



THE SECOND WARNING

By
Andrew Murray

Revival Classics

THE SECOND WARNING

**Not To Come Short Of
The Promised Rest**

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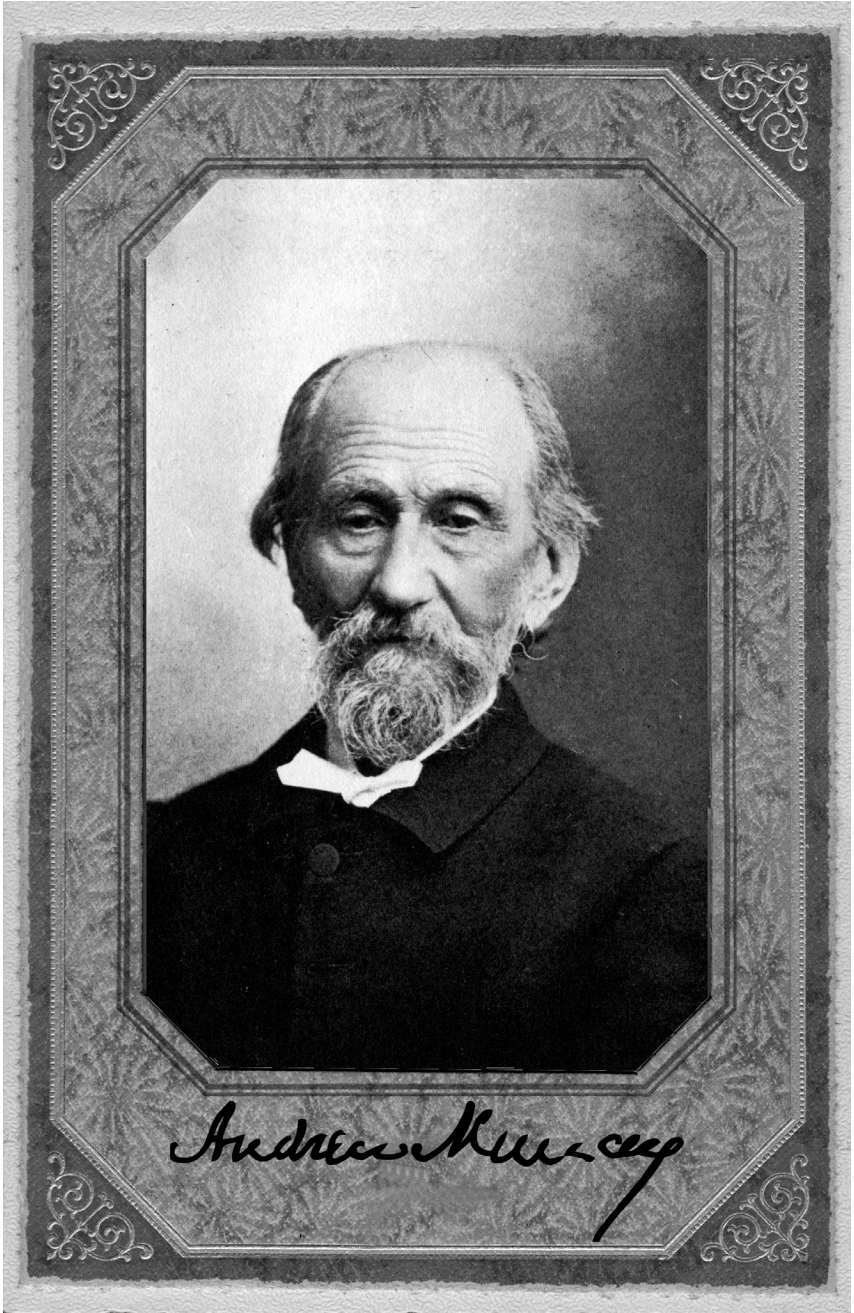
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These several Chapters out of Andrew Murray's The Holiest Of All is published as a separate book and offered unabridged hopefully as a useful tool for those Christians seeking the full salvation offered by our Lord and to provide some direction in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

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THE SECOND WARNING.

Chap. iii. 7-iv. 13.

Not to come short of the promised Rest.

XXII

ON HEARING THE VOICE OF GOD.

- III.—7. Wherefore, even as the Holy Ghost saith,
 To-day, if ye shall hear his voice,
 8. Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation,
 Like as in the day of temptation in the wilderness,
 9. Wherewith your fathers tempted me by proving me,
 And saw my works forty years.
 10. Wherefore I was displeased with this generation,
 And said, They do alway err in their heart:
 But they did not know my ways;
 11. As I sware in my wrath,
 They shall not enter into my rest.

THE writer has such a deep impression of the low and dangerous state into which the Hebrews had sunk, that, having mentioned the name of Moses, he makes a long digression to warn them against being like their fathers and hardening themselves against Him who is so much more than Moses. From Ps. xcv. he quotes what God says of Israel in the wilderness, hardening its heart against Him, so that He sware that they should not enter into His rest. The words of the quotation first point us to what is the great privilege of God's people;

they hear His voice ; then, to their great danger, hardening the heart against that voice. Not to the unbelieving Jews, but to the Christian Hebrews are these words of warning directed. Christians in our day have no less need of them. Let us take more abundant heed to the word: **Even as the Holy Ghost saith, To-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.**

When God spake to Israel, the first thing he asked of them was a heart that did not harden itself, but that in meekness and gentleness, in tenderness and docility turned itself to listen to His voice. How much more may He claim this, now that He speaks to us in His Son. As the soil must be *broken up by the plough* and softened by the rain, so a broken, tender spirit is the first requisite for receiving blessing from God's word, or being in truth made partakers of God's grace. As we read in Isaiah, "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite heart, and trembleth at My word." When this disposition exists, and the thirsty heart truly waits for divine teaching, and the circumcised ear opens to receive it, God's voice will bring real life and blessing, and be the power of living fellowship with Himself. Where it is wanting, the word remains unfruitful, and we go backward, however much head and mouth be filled with Bible truth. **Wherefore, even as the Holy Ghost saith, If ye hear His voice, harden not your hearts.**

It is not difficult to say what it is that hardens the hearts. The seed sown by the wayside could not enter the soil, because it had been trodden down by the passers-by. When the world, with its business and its interests, has at all times a free passage, the heart loses its tenderness. When we trust too much to the intellect in religion, and very great care is not taken to take each word as from God into the heart, into its life and love, the

heart gets closed to the living voice of God. The mind is satisfied with beautiful thoughts and pleasant feelings; but the heart does not hear God. When we are secretly content with our religion, our sound doctrine and Christian life, unconsciously but surely the heart gets hardened. When our life does not seek to keep pace with our knowledge, and we have more pleasure in hearing and knowing than obeying and doing, we utterly lose the meekness to which the promise is given, and, amidst all the pleasing forms of godliness, the heart is too hard to discern the voice of the Spirit. More than all, when unbelief, that walks by sight, and looks at itself and all around in the light of this world, is allowed to have its way, and the soul does not seek in childlike faith to live in the invisible, as revealed in the word, the heart gets so hardened that God's word never enters. Yes, it is an unspeakably solemn thought, that with a mind occupied with religious truth, and feelings stirred at times by the voice and words of men, and a life apparently given to religious works, the heart may be closed to the humble, direct intercourse with God, and a stranger to all the blessing the living word can bring. **Wherefore, even as the Holy Ghost saith, If ye hear His voice, harden not your heart.**

Let all who would seek the blessing to be found in this Epistle, beware of studying it simply as an inspired treatise on divine things. Let it be to us a personal message, the voice of God speaking to us in His Son. Let us, under a sense of the spiritual mystery there is in all divine truth, and the impotence of the human mind rightly to apprehend spiritual things, open our heart in great meekness and docility to wait on God. The whole of religion, and the whole of salvation, consists in the state of the heart. God can do nothing for us, in the way of imparting the blessings of redemption, but as He does it in the

heart. Our knowledge of the words of God will profit nothing but as the heart is opened to receive Himself to fulfil His words in us. Let our first care be, a meek and lowly heart, that waits on Him. God speaks *in His Son, to the heart, and in the heart*. It is in the heart that the voice and the Son of God must be received. The voice and the word have weight according as we esteem the speaker. As we realise the glory and the majesty of God, His holiness and perfection, His love and tenderness, we shall be ready to sacrifice everything to hear what He speaks, and receive what He gives. We shall bid all the world around us, all the world within us, be silent that we may hear aright the voice of the divine Being speaking to us in the Son of His love.

1. Salvation will be found in these two things—God speaking to me in His Son, and my heart opening to hear His voice. It is not only in order to salvation, as a means to an end that is something different and higher, that He speaks. No, His speaking gives and is salvation, the revelation of Himself to my soul. Let the work of my life be to hearken with a meek and tender spirit.

2. The Lord opened the heart of Lydia to give heed to the things which were spoken. This is what we need. God Himself will draw our heart away from all else, and open it to take heed. Let us ask this very earnestly.

3. Nothing so effectually hinders hearing God's voice as opening the heart too much to other voices. A hear too deeply interested in the news, the literature, the society of this world, cannot hear the divine voice. It needs stillness, retirement, concentration, to give God the heed He claims.

XXIII.

EVEN AS THE HOLY GHOST SAITH.

III.—7. Wherefore, even as the Holy Ghost saith, To-day if ye shall hear his voice.

IN quoting the words of the 95th Psalm the writer uses the expression, **Even as the Holy Ghost saith.** He regards that Psalm as simply the language of the Holy Spirit. He looks upon the Scriptures as truly inspired by God, God-breathed, because men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost (2 Tim. iii. 16, 2 Pet. i. 21). He regards them as the very voice of God, and attaches to the words all the weight of divine authority, and all the fulness of meaning they have in the divine mind. It is on this ground that he sees in them a deeper meaning than we would have looked for, and teaches us to find in the words, *enter into my rest*, the revelation of a deep spiritual mystery and a prophecy of what Christ should bring. As it was the Holy Spirit who of old first gave the word, so it was the same Spirit who taught the apostle to set forth to us its spiritual meaning and lessons, as we have them in the fourth chapter. And even now it is that same spirit alone who can reveal the truth spiritually within us, and make it life and power in our experience. Let us wait on Him as we meditate on these words, **Even as the Holy Ghost saith.** The words of the Holy Ghost need the Holy Ghost as their interpreter. And

the Holy Ghost interprets only to those in whom He dwells and rules.

In the opening words of the Epistle we were told that it was the same God, who had spoken to the fathers in the prophets, who has now spoken to us in His Son. The inferiority of the Old Testament did not consist in this that the words were less the words of God than in the New. They are equally the words of the Holy Spirit. But the superior excellence of the new dispensation lies in this that, in virtue of the mighty redemption wrought out by Christ, taking away the veil between God and us, and the veil from our eyes and heart (Heb. x. 20, Is. xxv. 7, 2 Cor. iii. 16), the word can enter more fully into us with its life-giving power. The Son of God, as the living Word, dwelling in us through the Holy Spirit, brings the truth and the power of the word as a divine reality into our living experience. The Old Testament was as the bud; in the New the bud has opened and the flower is seen. **Even as the Holy Ghost saith.** This word assures us that the Holy Spirit will Himself unfold in the New what He had hidden in the words of the Old.

This brings us to a lesson of the very deepest importance in our spiritual life: that what the Holy Ghost hath spoken, He alone can make plain. He uses human words and thoughts, and, as regarded from the human side, human reason can understand and expound them. But even in one who may be a true Christian, this does not bring him farther than the Old Testament, the preliminary stage: "The prophets sought and searched diligently what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point unto" (1 Pet. i. 11). Beyond this, to the real possession and experience of the redemption they proclaimed, they did not come. It was only when Christ was

glorified, and the Spirit was given as an indwelling fountain of light and life, that the divine meaning and power could be known. And so it is with ourselves; *to understand the words of the Holy Spirit I must have yielded myself to be led by the Spirit, I must be living in the Spirit.* It is only one who knows Hebrew who can expound a Hebrew writing; it is only the Spirit of God who knows the mind of God and can reveal it to us. Take, for instance, what is said of entering into the rest of God, anyone who will take trouble, and study it carefully, will be able to form some conception of what it means. But truly to know the rest of God, to enter into it, to enjoy it in living power,—none but the Holy Spirit can teach us this.

Wherefore, even as the Holy Ghost saith, To-day if ye shall hear His voice, harden not your heart. Here is the first lesson the Holy Spirit teacheth. He calls us not to harden or close the heart, but to hearken to the voice of God there; *the Holy Spirit cannot possibly lead us into the power and the blessing of God's word unless with our whole heart we hearken to the voice.* The Holy Spirit can teach in no way but in a heart that is given up to hearken and obey. When the Son came into the world he spake: **Lo, I am come to do Thy will, O God.** The proof of the Spirit's presence in Him, the sacrifice in the power of the Eternal Spirit, the way to the outpouring of the Spirit, was that of hearkening and obedience. The first message of the Holy Spirit, and the condition of all further teaching is ever, **If ye hear His voice, harden not your heart.** God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our heart; God asks us to yield our whole heart to His leading; it is as the indwelling Spirit that He will call us and fit us to listen to God's voice.

We are commencing the study of an Epistle of which the keynote is, God speaks to us now in His Son. The wonderful

truths of the heavenly priesthood of our Lord Jesus, and of our access into the Holiest of All by the blood, to dwell and worship there, and there in God's presence to be made partaker of the full union with Christ, are to be unfolded. Let us seek a deeper sense of the need, and also the certainty, of the teaching of the Spirit within us: Let us pray "that the Father give us the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ." Let us hear God's voice in meekness and tenderness of heart. Let us in deep humility yield ourselves to the Spirit's guidance. We can count upon it that the same Spirit who first of old inspired the words of the Psalm, who then in this Epistle revealed their fulness of meaning, will reveal to us in power all the light and truth they are meant to bring into the believing heart.

1. God speaking to us in His word, and in His Son, is all by the Holy Spirit. Everything depends upon our right relation to the Spirit. Let the word be as a seed in which the life of God dwells. Let us receive the word, in the faith that the Holy Spirit will open it, and make it work mightily, in us who believe.

2. And as we wait on the Spirit to open the word, we shall through the word be led to and receive the spirit of heaven, as the divine seal of our faith in the word.

3. So shall we learn to speak the word in the power of the Spirit. The disciples, however much they knew of Jesus through His intercourse and teaching, and as the witnesses of His death and resurrection, were not allowed to go and preach Him, until they received the Spirit from on high. The Spirit-breathed word, the Spirit-opened word, must also be a Spirit-spoken word; we, too, must speak out of a living communication of the Spirit from the throne of the glorified Christ. From beginning to end, everything connected with God's word must be in the power of the Holy Spirit.

XXIV.

TO-DAY.

III.—7. Wherefore, even as the Holy Ghost saith, To-day, if ye shall hear His voice, harden not your hearts.

THESE words are generally applied to the unconverted ; the Psalm in which they occur, and the context in which they stand in this Epistle, both prove that they are meant for God's people. In all the dealings of the Holy Ghost with believers, be they weak and erring, or strong and glad, His great word to them is, To-day.

The Holy Ghost saith, To-day. What does this mean? God is the Eternal One. With Him there is no yesterday or to-morrow ; what we call past and future are with Him an ever-present Now ; His life is an ever-blessed, never-ending To-day. One of the great words of this Epistle in regard to Christ and His salvation is the word Eternal, For ever. He has become the author of eternal salvation—that is, a salvation which bears the character of eternity ; its chief mark is that it is an ever-present Now—that there is not a moment in which Christ, who ever lives to pray for us, is not able to maintain us in it in the power of an endless life.

Man is the creature of a moment ; the past has gone from him, and over the future he has no control ; it is only the present moment that is his. Therefore it is that, when he is made partaker of Christ, a High Priest for ever, and the eternal

salvation He imparts, God's great word to him is To-day. In Christ all the blessedness of the great eternity is gathered up in an ever-present Now : the one need of the believer is to know it, to respond to it, and to meet the To-day, the Now, my child ! of God's grace with the To-day, the Even now, my Father ! of his faith.

If you would understand the meaning of this divine To-day, look at it in its wondrous setting. **Even as the Holy Ghost saith, To-day.** Satan's word is ever To-morrow, man's favourite word, too, To-morrow. Even with the child of God the word of unbelief is too often To-morrow ; God's demand is too great for to-day ; God's promise too high ; we hope it will come easier later on. **The Holy Ghost saith, To-day.** That means that He who is the mighty power of God is Himself ready to work in us all that God wills and asks ; it is He who is each moment pleading for immediate surrender, for a present trust, because He bears with Him the power of a present salvation.

To-day! it is a word of wonderful promise. It tells that To-day, this very moment, the wondrous love of God is for thee—it is even now waiting to be poured out into thy heart ; that To-day, all that Christ has done, and is now doing in heaven, and is able to do within thee—this very day, it is within thy reach. To-day the Holy Ghost, in whom there is the power to know and claim and enjoy all that the Father and the Son are waiting to bestow, to-day the Holy Ghost is within thee, sufficient for every need, equal to every emergency. With every call we find in our Bible to full and entire surrender ; with every promise we read of grace for the supply of temporal and spiritual need ; with every prayer we breathe, and every longing that rules in our heart, there is the Spirit of promise whispering, To-day. **Even as the Holy Ghost saith, To-day.**

To-day! it is a word of solemn command. It is not here a question of some higher privilege which you are free to accept or reject. It is not left to your choice, O believer, whether you will receive the fulness of blessing the Holy Spirit offers. That **To-day** of the Holy Ghost brings you under the most solemn obligation to respond to God's call, and to say, Yes, **To-day**, Lord, complete and immediate submission to all Thy will; **To-day**, the surrender of a present and a perfect trust in all Thy grace. **Even as the Holy Ghost saith, To-day.**

To-day! a word, too, of earnest warning. **Even as the Holy Ghost saith, To-day, if ye shall hear His voice, harden not your hearts.** *They shall not enter into My rest.* There is nothing so hardening as delay. When God speaks to us, He asks for a tender heart, open to the whispers of His voice of love. The believer who answers the **To-day** of the Holy Ghost with the **To-morrow** of some more convenient season, knows not how he is hardening his heart; the delay, instead of making the surrender and obedience and faith easy, makes it more difficult. It closes the heart for to-day against the Comforter, and cuts off all hope and power of growth. O believer, **Even as the Holy Ghost saith, To-day**, so when you hear His voice, open the heart in great tenderness to listen and obey; obedience to the Spirit's **To-day** is your only certainty of power and of blessing.

To all Christians whose life has been one of feebleness and of failure, who have not yet entered into the rest of faith, into God's own rest, this word **To-day** is the key to all their disappointments and to all their failures. You waited for strength, to make obedience easier; for feeling, to make the sacrifice less painful. You did not listen to the voice of God breathing through every word. He speaks that wondrous note, even through the living word, Jesus Christ, that wondrous note of

hope, To-day. You thought it meant for the sinner a call to immediate repentance; you did not know that it means for the believer, each time he hears the voice, immediate, whole-hearted submission to all God says, immediate trustful acceptance of all He gives. And yet just this is what it does mean.

In the Epistle to the Hebrews we have a very wonderful exhibition of what Christ, as a High Priest at the right hand of God, can do for us in the power of an endless life. The entering into the rest of God, the perfect cleansing of the conscience in the blood through which He entered into the presence of God, our access within the veil into the presence of God, the being brought close to the very heart of God, the being taken up and kept in Christ in the love of God,—these blessings are all ours. And over each of them is written the words, Now is the accepted time. **Even as the Holy Ghost saith, To-day.**

1. Brother, let you and me bow in great stillness before God to hear this wonderful message: the Holy Ghost whispering, To-day, To-day. Let our whole heart open up to take it in. Let all fear and unbelief pass away as we remember: it is the Holy Ghost Himself, the giver of strength, the dispenser of grace, the revealer of Jesus, who says To-day.

2. Let our faith simply listen to God's voice, until it rings through our soul day by day, and all the day. We shall take God's word To-day, and make it our own. We shall meet this wonderful To-day of God's love with the confident To-day of our faith. And it will become to us a foretaste of that eternal To-day in which He dwells.

3. The Holy Spirit's To-day, accepted and lived in, will be within us the power of an endless life, the experience of an eternal salvation, as an ever-present, never-ceasing reality. "Even as the Holy Ghost saith, To-day."

4. Just yesterday I heard a servant of God testify that at his conversion he was led to say: I am going to do the will of God to-day, without thinking of to-morrow; and he had found the unspeakable blessing of it. Let anyone begin to live a whole-hearted life, by the grace of God, for one day; for to-morrow will be as to-day, and still better.

XXV.

AN EVIL HEART OF UNBELIEF.

III.—12. Take heed, brethren, lest haply there shall be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief, in falling away from the living God.

THE great practical aim of the Epistle is to call us to faith. It is with this view that it will show us what a sure ground we have for it in the word and oath of God, in the person and power of our heavenly High Priest. It will remind us how unbelief has been the cause of all falling away from God, and all failing of entrance into the enjoyment of His promise and His rest, as faith has in all ages been the one power in which God's saints have lived and worked. It has already spoken of "holding fast our boldness and the glorying of our hope firm to the end"; it here uses the word "believe" for the first time in the call to beware of an evil heart of unbelief.

An evil heart of unbelief. Think a moment of what the expression means. And note first the place the heart takes in religion. We have heard the warning (ver. 7), **Harden not your hearts.** It is in the heart God speaks, and where He longs to give His blessing. On that there followed God's complaint, "They do alway err in their *heart*; they did not *know* my ways." It is a heart that goes wrong that cannot know God's ways. And so here again, it is the evil heart that cannot believe, that falls away from the living God. Do

let us, in our study of the Epistle and in our whole religious life, beware of rejoicing in beautiful thoughts and happy feelings, while the heart, with its desire and will and love, is not wholly given up to God. In our intercourse with God, everything depends on the heart. It is with the heart man believeth and receiveth the salvation of God.

An evil heart of unbelief. Many think and speak of unbelief as a frailty ; they wish to believe, but do not feel able ; their faith, they say, is too weak. And of course they have no sense of guilt or shame connected with it : not being able to do a thing is counted a sufficient excuse for not doing it. God thinks differently. The Holy Ghost speaks of the **evil heart** of unbelief. The heart is the organ God created in man for holding fellowship with Himself. Faith is its first natural function ; by faith and love it lives in God. It is the ear that hears the voice of God, the eye that can ever see Him and the unseen world ; the capacity for knowing and receiving all that God can communicate. It begins as trust in the word spoken ; it grows into fellowship with the Person who speaks ; its fruit is the reception of all God has to bestow. Sin turned the heart from the unseen to the seen, from God to self, and faith in God lost the place it was meant to have, and became a faith in the visible world and its good. And now unbelief, whether avowed and definite, or more secret and unconscious, is the great mark of the evil heart, the great proof of sin, the great cause of everlasting darkness and damnation. There is no warning the professing Christian Church needs to have sounded more loudly than this one to the Hebrews : **Take heed lest there be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief in falling away from the living God.**

In falling away from the living God. This is the terrible

evil of unbelief; it incapacitates a man for holding fellowship with God as the living One. The expression, *the living God*, occurs four times in the Epistle. In the Old Testament it contrasted God with the dead idols, who could not hear or speak or help. Alas, how often professing Christians have, instead of a graven image, the more dangerous idol of a thought-image—a conception of the mind to which they bring their worship. *The living God*, speaking in His Son, hearing them when they speak, working out in them His mighty salvation—the living God who loves and is loved,—Him they know not. With all their Christian profession and religious exercises there is an evil heart of unbelief, in falling away from the living God.

Let us take the warning. Ere we come to the deeper truth the Epistle has to teach us, let us learn well our first lesson: the one thing God looks to, the one thing we need to receive, the fulness of blessing our great High Priest has for us and waits to bestow, is a heart of faith—a true heart drawing nigh to God in fulness of faith (x. 23). *Take heed*—we ought to give more abundant heed—lest there be in any of us, even for a moment, an evil heart of unbelief. Let us cast out everything that can cause or can strengthen it, whether it be worldliness or formality, too little knowledge, or too much head-knowledge of God's word, too little looking to the state of our heart or too much occupation with self; let us take heed lest there be at any time in us an evil heart of unbelief. Let a tender heart, hearkening to His voice, listening to and trusting His word, ever be the sacrifice we bring Him.

With the heart man believeth, whether in God or the world. As our heart is, so is our faith, and so our life. Our enjoyment of Christ, our spiritual strength and fruitfulness, our nearness to God, and our experience of His working in us, all depend, not

upon single, isolated acts of faith, but upon the state of the heart. Therefore God breathes into us the Spirit of faith, to keep our heart ever tender and open towards Him. Oh, let us above everything beware of an evil heart of unbelief.

And if we would know how true living faith is to be obtained and increased, note the connection. As unbelief falls away from the living God, so faith draws nigh to Him and is fed and nourished in His presence. Practise the presence of God in deep humility and stillness of heart. Thirst for God, the living God. "My soul, be thou silent unto God: for my expectation is from Him." He is the living God. He sees and hears and feels and loves. He speaks and gives and works, and reveals Himself. His presence wakens and strengthens and satisfies faith. Bow in lowly meditation and worship before the living God, and faith will waken up and grow into boldness and the glorying of hope. He is the living God, *who makes alive, out of whom life comes into them that draw near to Him*: tarry in His presence—that, and nothing else, but that, most surely, will free thee from the evil heart of unbelief.

1. Unbelief and falling away from the living God: remember with holy fear the close connection. They act and react on each other.

2. The faithfulness of Jesus fills the heart with the fulness of faith. You remember the lesson? Here it is the same again: drawing nigh to the living God will fill the heart with living faith. And the Epistle is going to teach us how God draws nigh to us in Jesus, and how in Jesus we draw nigh to God.

3. Never speak or think of unbelief as a weakness, but always as the sin of sins, the fruitful mother of all sin.

4. The living God in heaven, and the believing heart on earth: these are the two powers that meet and satisfy each other. Let thy faith know of no other measure or limit than the living God. Let it be living faith in a living God.

XXVI.

EXHORT ONE ANOTHER DAY BY DAY.

III.—13. But exhort one another day by day, so long as it is called to-day, lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

IN the previous verse we read, "Take heed lest there be *in any one of you* an evil heart of unbelief." That is not only, let each one look to himself, but let all look to it that there be not *in any one of you* the evil unbelieving heart. The Church is one body; the sickness of one member is a danger to the whole body. Each one must live to care for those around him. Each member is entrusted by Christ to the love and care of his brethren, and is dependent on their help. Believers who are joined together in one house, in a neighbourhood, in a church, are responsible for one another; they must take heed that there be not in anyone the unbelief that falls away from God. They are called to help and encourage each other so that all may at all times continue steadfast in the faith.

In our meditation on ver. 6 we spoke of the painful fact that in so many cases the first boldness and joy of hope is not held fast firm to the end. Here is one cause. There is not the care and help for each other which the Lord intended. In caring only for ourselves, our brother not only suffers, but we lose much ourselves. The healthy life of the individual member is dependent on the life around him, and on the part he takes in

maintaining that life. The warning has a deeper significance than we think: "Take heed lest there be *in any one of you* an evil heart of unbelief."

It is this thought our text seeks to enforce: **But exhort one another day by day, lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.** Christians are bound to exhort one another; it is their duty and their right. It is implied in the whole constitution of the body of Christ, that the members care for one another. Its life is entirely dependent on the Spirit of Christ, who pleased not Himself, and that Spirit is a love that seeketh not its own, but has its very being in loving and blessing others. As each member humbly yields himself to be helped and to help, the safety and the vigour of all will be secured. The communion of saints in all our Church circles must be proved in the cultivation of a practical ministering love and care for each other.

Exhort one another day by day, so long as it is called To-day. We saw what solemn meaning there was in the Holy Spirit's call, **To-day, if ye hear His voice.** We sought to apply that personally. Here we are taught that all the urgency that call implies must by each one of us be applied to our neighbour as well as ourselves. We must think of the danger of delay, of the time when it will be no longer *To-day* for those around us, who are forgetting it, and exhort them *day by day*. *To-day!* The work is urgent and must be done immediately. It may be difficult—He who commands will enable. Our conscious unfitness must drive us to Him who can fill us with the love and the boldness, and the wisdom we need. *Day by day.* The work is slow, and must be done unceasingly, "*so long* as it is called **To-day.**" The Spirit of Jesus can give us grace and patience and faith to persevere. "In due time we shall reap if we faint not."

Day by day. This word of the Holy Spirit is the complement of that other *To-day*. The *To-day* of the Holy Spirit must day by day be afresh accepted and obeyed. It is only as we are ready, every day without one exception, to live fully in the obedience to the voice of God and the faith of Jesus, that our life can grow. What has once, or for a time, been done, will not avail; day by day, our fellowship with Jesus, our consecration to Him, our service for Him, must be renewed. So shall we in our care for others, as much as in our personal walk, hold fast our boldness firm to the end.

“Exhort one another, **lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.**” We heard the warning, **Harden not your hearts.** Here is its exposition, **Hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.** All sin is deceit, its promised pleasures are all a lie. But there are some sins that are open and unmistakable. There are others that are specially deceptive. Where the sanction of the Christian world, or the force of habit and custom, or the apparent insignificance of what we do, makes us think little of the sin, it has a terrible power to deceive the professing Christian. And through this deceitfulness of sin, be it worldliness, or unlovingness, or pride, or want of integrity, hearts are hardened, and become incapable of hearing the voice of God. What a call to all who are awake to their own danger to listen, “Exhort one another day by day, **lest any one of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.**”

Let me press upon everyone who would study this Epistle, the solemn obligation resting upon him to care for those around him—not only the outcast, but those with whom he is associated in church fellowship, very specially any who are in danger of being hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. The Christ unto whom we are to grow up in all things is the Christ “from

whom all the body, fitly framed and knit together, through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in its measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love." Our connection with the head, the power of our growth unto Him in all things, must be maintained in our love to the members of His body around, however feeble or backward.

And if we would know where the grace for this work is to be found, the answer is not far to seek. It is in Jesus Christ our Head and in His love shed abroad in our hearts. As in this Epistle we study the compassion of Jesus, as our High Priest and Leader, let us believe that He makes us partakers of His Spirit. He forms us in His own likeness, He leads us in His footsteps, He makes each of us what He was, a Priest with a priestly heart ready to live and die for those around us. **Therefore, brethren, exhort one another day by day.**

1. This work is most difficult. But strength for it will come as for any other work. First of all, accept the command; get the heart filled with the sense of obligation; yield yourself to your Master in willing obedience, even though you see not the slightest prospect of doing it. Then wait on Him for His light and strength—for wisdom to know how to begin, for boldness to speak the truth in love. Present yourself unto God as one alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness in His hands. Let the fire within the heart be kept burning: the grace of obedience will not be withheld.

2. This Epistle is an exposition of the inner life, the life of faith. But with this, work is considered as a matter of course that needs no vindication. Let every Christian give himself to his Lord to watch over others: let all the fresh grace and the deeper knowledge of Jesus we seek be for the service of those around us. Exhort one another daily.

XXVII.

PARTAKERS OF CHRIST.

III.—14. For we are become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end; while it is said,

15. To-day, if ye shall hear his voice,

Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.

IN the second chapter the twofold oneness of our Lord Jesus and His believing people was set before us. On the divine side they are one, for both **He that sanctifieth, and they that are sanctified are all of one**, that is, of God. Therefore He calls them brethren. On the other, the human side, they are one, because He became man, and took our nature upon Him. **Since the children are sharers of flesh and blood, He also Himself in like manner partook of the same.** There we have the same word as here. Just as truly as Christ became *partaker of flesh and blood* we become *partakers of Christ*. In partaking with us of flesh and blood, Christ entered into perfect fellowship with us in all we were, our life and our death became His. When we become partakers of Christ, we enter into perfect fellowship with Him in all He was and is; His death and His life become ours.

We are become partakers of Christ! What a mystery! What a treasure! What a blessedness! The whole object of the Epistle is to show what there is in the Christ of whom we are become partakers, and what He can do for us. But here at

the outset, amid needful words of remonstrance against giving way to sloth or unbelief, believers are reminded of what their portion and possession is; they are **become partakers of Christ**. There is often danger, as we listen to the teaching of Scripture about Christ as our High Priest, of regarding Him as an outward person, and His work as something that is done outwardly for us in heaven. This precious word reminds us that our salvation consists in the possession of Himself, in the being one life with Him, in having Himself as our own. Christ can do nothing for us but as an inward Saviour. Himself being our life, personally dwelling and working in us. As truly and fully as Christ, when He became partaker of flesh and blood, was entirely and eternally identified with man and His nature, so that He and it were inseparably united in one life, so surely, when we become partakers of Christ, do we become indissolubly identified with Him. Since Christ became partaker of flesh and blood, He is known, and will be to all eternity, even upon the throne, as the Son of Man. No less will we, when we truly become partakers of Christ, be known, even now and to all eternity, as one with Christ on the throne of glory. Oh, let us know ourselves as God knows us—partakers of Christ.

It is the one thing God desires. When God set forth His only begotten Son as the only possible way of access to Himself, it meant that He can delight in or have fellowship with nothing in which the likeness of His Son is not to be seen. We can have no farther entrance into God's favour or good pleasure than He can see Christ in us. If God has called us to the fellowship of His Son, and made us participators of all there is in Christ, the sonship, and the love, and the Spirit of the Father, let us live worthy of our privilege—let us live as men who are—oh the riches of the grace!—are become *partakers of Christ!*

And how can we know in full assurance that it is so, and ever rejoice in the blessed consciousness of all it implies. Just as it was said before, where our blessed relation to Christ was set forth in another aspect, we are His house, **if we hold fast our boldness and the glorying of our hope firm unto the end**, so we have the answer here again: "We are become partakers of Christ, **if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end.**" The beginning of our confidence must be held fast. We must not, as many think, begin with faith, and continue with works. No, the confidence with which we began must be held fast firm to the end. We must see that when we are made partakers of Christ, that includes all, and that as at first, so all the way unto the end, we can receive out of Christ only by faith and according to our faith. Apart from faith receiving Christ's strength, our works avail not. God works nothing but through Christ, and it is as by faith we live in our riches in Christ that God can work into us all there is in Him for us. It is this faith through which God can work all our works for us and in us.

For we are become—note, not we shall become—we are become, **partakers of Christ, if we hold fast to the end.** Our perseverance will be the seal of our being partaker of Christ. The faith by which, at conversion, we know at once that we have Christ, grows clearer and brighter, and more mightily effectual in opening up the treasures of Christ, as we hold it fast firm unto the end. Persevering faith is the witness that we have Christ, because through it Christ exercises His keeping and perfecting power.

Believer! would you enjoy the full assurance and the full experience that you are partaker of Christ? *It is alone to be found each day in the living fellowship with Christ.* Christ is a living person, He can be known and enjoyed only in a living personal

intercourse. Christ is my Leader ; I must cling to Him, I must follow Him, in His leading. Christ is my High Priest ; I must let Him lift me into God's presence. Christ is the living Son of God, our life ; I must live Him. I am His house ; I can only know Him as Son in His house as I yield myself to His indwelling.

But, all and only through faith, we are become partakers of Christ, **if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end.** Begin each day, meet each difficulty, with the renewal of the confidence you reposed in Jesus, when first you came to Him ; with a brightness that shines unto the perfect day you will know what boundless blessing it is to be *a partaker of Christ.*

1. When Christ became partaker of human nature, how entirely He identified Himself with it, that all could see and know it. I am become partaker of Christ : let me be so identified with Him that my whole life may be marked by it. So may all see and know that I am partaker of Jesus Christ.

2. How did Christ become partaker of our nature ? He left His own state of life, forsook all, and entered into our state of life. How do I become partaker of Christ ? By coming out from my state of life, forsaking all, giving myself wholly to be possessed of Him and to live His life.

3. If we hold fast the beginning. Christ maintained His surrender to be Man firm to the end, even unto death. Let me maintain my surrender to Christ, live one life with Christ, at any cost.

4. Partaker of Christ, of His life, His dispositions as man, His meekness and lowliness of heart ; partaker of a living Christ—who will live His life out in me.

XXVIII.

THE REST IN CANAAN

III.—16. For who, when they heard, did provoke? nay, did not all they that came out of Egypt by Moses?

17. And with whom was he displeased forty years? was it not with them that sinned, whose carcases fell in the wilderness?

18. And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that were disobedient?

19. And we see that they were not able to enter in because of unbelief.

IN the opening verses of the Epistle we saw that God has two dispensations, or ways of dealing with man, and that these find their counterpart in the Christian life. There are believers who always walk in the twilight and bondage of the Old Testament; there are others, who truly know the joy and the power of the New Testament, and have fellowship with God, not as through the prophets, but truly and directly in the Son Himself.

In the words we are now to meditate on we have the same truth in another aspect. The writer had spoken of Christ as more than Moses. This gives him occasion to speak, in the tone of solemn warning, of the people of Israel who came out of Egypt. They did not all enter Canaan. There came a separation among those that God had redeemed out of Egypt; some perished in the wilderness; others did indeed enter and possess the promised land. The cause of this failure to enter Canaan was, we are told, disobedience, arising out of unbelief. When

God commanded them to go up and possess the land, they gave way to fear. They believed not God's promise, and were disobedient. Unbelief is ever the cause of disobedience; they could not enter in because of unbelief and disobedience.

The story has a deep spiritual significance, and teaches a lesson of great solemnity. In our chapter we have twice heard already that it is not enough to begin well; we must hold fast *unto the end*. Of the people of Israel we read—"By faith they kept the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood; by faith they passed through the Red Sea." There was the initial faith to go up out of Egypt. But when they were tested to see if they would **hold fast the beginning of their confidence firm unto the end**, the great majority failed. Their faith was but for a time: they had faith to leave Egypt; they had not faith to enter Canaan.

Among the Hebrews there were Christians who were in the same state. They had begun well, but had been hindered. Some were standing still; some had already turned back. And even so there are many Christians in our churches who never come farther than the initial faith of conversion. They say they know God has saved them from Egypt. They rest content with the thought of having been converted. There is no hearty desire, no earnest purpose to press on to a life of holiness, no readiness at any sacrifice to go up into the promised land of rest and of victory.

When Israel was about to enter the land of Canaan, Moses used the words: "He *brought us out* from thence, that He *might bring us in* to give us the land." It is to be feared that there are many Christians who put asunder what God hath joined together. They would fain be brought out from the land of bondage; they are not ready to go all the length with God, to

enter the land and conquer every enemy. They would fain be made happy in being delivered from bondage ; they long not to be made holy in a life of separation and service. To the voice that calls to enter into God's rest they hearken not, but harden their hearts. It was not in Egypt—let us note this well—it was on the very borders of Canaan that the men God had begun to save hardened their hearts. It is among Christians who profess conversion, who have not only begun the Christian life, but even made some progress in it, that the hardening of the heart is now still found. The call to holiness, the call to cease from the life of wandering and murmuring, and enter into the rest of God, the call to the life of victory over every enemy and to the service of God in the land of promise, is not obeyed. They say it is too high and too hard. They do not believe with Caleb, "We are well able to possess the land"; they fear the sacrifice and cling to the carnal life; in not hearkening to God's voice their heart is hardened. God has sworn, they shall not enter into His rest.

I cannot with too much earnestness urge every Christian reader to learn well the two stages of the Christian. There are the carnal, and there are the spiritual; there are those who remain babes, and those who are full-grown men. There are those who come up out of Egypt, but then remain in the wilderness of a worldly life; there are those who follow the Lord fully, and enter the life of rest and victory. Let each of us find out where we stand, and taking earnest heed to God's warnings, with our whole heart press on to go all the length in following Jesus, in seeking to stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.

What mean all the warnings in our Epistle, specially dedicated to the unfolding of the heavenly life and power, the complete

salvation of our great High Priest? It means this, that no teaching of what Christ is can profit, unless our hearts *are longing and ready to follow Him fully*. The Epistle will sum up all its teachings in its call to enter into the Holiest of All, into the rest of God. But it wants us to feel deeply that there can be no entering in, except in the path of faith and full obedience, except with a heart that is ready to forsake all its own will, to follow Him who bore the cross, a heart that will be content with nothing less than all that God is willing to give.

1. They were not able to enter in because of unbelief. Take heed, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief. Everything depends upon faith. At each step in the teaching of our Epistle, let faith be exercised. Faith in the God who speaks to us; faith in the blessed Son, in the divine power and all-pervading nearness in which He works, in His true humanity, and the heavenly life He perfected for us and imparts from heaven; faith in the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, and is God's power working in us;—let faith be the habit of our soul, the every breath of our life.

2. Because of unbelief. Just what Jesus says: Because of your unbelief, in answer to our Why? Let us cultivate the deep conviction that the root of all disobedience and failure, of all weakness and trouble in the spiritual life, is unbelief. Let us not think that there is some inexplicable mystery about our prayers not being heard; it is simply unbelief that will not trust God, will not yield itself wholly to God, will not allow God to do what He promises. God save us from unbelief!

XXIX.

THE REST OF FAITH.

IV.—4. Let us fear therefore, lest haply a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to have come short of it.

2. For indeed we have had good tidings preached unto us, even as also they: but the word of hearing did not profit them, because they were¹ not united by faith with them that heard.

3. For we which have believed do enter into that rest; even as he hath said,

As I sware in my wrath,

They shall not enter into my rest:

although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

WE have seen that with Israel, after its deliverance from Egypt, there were two stages. The one, the life in the wilderness, with its wanderings and its wants, its unbelief and its murmurings, its provocation of God and its exclusion from the promised rest. The other, the land of promise, with rest instead of the desert wanderings, with abundance instead of want, and the victory over every enemy instead of defeat: symbols of the two stages in the Christian life. The one in which we only know the Lord as the Saviour from Egypt, in His work on the cross for atonement and pardon. The other, where He is known and welcomed as the glorified Priest-King in heaven, who, in the power of the endless life, sanctifies and saves completely, writes God's laws in the heart, and leads us to find our home in the holiest of God's presence. The aim of the writer in this whole section is to warn

¹ It was.

us not to rest content with the former, the preparatory stage, but to show all diligence to reach the second, and enter the promised rest of complete deliverance. **Let us fear therefore, lest haply, a promise being left of entering into His rest, any of you should come short of it.**

Some think that the rest of Canaan is the type of heaven. This cannot be, because the great mark of the Canaan life was that the land had to be conquered and that God gave such glorious victory over enemies. The rest of Canaan was for victory and through victory. And so it is in the life of faith, when a soul learns to trust God for victory over sin, and yields itself entirely, as to its circumstances and duties, to live just where and how He wills, that it enters the rest. It lives in the promise, in the will, in the power of God. This is the rest into which it enters, not through death, but through faith, or rather, not through the death of the body, but the death to self in the death of Christ through faith. For indeed we have **had good tidings preached unto us, even as also they: but the word of hearing did not profit them, because it was not united by faith with those that heard.** The one reason why they did not enter Canaan was their unbelief. The land was waiting: the rest was provided; God Himself would bring them in and give them rest. One thing was lacking; they did not believe, and so did not yield themselves to God to do it for them what He had promised. Unbelief closes the heart against God, withdraws the life from God's power; in the very nature of things unbelief renders the word of promise of none effect. A gospel of rest is preached to us as it was to them. We have in Scripture the most precious assurances of a rest for the soul to be found under the yoke of Jesus, of a peace of God which passeth all understanding, of a peace and a joy in the soul which nothing can

take away. But when they are not believed they cannot be enjoyed: faith is in its very nature a resting in the promise and the promiser until He fulfil it in us. Only faith can enter into rest. The fulness of faith enters into the full rest.

For we which have believed do enter into rest. It is not, shall enter. No. To-day, even as the Holy Ghost saith, "To-day," now and here, we which have believed do enter into rest. It is with the rest of faith here as with what we heard of being partakers of Christ—the blessing is enjoyed, **if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end.** The initial faith, that passes out of Egypt through the Red Sea, must be held fast firm, then it comes to the fulness of faith that passes through Jordan into the land.

Let every student of this Epistle realise how intensely personal its tone is, and with what urgency it appeals to us for faith, as the one thing needful in our dealings with the word of God. Without this the word cannot profit us. We may seek by thought and study to enter into the meaning of the promise—God has sworn that we never shall enter into its possession, or into His rest, but by faith. The one thing God asks in our intercourse with Him and His word is the habit of faith, that ever keeps the heart open towards God, and longs to enter in and abide in His rest. It is the soul that thirsts for God, for the living God, that will have the spiritual capacity for receiving the revelation of how Jesus, the High Priest, brings us into God's presence. What is to be taught us later on of our entering into the Holiest of All is nothing but the clearer unfolding of what is here called entering into rest. Let us in studying the Epistle above everything have faith.

Would you enter into the rest? Remember what has been taught us of the two stages. They are represented by Moses

and Joshua. Moses the leader, Joshua the perfecter or finisher of the faith of Israel. Moses brought the people out: Joshua brought them in. Accept Jesus as your Joshua. Let past failure and wandering and sin not cause either despair or contentment with what you are. Trust Jesus who, through the sprinkling of the blood, brought you out of Egypt, to bring you as definitely into the rest. Faith is always repose in what another will do for me. Faith ceases to seek help in itself or its efforts, to be troubled with its need or its weakness; it rests in the sufficiency of the all-sufficient One who has undertaken all. Trust Jesus. Give up and forsake the wilderness. Follow Him fully: He is the rest.

1. Let no one imagine that this life in the rest of faith is something that is meant only for a favoured few. I cannot too earnestly press it upon every reader: God calls you—yes you, to enter the rest. He calls you to a life of entire consecration. If you rest content with the thought of having been converted, it may be at the peril of your soul: with Israel you may perish in the wilderness. "I have sworn in my wrath: they shall not enter into my rest."

2. If God be indeed the fountain of all goodness and blessedness, it follows that the nearer we are to Him, and the more we have of Him, the deeper and the fuller our joy will be. Has not the soul, who is not willing at all costs to yield to Christ when He offers to bring us into the rest of God, reason to fear that all its religion is simply the selfishness that seeks escape from punishment, and is content with as little of God here as may suffice to secure heaven hereafter.

XXX.

THE REST OF GOD.

IV.—4. For he hath said somewhere of the seventh day on this wise, And God rested on the seventh day from all his works;

5. And in this place again,

They shall not enter into my rest.

6. Seeing therefore it remaineth that some should enter thereinto, and they to whom the good tidings were before preached failed to enter in because of disobedience,

7. He again defineth a certain day, saying in David, after so long a time To-day, as it hath been before said,

To-day if ye shall hear his voice,

Harden not your hearts.

8. For if Joshua had given them rest, he would not have spoken afterward of another day.

WE speak, with Scripture, of the rest of faith. Faith, however, only gives rest because it rests in God; it rests because it allows God to do all; the rest is in God Himself. It is His own divine rest into which we enter by faith. When the Holy Ghost says, *My rest, His rest, God rested*, it teaches us that it is God's own rest into which we enter, and which we partake of. It is as faith sees that the creature was destined to find its rest nowhere but in the Creator, and that in the entire surrender to Him, to His will and His working, it may have perfect rest, that it dares to cast itself upon God, and have no care. It sees that God, the cause of all movement and change, is Himself the immovable and unchangeable

One, and that His blessed rest can never be disturbed by what is done either by Himself or by others. Harkening to the loving offer, it forsakes all to find its dwelling-place in God and His love. Faith sees what the rest of God is ; faith believes that it may come and share in it ; faith enters in and rests, it yields itself to Jesus to lead it in and make it partaker. Because it honours God and counts Him all, God honours it ; He opens the door, and the soul is brought in to rest in Him.

This faith is faith in Jesus. It is the insight into His finished work, the complete salvation He bestows, the perfection which was wrought in Him personally, and in which we share as **partakers of Christ**. The connection between the finishing of a work and the rest that follows is clearly seen in what is said of creation. **God rested on the seventh day from all His works. He that is entered into His rest, hath himself also rested from his work, as God did from His.** The rest of God was His glad complacency in what He had finished in Creation, the beginning of His blessed work of Providence to care for and bring on to perfection what He had wrought. And so it is the finished work of Jesus that is ever set before us in the Epistle as the ground of our faith, the call for us in fulness of faith to draw nigh and enter in and rest. Because Christ hath put away sin, hath rent the veil, and is set down on the right hand of the throne,—because all is finished and perfected, and we have received the Holy Spirit from heaven in our hearts to make us the partakers of that glorified Christ, we may with confidence, with boldness, rest in Him to maintain and perfect His work in us. And, resting in Him, He becomes our Joshua, perfecting our faith, bringing us in, and giving us a home in the rest of God with Himself, now to go no more out for ever.

And if you would know why so few Christians enjoy this rest, *it is because they do not know Jesus as their Joshua*. We shall see later how Aaron was only a type of Christ in His work on earth. Melchizedek is needed as a type of His work in heaven, in the power and joy of the heavenly life. Moses and Aaron both shadow forth the beginning of Christ's work—His work on earth; Melchizedek and Joshua His work in heaven. They show us clearly how, as in the type God ordained, so in reality there are two stages in Christian knowledge and experience. All the feebleness of our Christian life is owing to one thing: we do not know Jesus in heaven; we do not know that Jesus has *entered in* for us (vi. 20, ix. 12, 14), and that this secures to us *boldness and the power of entrance* into a heavenly state of life; that He there *sits* upon the throne as our High Priest in power, maintaining in us His own heavenly life; keeping us in personal fellowship with the living Father, so that in Him we too enter the rest of God. It is because we do not know Jesus in His heavenly life and power that our life is feeble; if we learn to know Him as He is to be revealed in this Epistle, as our heavenly Joshua, actually bringing us and our inmost nature into the rest of God, we cannot but enter into that rest. When Joshua went before, the people followed at once in fellowship with him. Entering the rest of God is a personal practical experience of the soul that receives the word in living faith, because in it it receives Jesus on the throne.

Let us do what Israel did in crossing Jordan; they allowed Joshua to bring them in; they followed him. Let us follow Jesus in the path He trod. In heaven God's will is all. On earth Jesus made that will all. He lived in the will of God, in suffering and doing, in meeting trial, in waiting for the Father's guidance; in giving up everything to it, He proved that God's

will was His path. Follow Him. Yield thyself, in the death to self, to the will of God ; have faith in Jesus on the throne, as thy Head and life, that He has brought thee in and will make it true in thy experience ; trust Jesus, as being partaker of His nature and life, to work all in thee that the Father seeks ; and thou shalt know how blessed it is to enter the rest of God.

1. Deep restfulness, even amid outward activity, is one of the most beautiful marks and aids of the life of faith. Cultivate that holy stillness that seeks to abide in God's presence, and does not yield too much to things around.

2. This rest is God's rest : it is found in His fellowship. Think of all He sees, of all He feels, and has to bear ; think of the divine peace and patience with which He guides all ; and learn to be patient and trustful, and to rest in Him. Believe in Him, as the one God who worketh all in all, and works in thee that which is well-pleasing in His sight, and thou shalt have perfect rest in letting Him do all for thee and in thee.

3. God is a supernatural, incomprehensible Being ; we must learn to know Him in a way that is above reason and sense. That way is the adoration of faith, and the deep humility of obedience. Through these the Holy Spirit will work the work of God in us.

4. All entering in means a coming out from the place we were in before. Forsake all, and follow Jesus into God's presence.

*5. O my soul, listen to this word of the great God, and let His unspeakable love draw thee--
To-day, enter into My rest.*

XXXI.

REST FROM WORKS.

IV.—9. There remaineth therefore a sabbath rest for the people of God.

10. For he that is entered into his rest hath himself also rested from his works, as God did from his.

There remaineth therefore a sabbath rest for the people of God: taken in connection with what precedes about the seventh day or Sabbath, the rest is here called a sabbatism or sabbath rest. It is spoken of as *remaining*, with reference to the rest in Canaan. That was but a shadow and symbol: the real sabbath rest remained, waiting its time, till Christ the true Joshua should come, and open it to us by Himself entering it.

In ver. 10 we have here another proof that the rest does not refer to heaven. How needless it would be in that case to say of those who have died, **For he that hath entered into his rest, hath himself also rested from his works, as God did from His.** The remark would have no point. But what force it has in connection with the rest of faith in this life, pointing us to what is the great secret of this entrance into rest—the ceasing from works, as God did from His.

In God we see, as it were, two distinct stages in His relation

to His work. The first was that of creation—until He had finished all His work which He created and made. The second, His rest when creation was finished, and He rejoiced in what He had made, now to begin the higher work of watching the development of the life He had intrusted the creature with, and securing its sanctification and perfection. It is a rest from work which is now finished, for higher work now to be carried on. Even so there are the two stages in the Christian life. The one in which, after conversion, a believer seeks to work what God would have him do. The second, in which, after many a painful failure, he ceases from his works, and enters the rest of God, there to find the power for work in allowing God to work in him.

It is this resting from their own work which many Christians cannot understand. They think of it as a state of passive and selfish enjoyment, of still contemplation which leads to the neglect of the duties of life, and unfits for that watchfulness and warfare to which Scripture calls. What an entire misunderstanding of God's call to rest. As the Almighty, God is the only source of power. In nature He works all. In grace He waits to work all too, if man will but consent and allow. Truly to rest in God is to yield oneself up to the highest activity. We work, because He worketh in us to will and to do. As Paul says of himself, "I labour, striving according to His working who worketh in me with might" (*lit.* "agonising according to His energy who energises in me with might"). Entering the rest of God is the ceasing from self-effort, and the yielding up oneself in the full surrender of faith to God's working.

How many Christians are there who need nothing so much as rightly to apprehend this word. Their life is one of earnest effort and ceaseless struggling. They do long to do God's will,

and to live to His glory. Continued failure and bitter disappointment is their too frequent experience. Very often as the result they give themselves up to a feeling of hopelessness: it never will be otherwise. Theirs is truly the wilderness life—they have not entered into God's rest. Would that God might open their eyes, and show them Jesus as our Joshua, who has entered into God's presence, who sits upon the throne as High Priest, bringing us in living union with Himself into that place of rest and of love, and, by His Spirit within us, making that life of heaven a reality and an experience.

He that is entered into rest, hath himself also rested from his works, as God did from His. And how does one rest and cease from his works? It is by ceasing from self. It is the old self life that always insists upon proving its goodness and its strength, and presses forward to do the works of God. It is only in death that we rest from our works. Jesus entered His rest through death; each one whom He leads into it must pass through death. "Reckon yourself to be indeed dead unto sin, and alive unto God in Christ Jesus our Lord." Believe that the death of Christ, as an accomplished fact, with all that it means and has effected, is working in you in all its power. You are dead with Him and in Him. Consent to this, and cease from dead works. "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord. Yea, saith the Spirit, for they do rest from their labours." That is as true of spiritual dying with Christ as of the death in the body. To sinful nature there is no rest from work but through death.

He that is entered into rest hath rested from his works. The ceasing from our works and the entering the rest of God go together. Read the first chapter of Joshua, and hear God's words of strength and encouragement to everyone who would

enter. Exchange the wilderness life with your own works for the rest-life in which God works. Fear not to believe that Jesus came to give it, and that it is for you.

1. Not I, but Christ. This is the rest of faith in which a man rests from his works. With the unconverted man it is, Not Christ, but I. With the feeble and slothful Christian, I and Christ: I first, and Christ to fill up what is wanting. With increasing earnestness it becomes, Christ and I: Christ first, but still I second. With the man who dies with Christ it is, Not I, but Christ: Christ alone and Christ all. He has ceased from his work: Christ liveth in him. This is the rest of faith.

2. God saith of His dwelling among His people, "This is My rest; here will I dwell." Fear not to say this too. It is the rest of God in His delight and pleasure in the work of His Son, in His love to Jesus and all who belong to Him. It is the rest of Jesus in His finished work, sitting on the throne, resting in the Father's love. It is the rest of our faith and love in Jesus, in God, in His love.

XXXII.

GIVE DILIGENCE TO ENTER INTO THE REST.

IV.—11. Let us, therefore, give diligence to enter into that rest, that no man fall after the same example of disobedience.

OUR Epistle is intensely practical. How it detains and holds us fast in hope of persuading us not to be content with the knowledge or the admiration of its teaching, but personally to listen to the message it brings from God by the Holy Ghost, and indeed do the thing God would have us do—enter into His rest. **Let us give diligence to enter into that rest.**

Let us give diligence. The word means, Make haste—be in earnest, put your whole heart into it, see that you do it ; enter into the rest. **That no man fall after the same example of disobedience.** The danger is imminent—the loss will be terrible. God has sworn in His wrath that unless we hearken and obey, we shall not enter His rest. Let us give diligence to enter in. All the wonderful teaching the Epistle contains farther on, as to the Holiest that is opened for us as the place where God wants to receive us into His rest and live, as to the great High Priest who has opened the way and entered in and lives as our Joshua to bring us in, will profit us nothing, unless there be the earnest desire, the willing readiness, the firm resolve, to

enter in. It is this disposition alone that can fit a man spiritually to apprehend the heavenly mysteries the Epistle opens up.

And surely it ought not to be needful to press the motives that should urge us to obedience. Ought not the one motive to suffice?—the unspeakable privilege God offers me in opening to me the entrance into His own rest. No words can express the inconceivable greatness of the gift. God speaks to me in His Son as one who was created in His image, capable of fellowship with Himself; as one whom He has redeemed out of the awful captivity of sin and death, because He longs to have me living with Him in His love. As one for whom He has made it possible to live the outer life in the flesh, with the inner life in Christ, lifted up, kept safe in the Holiest of All, in God's own rest,—oh, can it be that anyone believes this and does not respond? No, let each heart say, Blessed be God, into this rest would I enter, here would I dwell.

We are so accustomed to the wilderness life of stumbling and sinning, we have so learnt to take the words God speaks of that life (iii. 10), "They do alway err in their heart," as descriptive of what must be daily Christian experience, that we hardly count it a practical possibility to enter into the rest. And even when the desire has been awakened, the path appears so dark and unknown. Let me for the sake of such once again gather up what has been said as to the way to enter in: it may be God, of His great mercy, may help some to take the step. The instructions need be very simple.

First, settle it in your mind, *believe with your whole heart that there is such a rest, and that To-day.* It is God's rest, in which He lives; into which Jesus, as your Joshua, has entered. It is your rest, prepared for you; your land of promise; the spiritual state of life which is as surely yours as Jesus is; into which

Jesus will bring you, and where He will keep you. It is the rest in which you can live every hour, free from care and anxiety, free from weariness and wanderings, always resting in the rest that trusts God for all. Believe this.

Then *cease from your own works*. Not as if you had to attain this perfectly before entering into God's rest. No, but consent, yield, be willing that all self-working should come to an end. Cease from self. Where there is life there is action ; the self-life will seek to work, except you give up self into the death of Christ ; with Him you are buried, in Him you live. As Christ said, Hate your own life, lose it. Cease from your own works, and bow in deep humility and helplessness of all good, as nothing before God.

Trust Jesus as your Joshua, who brings you in, even now. Israel had simply to trust and obey and follow Joshua. Set your heart on Him who has entered the heavens to appear before God for us. Claim Jesus as yours, not only in His cross and death and resurrection, but above all in His heavenliness, in His possession of the rest of heaven. Claim Him, and leave Him to do His blessed work. You need not understand all. Your feelings may not be what you would wish. Trust Him, who has done all for you in earth and heaven, to do all in your heart too.

And then be *a follower of them who through faith and patience have inherited the promises*. Israel passed in one day through Jordan into Canaan, but did not in one day come to the perfect rest. It is at the end of the life of Joshua we read, "The Lord gave them rest round about." Enter to-day into the rest. Though all may not be bright at once, look to Jesus, your Joshua, and leave all in His hands. Come away out of self, and live in Him. REST IN GOD whatever happen. Think of HIS

REST, and Jesus who has entered it in your name, and out of it fills you with its Spirit, and fear not. *To-day*, if you hear His voice, enter in.

1. *Jesus said, "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." It was through meekness and lowliness of heart that Jesus found His rest in God: He allowed God to be all, trusted God for all—the rest of God was His abode. He invites us to share His rest, and tells us the secret. In the meekness and lowliness of Jesus is the way to the rest.*

2. *Israel did not enter Canaan. And why? It is twice said because of disobedience, and thrice because of unbelief. The two things always go together. Yield yourself in everything to obey. This will strengthen you to trust for everything He has promised to do.*

3. *The rest includes victory: "The Lord will give thee rest from all thy enemies round about, and thou shalt dwell in safety." "And the Lord gave them rest round about, all their enemies gave He into their hand."*

XXXIII.

THE HEART-SEARCHING WORD OF GOD.

IV.—12. For the word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart.

13. And there is no creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

THEY have been earnest words with which the writer has been warning the Hebrews against unbelief and disobedience, hardening the heart and departing from God, and coming short of the promised rest. The solemn words of God's oath in Ps. xcv., *I have sworn in My wrath, they shall not enter into My rest*, have been repeated more than once to urge all to give diligence lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. He is about to close his warning. He does so by reminding them of the power of the word of God as the word of the omniscient One, of Him with whom we have to do, before whose eyes all things, our hearts and lives too, are naked and open. Let each student of the Epistle make a very personal application of the words. Let us take the oath of God concerning His rest, and the command to labour that we may enter in, home to our heart, and say whether we have indeed entered in. And if not, let us all the more yield ourselves to the word to search and try us: it will without fail do its blessed work in us, and prepare us for

following with profit the further teaching concerning our Lord Jesus.

For the word of God is living and active. At times it may appear as if the word effects so little. The word is like seed : everything depends on the treatment it receives. Some receive the word with the understanding : there it cannot be quickened. The word is meant for the heart, the will, the affections. The word must be submitted to, must be lived, must be acted out. When this is done it will manifest its living, quickening power. It is not we who have to make the word alive. When, in faith in the life and power there is in the word, the heart yields itself in humble submission and honest desire to its action, it will prove itself to be life and power.

And sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow. The first action of God's word is to wound, to cut, to divide. In the soul the natural life has its seat ; in the spirit the spiritual and divine. Sin has brought confusion and disorder ; the spirit is under the mastery of the soul, the natural life. God's word divides and separates ; wakens the spirit to a sense of its destiny as the faculty for the unseen and eternal ; brings the soul to a knowledge of itself as a captive to the power of sin. It cuts deep and sure, discovering the deep corruption of sin. As the knife of the surgeon, who seeks to heal, pierces even to the dividing of the joints and marrow, where it is needed, so the word penetrates all ; there is no part of the inner being to which it does not pass.

And quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart. It is specially with the heart that God's word deals. In chap. iii. we read of the hardened heart, the evil heart of unbelief, the erring heart. When the word heart occurs later in the

Epistle we shall find everything changed; we shall read of a heart in which God's law is written, of a true heart, a heart sprinkled with the blood, a heart stablished by grace (viii. 10, x. 22, xiii. 9). We have here the transition from the one to the other. God's appeal was, **To-day, if ye hear His voice, harden not your heart.** The heart that will but yield itself to be searched by God's word, to have its secret thoughts and intents discerned and judged by it, will be freed from its erring and unbelief, and quickened and cleansed, and made a living table on which the word is written by God Himself. Oh, to know how needful it is, but also how blessed, to yield our hearts to the judgment of the word.

And there is no creature that is not manifest in His sight. God's word bears the character of God Himself. He is the all-knowing and all-pervading: nothing can hide itself from the judgment of His word. If we will not have it judge us now, it will condemn us hereafter. **For all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.** Yes, the God with whom we have to do is He of whom we later read: "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." And again: "Our God is a consuming fire." It is this God who now pleads with us to enter into His rest.

Let each of us gladly yield ourselves to have to do with Him. If perhaps there be a secret consciousness that all is not right, that we are not giving diligence to enter into the rest, oh, let us beware of setting such thoughts aside. It is the first swelling of the living seed of the word within us. Do not regard that thought as coming from thyself, or from man who brings thee God's word; it is God waking thee out of sleep. Have to do with Him. Be willing that the word should show thee what is wrong. Be not afraid of its discovering to thee thy

sin and wretchedness. The knife of the physician wounds to heal. *The light that shows thee thy sin and wrong will surely lead thee out.* The word is living and will give thee life.

1. *God has spoken to us in His Son. This is the keynote of the Epistle. To-day, if ye hear His voice, harden not your heart: this is the keynote of this long and solemn warning. Let us hearken, let us yield to the word. As we deal with the word, so we deal with God. And so will God deal with us.*

2. *Judge of thy life not by what thy heart says, or the Church, or the so-called Christian world—but by what the word says. Let it have its way with thee: it will greatly bless thee.*

3. *All things are naked before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. Why, then, through indifference or discouragement, shut thine eyes to them? Oh, lay everything open before God, the God with whom we have to do, whether we will or not.*

4. *The word is living and active. Have great faith in its power. Be sure that the Holy Spirit, that the living Word, that God Himself works in it. The word ever points to the living God, who is present in it, and makes it a living word, in the heart that is seeking for life and for God.*

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