and help them. By reason of the time ye ought to be teachers.*

## XLVI.

## OF DILIGENCE AND PERSEVERANCE.

VI.—9. But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak:

10. For God is not unrighteous to forget your work, and the love which ye showed toward his name, in that ye ministered to the saints, and still do minister.

11. And we desire that each of you may show the same diligence unto the fulness of hope even to the end:

12. That ye be not sluggish, but imitators of them who through faith and patience<sup>1</sup> inherit the promises.

IN every Christian community you have two classes. There are some who give themselves up with their whole heart to seek and serve God. There are others, too often the majority, who, like Israel, are content with deliverance from Egypt, and settle down in sloth, without striving for the full possession of the promise, the rest in the promised land. In speaking to such a Church, one might address the two classes separately. Or one might address the whole body now from one, then from the other of the two standpoints. This is what the Epistle does. In its warning it speaks to all as if all were in danger. In its exhortation and encouragement it speaks as if all shared the sentiments of the better half.

But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak of

<sup>1</sup> Longsuffering.

falling away, and the impossibility of renewal. We have the hope that our word of warning will bear fruit, and that by the grace of God, which has already wrought in you, you will be stirred to rise up out of all sloth and unbelief and press forward. We look to God Himself to perfect His work in you.

**For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and the love which ye showed toward His name, in that ye ministered to the saints, and still do minister.** If there was much in the present state to make him anxious, the writer encourages himself and them by pointing to the past. When the gospel was preached among them they had received Christ's messengers with joy, and stood by them in sharing reproach and spoiling for His name. Even now still there was among them a love towards God's people. And God is not unrighteous to forget what has been done for His name and people; the reward of the cup of cold water may be remembered by God even when the giver has grown cold, and may come in the blessing that restores him again. God does not only remember sin; He much rather remembers the work of love.

**And we desire that each one of you may show the same diligence unto the fulness of hope even unto the end.** In all worldly business diligence is the secret of success. Without attention and trouble and hearty effort we cannot expect our work to prosper. And yet there are many Christians who imagine that in the Christian life things will come right of themselves. When they are told that Jesus undertakes to do all, they count this as a pass to a life of ease. Verily no. Jesus will indeed do all; but he undertakes it, just to inspire us with His own spirit of self-sacrifice and devotion to the Father's will, His own readiness to forsake all ease and comfort to please God and man, His own unwearying diligence in working while it was

day. And so our writer urges his readers to show the same diligence they had formerly manifested, unto the fulness of the hope to the very end.

We have here the same three words we had in the second warning. There we read, "Let us **give diligence** to enter into that rest" (iv. 11). "If we hold fast the glorying of our **hope firm to the end** (iii. 6). "If we hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm **to the end.**" The great marks of Christian perseverance are here once again joined together. **Hope** looks forward and lives in the promises; it glories beforehand in the certainty of their fulfilment. Bright hopefulness is one of the elements of a healthy Christian life—one of the surest preservatives against backsliding. This hopefulness must be cultivated; **diligence** must be given unto the fulness of hope—a hope that embraces all the fulness of God's promises, and that fills all the heart. And all this **to the end**, with a patience and perseverance that knows no weariness, that waits God's time, and seeks in patience till the fulfilment has come.

**That ye be not slothful.** This is what had done so much harm—they had been slothful in hearing (v. 11). This is the danger that still threatens. **But be imitators of them who through faith and longsuffering inherit the promises.** The writer had spoken in warning of the example of the fathers in the wilderness; he here encourages them by reminding them of those who **through faith and longsuffering had inherited the promises.** Longsuffering is the perseverance of faith. Faith grasps at once all that God promises, but is in danger of relaxing its hold. Longsuffering comes to tell how faith needs daily to be renewed, and strengthens the soul, even when the promise tarries, still to hold fast firm unto the end. This is one of the great practical lessons of our Epistle, and one the young believer

specially needs. Conversion is but a beginning, a step, an entrance on a path; day by day its surrender must be renewed; every day faith must afresh accept Christ, and find its strength in Him. Through faith and longsuffering we inherit, enter on the possession of the promises. Salvation consists in what Christ Jesus is to us and does in us. There must, each day, be personal intercourse with Him, distinct personal surrender to His teaching and working, if He is indeed to be our life. Let us beware, above everything, of unconsciously resting or trusting in what we have or enjoy of grace. It is alone by faith and longsuffering, by the never-ceasing daily renewal of our consecration and our faith in our quiet time with our Beloved Lord, that the heavenly life can be maintained in its freshness and power.

1. *God is not unrighteous to forget your work. How often God spoke to Israel of its first love. What an encouragement to any who have grown cold to return and trust Him to restore them. God cannot forget what has passed between thee and Him.*

2. *That ye be not slothful, not for a single day. We may lose in an hour by unwatchfulness what we have gained in a year. Christ and His service ask for your undivided, unceasing attention.*

3. *Let not God's way appear too slow or too difficult. Let patience have its perfect work. As the husbandman has long patience with the seed, God is patient with you. Be patient with Him. Just remember this simple lesson. Day by day renew your surrender to Jesus, and your faith in Him—your hope in God. Faith and patience must inherit the promises.*

## XLVII.

## INHERITING THE PROMISE.

VI.—13. For when God made promise to Abraham, since he could swear by none greater, he swore by himself,

14. Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee.

15. And thus, having patiently endured,<sup>1</sup> he obtained, the promise.

THE Epistle is dealing with one of the greatest dangers in the spiritual life. All experience amply confirms what was seen in the first Christian churches, that many who began well stood still and then turned back. The Christian life is a race: to begin profits nothing unless we run to the end and reach the goal. Faith may accept; only longsuffering *inherits the promise*. Day by day, without intermission, rather with ever-growing zeal and diligence, our allegiance to Jesus our Leader must be maintained, or backsliding must inevitably ensue. And the Church of Christ is a very hospital of backsliding Christians, who meant honestly, in the joy of their first love, to live wholly for God, and who yet gradually sank down into a life of formality and febleness. There is nothing the Church needs more than the preaching of daily diligence and perseverance as the indispensable condition of growth and strength. Let us learn from the Epistle how these virtues can be fostered in ourselves and others. It had spoken of those who through faith and longsuffering inherit the promises. It will now show us,

<sup>1</sup> Suffered long.

from the example of Abraham, what this means. It first points us, as ever, to what God promises, and then to the disposition in man which this claims and works.

**For when God made promise to Abraham, since He could swear by none greater, He swore by Himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee.** The deeper our insight into the certainty and the fulness of the blessing of God, the more will our hearts be roused to believe and to persevere. The word of God is our assurance of what we are to expect. How much greater must our confidence be when that word is an oath? Of this the following verses are to speak. Here the fulness of God's blessing is set before us in the promise given to Abraham: as his seed we are his heirs, and what God promised him is for us too. We need be content with nothing less; nothing less will stimulate us to a life like his in faith and patience.

**Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee.** In Hebrew the repetition of a verb is meant to give force to what is said, to express the certainty and the greatness of what is asserted. In the mouth of God the repetition, **Blessing I will bless, multiplying I will multiply,** was meant to waken in Abraham's heart the confidence that the blessing was indeed to be something very wonderful and worthy of God, blessing in divine power and fulness. What that blessing was to be, the second half of the sentence shows, **Multiplying I will multiply thee.** Scripture teaches us that the highest blessing which God can bestow, that which makes us truly Godlike, is the power of multiplying ourselves, of becoming, as God is, the source and the blessing of other lives. So the two words are connected in passages like Gen. i. 22, 28; ix. 1. Of the living creatures it is said: *God blessed them, saying, Be*



*fruitful and multiply. And of man: And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply. So of Noah too: And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said, Be fruitful and multiply.* It is the glory of God that He is the dispenser of life—that in His creatures He multiplies His own life and blessedness. And it is one of His highest blessings when He communicates this power of increase to those whom He chooses for His service. The power of His blessing to Adam is seen in the race that sprang from him, as of His blessing to Abraham in his seed, even in Jesus Christ Himself. And to each child of Abraham, to each true believer, the promise still comes in divine power: **Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee.** Every believer who will but claim, and give himself up to the blessing of God, will find that the blessing is a power of the divine life which will make him fruitful in blessing to others, and make it true of him too, **multiplying I will multiply thee.** Even we, like Christ, can become priests, bringing the blessing of God to those who know Him not.

It is when this fulness of blessing in its divine energy, when this **blessing I will bless thee** begins to be understood, and the soul sees that there is something beyond the mere being saved from wrath, that there is a becoming the recipient, and the channel, and the dispenser, of life and blessing to others, that it becomes willing to sacrifice everything, and in longsuffering to endure until it obtain the promise.

Christian! wouldest thou be an imitator of Abraham, and let the God who spake to him speak to thee? Remember it is not so easy to receive and claim this promise. Abraham received it in the way of faith and obedience and self-sacrifice, in the entire surrender to God's will and leading. It was when he had sacrificed Isaac, yea more, when in doing so he had sacrificed

himself, that this promise was given him with an oath. God will speak to thee as truly as to Abraham. Learn with him to go out of thy country and thy home; give thyself to God's leading; be prepared to sacrifice all. God will meet thee too with His double blessing. And thy heart will become strong to hear His voice, "Blessing *I will* bless, multiplying *I will* multiply." And it will be true of thee as of Abraham: **And thus, having patiently endured, he obtained the promise.** We shall not only be the heirs, but the actual inheritors of the promise.

*1. It is after the most terrible warning this promise comes. Until the slothful Christian is roused the most precious promise finds no entrance. When he is roused, it is the preaching of the promise in its fulness will give him courage and strength.*

*2. Does your heart condemn you, and do you fear that there is but little hope of your becoming a bright, growing, holy child of God, blessed and made a blessing? Come and learn from Abraham the secret, God spake to him! Listen to God. Let God speak to you, follow where He leads, obey what He commands. He will bring you to the place of blessing, the place of the revelation of Himself.*

*3. And put at once into practice the lesson of to day. Be not discouraged if you feel feeble and cold, and if there appears to be no progress. Listen to God's, Blessing I will bless you. Feed on what God says. And trust Him to work in you all you need.*

*4. Are you a worker in God's service? Wait upon God to speak this word to you too, Multiplying I will multiply you. He can make even you a blessing to many. But such a promise needs an oath to find entrance to the heart. Accept and live on the oath of God.*

## XLVIII.

## THE OATH OF GOD.

VI.—16. For men swear by the greater: and in every dispute of theirs the oath is final for confirmation.

17. Wherein God, being minded to shew more abundantly unto the heirs of the promise the immutability of his counsel, interposed<sup>1</sup> with an oath:

18. That by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may have a strong encouragement, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us.

FOR any serious man it is always a solemn thing to take an oath, and appeal to the omniscient God for the truth of what He says. But there is something more solemn even than taking an oath before God, and that is, God's taking an oath before man. And this is what our writer proceeds now to speak of. He had already spoken of God's oath in His wrath, **They shall not enter into My rest.** He will in the next chapter point out the deep significance of Christ's appointment as High Priest being confirmed by an oath. Here he wishes to show believers what strong encouragement they have in God's oath to expect most confidently the fulfilment of the promise. It is this confidence alone that will enable the Christian to endure and conquer.

Let us once more consider this. The oath of God plainly proves that the thing He seeks above everything is—faith; He wishes to be trusted. Faith is nothing but depending on God to do for us what we cannot do—what He has undertaken

<sup>1</sup> Mediated.

to do. God's purpose concerning us is something of infinite and inconceivable blessedness. He is ready, He longs, as God, Himself to work in us all that He has promised. He cannot do this except as we open our hearts to Him, and yield ourselves in stillness and surrender for Him to do His work. Until this faith takes possession of us, we are always seeking to do His work, and we hinder Him. Faith teaches us in deep humility and dependence, in meekness and patience, to place ourselves in God's hands, to make way for Him, and to wait His time. Faith opens the whole heart and life in expectation and hope. Then God is free to work; faith gives Him His place as God, and honours Him; and He fulfils the promise, *Him that honoureth Me, will I honour.* Oh, do learn the lesson, that the first and the last, the one thing, God asks is—that we trust Him, to do His work.

It is for this that He mediates, comes in between, with an oath. Just notice the expressions that are used: **God willing to show**—they had **shown** their love toward His name; they had been urged to **show** diligence unto the fulness of hope; here they are told what God will show them—willing to show **more abundantly to the heirs of salvation the immutability of His counsel.** God wills to show us how unchangeable His purpose to bless us is, if we will but let Him, if we will but trust Him, and by trusting let Him work. And He wills to show us this **more abundantly.** He wants us to have such more abundant proof of it, that we may, as we had it in chap. ii. 1, take more abundant heed, and see that there can be no possibility of a doubt: God will do it. It was for this He confirmed the promise with an oath.

**That by two immutable things—His promise and His oath—in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have a**

**strong encouragement.** Just notice the expression—*impossible for God to lie!* It is as if God asks, if we do not think His word enough, if we think it possible that He, the faithful and the unchangeable One, should lie. He knows how little our darkened hearts trust Him; His promises are so large, so divine, so heavenly, that we cannot take them in. And so, to waken and to shame us out of our unbelief, He comes, and, as if it were *possible for God to lie*, calls us to listen as He takes an oath in our presence that He will do what He has said: **Blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee.** And all, **that we, the heirs of salvation, might have a strong encouragement.** Surely every vestige of fear and doubt ought to pass away, and our whole soul fall down to worship and to cry out: O God! we do trust Thee. Never, never, will I doubt Thy word again.

God, since He could swear by none greater, sware by **Himself.** Yes. *By Himself!* in that lies the power of the oath, and the power of our faith in our oath. God points to Himself—His divine Being, His glory, His power, and *pledges Himself, gives Himself as security, as hostage,* that, as sure as He lives, He will fulfil His promise. Oh, if we would but take time to tarry in the presence of this God, and to listen to Him swearing to us that He will be faithful, surely we should fall down in confusion that we ever harboured for a moment the doubt, which thinks it possible that He may be untrue and not keep His word. Shall we not kneel and vow that by His grace we will rather die than again make such a God a liar?

And now let us pause and realise what all this argument about the blessing and the oath of God means. In the Christian life there is lack of steadfastness, of diligence, of perseverance. Of all the cause is simply—lack of faith. And of this again the

cause is—the lack of the knowledge of what God wills and is, of His purpose and power to bless most wonderfully, and of His faithfulness to carry out His purpose. It is to cure these evils; it is to tell His people that He will do anything to win their trust, and will do anything for them if they will trust Him, that God has taken His oath of faithfulness. Oh, shall we not this day believe God and believe in the fulness of His blessing? And shall we not count it our most sacred duty, and our most blessed privilege, to honour God every day by a life of full and perfect trust?

1. *"The oath for confirmation." The same word as in Heb. iii. 7, 14, and vi. 19, firm. As we see how firm, how steadfast, God's promise and the hope He gives us, our confidence will grow more firm too. The fulness of my faith depends upon my being occupied with the faithfulness of God.*

2. *By faith and long suffering. Having suffered long. God is often very slow. "He bears long with His elect." This is the patience of the saints: to let God take His time, and through all ever to trust Him.*

3, *That ye be not slothful: It is the faith that God will work all, that rouses to diligence both in waiting on Him and in doing His will.*

## XLIX.

## THE FORERUNNER WITHIN THE VEIL.

VI.—18. That we may have a strong encouragement, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us;

19. Which we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast<sup>1</sup> and entering into that which is within the veil;

20. Whither as a Forerunner Jesus entered for us, having become a High Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

IN chap. v., speaking of the priesthood of Jesus, the writer had twice cited the words of Psalm cx., with its prophecy of a Priest after the order of Melchizedek (v. 6, 10). But he feared that the Hebrews were, by reason of sloth, too far back in the Christian life to be able to receive this higher teaching. It was on this account he interposed his words of reproof and warning. From these he had passed to exhortation and encouragement, and is now ready to address himself to what is the central teaching of the Epistle. There are specially two great heavenly mysteries he is commissioned to unfold. The one, that of the heavenly priesthood of Christ; the other, that of the heavenly sanctuary in which He ministers, and into which He gives us access. In the two last verses of our sixth chapter we have the transition to the new section, and in it these mysteries are both mentioned as the **hope set before us**. Hope enters **within the veil**; it finds there **the Forerunner, who has entered for us, Jesus a High Priest, after the order of Melchizedek**.

<sup>1</sup> Firm.

**We who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us.** *The hope* sometimes means the object of hope, that which God sets before us; sometimes the subjective grace or disposition of hope in our hearts. Here it specially refers to the former. And what that hope is, is clear from the next chapter (vii. 19), where we read of the **bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw nigh to God.** This better hope is the access our High Priest in heaven gives us into God's very presence, into the enjoyment of His fellowship and blessedness, even while here on earth.

**Which we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and firm, and entering into that which is within the veil.** The hope is an anchor. A ship is held by the anchor cast into the unseen depth beneath. So the hope in the unseen within the veil, which God has given us, holds us fast. And as our heart is fixed upon it, hope as a subjective grace is stirred and drawn, and enters within the veil too. Where our hope lives there the heart lives. There we, our real selves, are living too.

**Whither the Forerunner is for us entered.** *The Fore-runner.* Here we have another of the keywords of the Epistle, without the right understanding of which our view of the work of Jesus as High Priest must be defective. It points us to the work He did in opening up the way, by Himself walking in it; to our following Him in that way to the place into which He has entered, and into which we now have access. We have had His name as Leader. We shall yet have (x. 21) the new and living way He has opened up. We shall hear (xii. 1) of the race we have to run, looking to Jesus, who went on before, enduring the cross, and is now set down at the right hand of God. There is nothing will so much help us to understand the work Jesus does as Son and High Priest as the



acceptance of Him as Leader and Forerunner, bringing us into the very presence of the Father.

**Entered for us.** We are so familiar with all the blessed meaning there is in the words *for us*, in reference to Christ on the cross. What He did there was all for us; by it and in it we live. No less is it true of Christ within the veil. It is all *for us*; all that He is and has there is for us; it is our present possession; by it and in it we live with Him and in Him. The veil was rent that the way through it might be opened *for us*; that we might have access to that which is *within the veil*; that we might enter into a new world, an entirely new way of living in close and intimate fellowship with God. A high priest must have a sanctuary in which he ministers. The mystery of the opened sanctuary is that we can enter too. The inner sanctuary, the Holiest of All, the presence of God, is the sphere of Christ's ministry and our life and service.

**The Forerunner, even Jesus!** It is as if the writer delights to repeat this name which our Saviour bears as Son of Man. Even in the glory of heaven He is still Jesus, our Brother.

**Having become a High Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.** We have yet to learn all that is contained in this Melchizedek priesthood. But this will be its chief glory—that He is a Priest for ever, a Priest in the power of an endless life, a Priest who opens to us the state of life to which He Himself has entered in, and brings us there to live here on earth with the life of eternity in our bosom.

Christian reader! knowest thou the power of this hope, entering into that which is within the veil, whither the Forerunner is for us entered. Jesus is in heaven *for thee*, to secure thee a life on earth in the power and joy of heaven, to maintain the kingdom of heaven within thee, by that Spirit, through whom

God's will is done on earth as it is in heaven. All that Jesus is and has, is heavenly. All that He gives and does, is heavenly. As High Priest at God's right hand, He blesses with all heavenly blessings. Oh, prepare thyself, as the glory of His person and ministry in the heavenly places are now to be opened up to thee, to look upon it, and appropriate it all, as thy personal possession. And believe that His High Priesthood not only consists in His having secured certain heavenly blessings for thee, but in his fitting and enabling thee to enter into the full personal experience and enjoyment of them.

*1. There is a sanctuary in which God dwells. There was a veil that separated man from God. Jesus came from within to live without the veil, and rend it, and open a way for us. He is now there for us as Forerunner. We may now enter in and dwell there, in the power of the Holy Ghost. This is the gospel according to the Epistle to the Hebrews.*

*2. Hope enters within the veil, rejoices in all there to be found, and counts upon the revelation in the heart of all that is there prepared for us.*

*3. Jesus the Forerunner, follow Him. Even though thou canst not understand all, follow Him in His path of humility and meekness and obedience: He will bring thee in. This is the promise which, even in this life, thou shalt inherit, through patience and longsuffering.*



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