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HEROES OF FAITH

– HEB. 11:1-40. – JUNE 13. –

Golden Text: – "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." – V. 1.

IN preceding lessons we have been discussing faith and works as the subtle power for good or evil wielded by the tongue. In this lesson we more particularly examine faith to learn of its importance as a motive power to good thoughts, good words and good deeds.

The chapter under consideration is one of the masterpieces of holy writ. Indeed, the entire book of Hebrews occupies a very commanding position in the Bible. Some, indeed, have questioned its authorship, but to us there seems no room for doubt that it was written by St. Paul. It is marked throughout by his masterful logic, reverence and personal humility. It gives insight into the Divine Plan of the Ages, which fully comports with St. Paul's other epistles and which far transcends in this respect all the other writings of the Bible. It has been noted by some that its style is more lofty than that of some others of St. Paul's epistles; but this may [R4385 : page 134] be easily accounted for. Those other epistles, although full of sound reasoning and logic, are written in a simple and fatherly style for the general reader. This one was written particularly for the benefit of the other eleven apostles and other learned Hebrews who were slow to discern the change of dispensation. Naturally, therefore, it was St. Paul's masterpiece, because upon it he evidently expended the greater labor – demonstrating the typical character of the Jewish Dispensation and indicating the antitypes of the Gospel Dispensation, as well as some reaching well into the Millennium. The references in the thirteenth chapter to Timothy and the statement, "They of Italy

salute you," imply that St. Paul wrote this epistle from Rome, where he was in prison.

It should not be thought strange, however, that the Lord used this great but humble man, St. Paul, as his mouthpiece in presenting many of the "deep things" of the Divine Plan. His early education and his association with the Gentiles combined with his deep spirituality – and fulness of consecration to the Lord well qualified him to be, as was foretold, the Lord's "chosen vessel." Let us remember, too, the order stated: –

- (1) To bear my name to the Gentiles;
- (2) And before Kings;
- (3) And to Israel

St. Paul's missionary efforts were first directed of the Lord to the Gentiles. It was later on that he stood before King Agrippa and other notables of Palestine – still later that he was sent a prisoner to Rome, and to some extent doubtless bore witness there before the Court. Later through this epistle to the Hebrews God's message through this Prince of the Apostles did much for "Israelites indeed" who were trammled by the things of the Law Covenant and unable to disentangle themselves so as to rightly discern between the shadows in the types and the eternal verities antityped in the Christ, Head and Body, and his great work as the "antitypical Priest," "antitypical Prophet," "antitypical Judge" and "antitypical Mediator" of the New (Law) Covenant.

"THE FOUNDATION OF THINGS HOPED FOR"

Strictly speaking hope is unsubstantial – not a reality. It furnishes no genuine foundation – it is merely a hope. It will not sustain weight. But faith is more than hope. Faith implies a promise. And when a promise is made by the Almighty God, who

changes not and who is as omnipotent as he is unchangeable, then faith can firmly trust him, come what may. Hope finds a foundation – finds in faith a substance, because the faith rests upon a Divine promise. Whoever, therefore, has hope that is without such a Divine promise has a foundationless hope. Thus we see the heathen with hopes and fears full of uncertainty; yea, many Christians, hoping for certain things, have uncertainty, fear and doubt, because they have not faith. And they have not faith because they are hoping for something which God has not promised and to many of them the things which he has promised are not known, not understood, and, therefore, not a basis for faith, nor a foundation for hope. Realizing these things, how careful we should be that our hopes should not soar away to uncertain fantasy, but build solidly upon the faith foundation of Divine promise. Such as have this proper faith must of necessity be students of the Divine Word and the greater their studies the more their faith; and the greater their faith the more their studies of the promises.

The Apostle brings before our minds from the past a galaxy of faith heroes. He holds them up for our admiration, so that they shine and sparkle and excite our admiration and, we trust, stimulate us to similar faith-heroism. None of these enumerated by the Apostle was a heathen vagarist feeling after God and hoping against hope and soaring off in imagination. They were all positive, forceful characters, who knew in whom they believed and testified their faith by their obedience to God.

JOHN CALVIN DEFINES FAITH

"Eternal life is promised to us, but after death. We are told of a blessed resurrection, but we meantime become the prey of decay; we are promised righteousness, and yet sin dwells in us; we hear ourselves called blessed, and meantime are overwhelmed in infinite miseries; we **[R4386 : page 134]** are promised

affluence of all good things, but are all our days in hunger and thirst; God proclaims that he will be ever present to help us, but seems deaf to our cries. What would become of us if we leaned not to hope, and unless our mind, guided by the Word and the Spirit of God, emerged through the midst of the shades, above this present world?"

The Apostle briefly sums up the matter of the Christian's present lessons in faith, saying, "We walk by faith and not by sight." The more carefully we walk with God the more peaceful and the more joyful may be our Pilgrim journey towards the New Jerusalem. Outwardly the world, the flesh and the Adversary may harass us, but no grief, no tribulation can shake our inmost joy, if it be well founded upon the faith foundation of Divine assurances that we are children of God, in touch with the Infinite, beloved by our Redeemer, who assures us that "The Father himself loveth you," and the Apostle, that "all things shall work together for good to them that love God, to the called ones according to his purpose."

ST. PAUL'S ILLUSTRATIONS OF FAITH

"By it (faith) the Elders obtained a good report." Not all the Elders or ancients received a testimony that they pleased God – the "report" here referred to. No, the number who received this witness of God is comparatively small, and, in every instance, they were commended, not for perfect works, but for their faith. Their "faith was counted unto them for righteousness." The Divine intention was that those whose reverence for their Creator and obedience to his Word of promise shaped and moulded a human life under present conditions of imperfection and world-enmity to God thus implied that they had hearts so full of trust and the proper spirit that God could count it righteousness, count it perfection; because when in the resurrection such should receive perfect bodies under perfect conditions they would surely do the Divine will thoroughly. Hence their faith in God and his promises,

attested by imperfect works, justified them to that Divine fellowship which they will fully enjoy when the things hoped for shall be realized.

Thus in few words the Apostle summarizes what he afterwards proceeds to amplify respecting the Ancient Worthies. Then he begins a specification of faith. By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God – in obedience to Divine direction. We believe this equally true, whether we understand the seven days of creation mentioned in Genesis to be twenty-four hour days or to be longer epochs – seven-thousand-year days. The fact that Divine energy is exercised through various channels and agencies and that worlds are not spoken into existence in a moment of time matters not. While God could speak worlds into existence, as our Lord by his word turned water into wine, as a matter of fact this is not his usual proceeding, even as the fruit of the vine is usually produced by sunshine and rain falling upon the earth in which the vine has been planted. It is, nevertheless, a matter of faith with us that what we see was miraculously formed, even though gradually.

The Genesis account of creation does not go back to the forming of our world out of the elements, but begins with the statement, "Now the earth *was*, but was without form and void (empty)." As the seven days or epochs were consumed in a gradual lifting of mountains and sinking of oceans and bringing forth of fish and reptiles, fowl and beast and herbage, so we may well suppose that the formation of the earth itself was a gradual accomplishment of a still more remote period in which the **[R4386 : page 135]** various strata of the earth's surface were formed – limestone, shale, coal, etc. A godly man wrote, "Ever all things are Divinely directed, and in the uniformity of nature we see the work of God; or (else) we see about us that which is impossible, unthinkable, – power, wisdom, a plan without mind; infinite intelligence in a godless, scopeless world."

Well did the Psalmist write, "For the heavens declare the glory of the Lord. Day unto day uttereth speech and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no place where their voice is not heard" – by those who have a hearing ear.

"HE BEING DEAD YET SPEAKETH"

Particularizing the heroes of faith the Apostle begins with the first martyr, Abel, who is mentioned four times in the New Testament and three of the times particularly styled "the righteous." It was in his death that he spoke – in the fact that he died because of his devotion to the Lord. And has it not been so with many of God's saints – that their lives spoke more earnestly to their neighbors, friends and children after their death than while they lived? We know of many instances which have exemplified this. So Abel, the first martyr for righteousness in the world's history, yet speaks of his devotion to God and to principle.

Figuratively his blood is said to cry out to God for vengeance. Divine Justice is supposed eventually to see to it that every crime, every injustice committed shall somehow and somewhere receive a just recompense of punishment, whether in the present or in the future life. The Apostle calls our attention to the fact that the blood of Christ, on the contrary, speaks the very reverse, and, instead of calling for justice, vengeance, upon those who crucified Jesus and have persecuted the members of his Body, will eventually call for mercy. Our Lord was the great sin-offering for mankind, and all whom he accepts as members are specifically styled sacrificers – on behalf of sinners – to seal for Israel the New Covenant, through which all the families of the earth may receive the blessing of Divine forgiveness.

ENOCH WALKED WITH GOD BY FAITH

The testimony respecting Enoch was that his was a life of faith; that he walked with God and not with the world; that he

sought to walk righteously, in harmony with the Divine will. The testimony is that all that approach God must believe that he is (else they would not seek to approach him), and must believe that he is a rewarder of those that diligently seek him, else they would not deny themselves the things highly esteemed amongst men and seek at the cost of sacrifice to do the things pleasing to the heavenly Father. The record respecting Enoch is very meager, but we do know that he was a prophet and that through him the message came that Messiah would come eventually with ten thousand of his holy ones to execute righteousness, judgment, in the earth – to overthrow sin and set up Divine standards amongst men. "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all." – Jude 14,15.

Enoch not only prophesied this but he believed it and it stamped his entire character and made him separate from the world and drew him nearer to the Lord. Similarly faith in the coming of our Redeemer and the establishment of his Kingdom and the reward of his faithfulness and the judgment or trial of the world during the Millennium, in which every man will receive a just recompense of reward, whether good or bad – this faith still has a sanctifying power. Let us cultivate daily, hourly, the setting of our affections on things above, the things which God hath in store for them that love him, for which we pray, "Thy Kingdom come."

"HEIR OF RIGHTEOUSNESS"

Noah is the third of these faith heroes held up for our inspection. None of these was righteous in the absolute sense, for the Scriptures declare, "There is none righteous, no, not one." Of Noah it is written, "Now Noah was perfect in his generation" – he and his family were separate, free from the contamination of their time, from improper intercourse with the angels, which kept not their first estate. – Gen. 6:4.

Noah's faith in God was manifested in his building of the Ark in obedience to the Divine instruction that a great rain and flood of waters would come, which would destroy every living thing and wipe out the corrupted race. This was no slight test of faith either, for we are to remember that the Scriptures declare that up to that time there had been no rain on the earth. It was moistened by irrigation and by mists and fogs. "For the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth....But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground." – Gen. 2:5,6.

For a long period Noah's faith was tested even unto the entering of the Ark and the closing of the door before the rains descended and the floods came. Of him it is well declared, therefore, "He became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." God is pleased to call Noah and all others who thoroughly, genuinely trust him, friends. He recognizes them as separate and distinct from the world in general. Their faith is their distinguishing quality. Nevertheless a manifestation of the faith and the testing of it by works of obedience is required. Blessed is the man who has much and strong faith in the Lord, which will stand trial, testing; for subsequently will be granted to him a corresponding blessing. Nay, more than this, the Lord has guaranteed us that he "will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able" and he informs us that he knoweth our frame and remembereth that we are but dust.

HE LOOKED FOR THE CITY OF GOD

Next in the list of Ancient Worthies is Abraham, styled "The Father of the Faithful" – not because Noah and Enoch and Abel had not been faithful, but because with Abraham God started a faith family to whom were given many and great promises. That family became known as the nation of Israel, and latterly as Spiritual Israel. Again, Abraham was the father of the faithful, because while the heroes that preceded him exercised faith

in **[R4387 : page 135]** God, it was more along abstract lines, whereas the Divine revelation to Abraham was the Gospel, the good tidings in definite form – that in and through his Seed all the families of the earth should receive a blessing. Thus the Apostle declares that God preached in advance the Gospel to Abraham, and thus all who believe that Gospel, of which redemption by Messiah is the essential, all such are called "the children of Abraham," and he is spoken of as their father, the one through whom this Gospel hope was caused to descend.

But in still another sense Abraham was the Father of the Faithful: in the sense that he typified the heavenly Father, as Isaac typified our Lord Jesus, and as Isaac's bride, Rebecca, typified the elect Gospel Church.

Abraham's call of God was the result of his having faith in God and because he lived at an appropriate time for the Divine purposes to begin to be expressed. First his faith was tested by the Divine command that he leave his native country to wander up and down through Palestine as a shepherd, dwelling in tents without any fixed habitation, without any attempt to take possession of the land and to establish himself in it by building fortresses, etc. The promise was that in after times God would bring his posterity to this land and give it to them for a possession.

The promise went further and declared that if obedient the Lord's blessing would continue and that the seed of Abraham would become great and influential and that through it all nations would receive a blessing – and by implication all would come under its control. It required great faith to believe all this under the circumstances. And the test continued, as, year by year, Abraham's wife **[R4387 : page 136]** grew older, until the time of motherhood was long past. Still we read that Abraham's faith "wavered not."

Still later, after Isaac the son of promise had been born and had grown to manhood, the Lord tested the faith of this wonderful man by telling him to offer his son as a sacrifice. We are not to assume that this instruction was given by any mere impression of the mind, nor would it have been proper for Abraham to have accepted and acted upon anything short of an absolute demonstration of the Divine will in such a matter. The father love, the hopes of years, and apparently the Divine Word and Oath were all about to be wrecked. Yet his faith "faltered not," for he accounted that God was able to raise his son from the dead and that surely God would fulfil his every promise to which he had bound himself, not only by his Word, but also by his Oath.

While we exclaim, Wonderful faith! let us remember that this was the very quality of Abraham which specially commended him to the Almighty as his particular friend. And let us remember that if we would have the particular friendship and blessing and fellowship of the Lord this is the channel through which it is to be sought – the channel of faith, of trust, of obedience. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." The more faith we have the more pleasing we shall be in the Lord's sight and the more we may be used of him as channels of blessing to others – however imperfect we may be in other respects.

And here it is worthy of note that Abraham was not perfect in every respect. On two occasions he was reproved by heathen kings and shown in some respects to have less lofty ideals, in one particular at least, than they would have given him credit for. Nevertheless, God did not reject Abraham because of those imperfections. Indeed, possibly those imperfections were partially the result of Abraham's endeavor to hold on to the Divine promises and to do everything in his power to bring them to fruition. He knew that the Divine promise was that his child, who should be the channel of God's blessings to the world, would be the son of Sarah; hence he felt that he must not jeopardize either

her life or his own. This very desire to do nothing to interfere with the Divine promise may have had something to do with apparent weaknesses. – Gen. 20.

"THE CITY WITH FOUNDATIONS"

When the Apostle declares that Abraham "looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God," we must not think this to mean that in his journeying throughout Palestine, he expected some day to come upon a newly-built city of divine construction. Nor should we think with some others that Abraham was looking for the New Jerusalem to come down from heaven – a city built of literal precious stones with gates of literal pearls. No, Abraham knew nothing about that city, for nothing respecting it had yet been revealed.

A city, in olden times, stood for and represented a fortification, a government, a rule of authority. Abraham realized that the earth was full of sin and violence and out of harmony with God. He knew that Enoch, his ancestor, a man of God, had already prophetically declared that Messiah would come, the representative of Jehovah, and establish a Government, a Kingdom, a City of Righteousness. He longed for that righteous government and realized that its foundation of righteousness would be deeply laid, and that it would be an everlasting Kingdom. He knew that occasionally a monarch came to an earthly throne possessed of good intentions and partially able to exercise these, but that soon his throne, his kingdom, crumbled and passed to others.

Abraham, therefore, was not in sympathy with any in his day, nor since, in looking for an earthly kingdom, but he was looking beyond all these for the Kingdom of God's dear Son – the Millennial Kingdom. His eye of faith looked down and beheld Messiah and the exaltation of Israel and the blessing of all the families of the earth during the Millennial day. Our Lord Jesus

attested this, saying, "Abraham rejoiced to see my day (the Millennial day of Christ's reign) and he saw it and was glad." The Jews misunderstood our Lord to mean that he had been with Abraham. Others misunderstand him to mean that Abraham saw by faith his work of sacrifice. It is true that our Lord did appear to Abraham. It is true that in a certain sense Abraham foresaw the sacrifice of Christ in the typical sacrifice of Isaac, but it is also true that "the Day of Christ" is the Millennial day for the world's blessing and that it was that which Abraham saw and which gladdened his eye of faith.

We also see the same; and, sharing the same faith, we share the same joy and gladness of hope and expectancy. We indeed discern still more clearly than Abraham of what that city or Kingdom consists – that our Lord will be the great King, the Head over the Church his Body (his Members, his Bride) and that this Bride, the Lamb's Wife, is pictured symbolically in the New Jerusalem, whose foundation stones in glory will be "the twelve apostles of the Lamb." (Rev. 21:2,11-14.) We see more clearly than did Abraham (because guided by the holy Spirit through the Word) that the Ancient Worthies will be the earthly channels or agents through which this Heavenly City will send forth its blessings to Israel and to all the families of the earth. As it is written, "Ye shall *see* Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the Kingdom." Christ and his elect spiritual Bride will not be *seen* by men except as we now see our Lord, with the eye of faith.

"SHE JUDGED THE PROMISER FAITHFUL"

We are glad that Abraham's wife is specifically mentioned in this list of faith heroes. It helps us to thoroughly grasp the Apostle's thought that the distinction of sex does not operate to the disadvantage of either male or female in connection with the Divine promises. Perhaps it cannot be said that Sarah's faith did

not falter, but if it wavered for a time it certainly was recovered. Although she was past the age of motherhood she believed God. "She judged him faithful who had promised." Thus she was counted in with the noble list of whom the Apostle says, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises (the things promised), but having seen them afar off (with the eye of faith) and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were pilgrims and strangers in the earth."

Ah, yes, here is an important feature. It is not sufficient that we see glorious things of the Divine purpose, not sufficient that we believe them, not sufficient that we rejoice in them. We must be willing also to stand the test of being strangers and pilgrims in the present time. Those who cannot stand this test will not be accounted *worthy* of a share in those glorious things. Those Ancient Worthies, unsatisfied with any of the earthly prospects, sought the heavenly – not in the sense that *we* are seeking the heavenly, the spiritual things – in the sense of hoping for the completion of a change of nature from earthly to spiritual. They sought or desired the heavenly in the sense expressed in our Lord's prayer. They wished God's Kingdom to come, to be established in the earth – a heavenly rule of righteousness, a heavenly city or government. "Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he hath prepared for them a city" – he has planned such a heavenly Kingdom or dominion as they hoped for. That Kingdom, the Scriptures assure us, will eventually be the "desire of all nations." – Hag. 2:7.

ISAAC, JACOB, JOSEPH, MOSES

We pass along the aisles of the hall of faith-fame and note the pictures to which the Apostle calls our attention – of Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses. Each one has distinctions, characteristics and peculiar traits; but the quality of faith foundation in them all is that which makes them the people of God – those he is well pleased to

acknowledge and to whom he has already promised blessings in the future because of their faith. If anything would inspire God's people to a cultivation of the grace of faith [R4388 : page 137] it surely would be a walk through this portrait gallery of the Faith Heroes of the past.

Isaac showed his faith in the Abrahamic promise in that he conveyed with full confidence the Abrahamic blessing to his son Jacob; and none the less did he manifest faith in that promise when he gave a blessing also to Esau, realizing that under that original promise all the families of the earth to be blessed must include the family of Esau also. Jacob, exercised by faith in the promise made to his grandfather Abraham, manifested it in the ordering of all of the affairs of his life. Especially was it manifested on his death-bed when, after giving special blessings to the sons of Joseph, he worshipped God, leaning upon the headpost of his bed (translated staff in the common version). He recognized that the blessings that were to come to his family were all under Divine supervision and all included in the original promise made to Abraham. He further signified his faith by giving directions respecting his burial, that it should not be in Egypt, but in Canaan, the Land of Promise, which was Israel's by faith only.

Joseph gave many manifestations of his faith in God. Not only as a boy, but also while in Egypt he clearly demonstrated his faith in the promise of God that Israel was to be the blessed people through whom the blessing of the Lord would eventually, in co-operation with Messiah, reach all the nations of the world. By faith he gave direction that when Israel would leave the land of Egypt for Canaan they should not forget to take with them his bones. This does not necessarily imply that he thought the bones and the dust that had once constituted his entity would be necessary to God in his resurrection, but it does signify that he would thus testify his faith in a resurrection of the dead – his faith that he

would participate in the blessings that would come to Israel through the Messiah.

"THE REPROACH OF CHRIST GREATER RICHES"

In various ways did Moses testify his faith in God, but in none of them, perhaps, in a more remarkable fashion than in renouncing the privileges of the throne of Egypt, to which he was by adoption the heir. He chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of the Abrahamic promise than to dwell in luxury with the others. The people of Israel were the people of the Messiah, the people of Christ; hence in associating himself with them he was showing his esteem for the reproaches of the Anointed. Indeed, faith marks every step of the progress of Moses in Divine favor and service.

"He endured as seeing him who is invisible." How graphically this describes the matter and how true it is to-day as well as then that the endurance of trials and testings is only possible to those who have the eye of faith – to those who can see invisible things, things invisible to others: especially those who can see the invisible King of glory and his, as yet, invisible Kingdom! It was through faith also that he instituted with Israel the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood, though we have no reason to suppose that to any considerable extent it was possible for him to comprehend the real meaning of the passover and the antitypical significance of the blood and its sprinkling. His faith again was demonstrated in the passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea. His obedience matched his faith in all these matters.

While we stand in awe at the presence of so great faith, nevertheless we are encouraged thereby, because we realize that perfect faith is possible to us, although perfect works are not. Let us, then, hold fast by faith to the Divine promises and continue to walk by faith and not by sight, until, by and by, our change shall come and we shall enter into the realities of which now we have only the promises.

"BY FAITH THE HARLOT RAHAB"

It is incomprehensible to the world, and an astonishment to the saints, that in so many ways the Scriptures show that God is no respecter of persons – that he has not been choosing out exclusively the great or the wise or the good, but, on the contrary, has been choosing the sincere, the honest, the faithful, notwithstanding lowliness of birth, natural blemishes and imperfections. Truly does the Lord say, "My ways are not as your ways, nor my plans as your plans." And truly did our Redeemer say that publicans and harlots should go into the Kingdom in preference to faithless, self-righteous Pharisees. How glad we are that in God's providence the Apostle mentions Rahab and her faith, and how the Lord appreciated it and rewarded it! Surely there is a lesson here that should be well marked and inwardly digested by every one of us, not only for our own encouragement, but also for our guidance in respect to others. It is in full conformity with the Apostle's statement that God is choosing some of the "mean things of the world" in the present time to ultimately confound some of the greater and mightier and less faithful and obedient.

After giving us this wonderful galaxy the Apostle seems to realize that he has only well begun the list. He declares that time would fail him to mention other faithful characters which have had God's approval, such as Gideon, Barak, Sampson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets, who through faith won victories, wrought righteousness, secured promises, etc. In every case the faith was tried, sometimes by cruel mockings and scourgings and sometimes by bonds and imprisonments. Some were stoned. Some were sawn asunder. Some were homeless wanderers, desolate of earthly comforts, afflicted, tormented – of whom the world was not worthy.

"NOT PERFECTED WITHOUT US"

After pointing us to these glorious heroes the Apostle intimates that they are a different class from ourselves, the disciples of Christ of this Gospel Age. They all died in faith, not receiving the things promised them, because God had provided something still better for us and had arranged that they could not get their blessing until we should first have received ours.

What is this wonderful thing that belongs to us, separate and distinct from what belongs to them? We answer that our blessing, like theirs, is a faith blessing and reward and not a reward of works. Our blessing is *superior* to theirs because Jesus the Messiah has come, has given his life, has been highly exalted – and because we are now being called to membership in his Body, the Body of Christ, the Body of the great High Priest, the Body of the King of kings and Lord of lords, the Body of the Mediator between God and mankind. This matter of our call to another plane of being as the associates of the great Messiah is the "*hidden mystery*" not previously revealed. It is indeed "*some better thing for us*" – as much better as the heavenly inheritance is better than the earthly one. The Ancient Worthies, whose glorious career we have been considering and praising, must wait until the spirit-begotten class shall be born from the dead in the First Resurrection; then they shall receive their blessing of resurrection to the earthly plane, to be the earthly representatives of the Heavenly City, Heavenly Kingdom, and to share in a very particular way in the bestowment of God's blessing to Israel and to all the families of the earth.

They all through the fall were imperfect and hence "children of wrath, even as others," and so are we. But they and we are willingly and intentionally and at heart in accord with the Lord and his righteousness as the majority of mankind are not: hence they and we have been enabled to hear God's voice, speaking

peace and blessings to the willingly obedient. The Ancient Worthies responded to the extent of the privileges and blessings that were then tendered, proffered, available. And we of this Gospel Age have heard and responded to the still higher blessings and privileges of the high calling of this Gospel Age.

JUSTIFIED BY FAITH

The Ancient Worthies were not justified by a Covenant nor by a Mediator. Neither were we. Both they and **[R4388 : page 138]** we are justified by *faith*. They with ourselves come under the Abrahamic Covenant, which had no mediator and needed none, because made only with those of similar faith and heart desires to those of father Abraham. Although some of these heroes lived during the Jewish Age they were not justified by their Law Covenant but by their faith, for the Law Covenant made nothing perfect because of the inefficiency of its mediator; neither were any of them justified by Israel's New (Law) Covenant, for it has not yet been inaugurated.

The selection of the *members* of the Mediator of Israel's New Covenant is now in progress. The Anointed (Christ, head and members) is the Mediator of the New Covenant. The Law Covenant was between God and the one nation of Israel, which it was proposed should first be blessed and made holy and granted eternal life and then become the channel of blessing to all other nations who would come into harmony with God by an acceptance of Israelitish obligations. That Covenant failed because its mediator Moses was unable to give life to anyone except in a typical sense temporarily. The New Covenant is to be between God and Israel and the world – between God and men. The Mediator is spiritual, but he does not mediate between God and a spirit-begotten class. He is a mediator for *men* with God. Hence the Church has no mediator, needs none, for the Church is not composed of those who are of human nature, but only of those

who are begotten of the holy Spirit and members of the New Creation. These are Members of the Mediator that need no mediator. Because of their imperfections of the flesh, because they cannot do the things that they would, they need an Advocate, and they have one, "Jesus Christ the Righteous." [R4389 : page 138]

As soon as all the Body members of the great Mediator Christ shall have been called and chosen and found faithful; then will come the time for the blessing of the Ancient Worthies, to whom will come the privileges and blessings of Abraham's seed according to the flesh. Through them God's blessing of the New Covenant will proceed, during the Millennial Age, to every creature: granting to all the fullest opportunities of reconciliation and eternal life.

Throughout the Millennial Age those Ancient Worthies, as the earthly representatives of the heavenly Mediator, will in a sense be deprived of the bliss which would properly belong to those tried and found worthy. For a thousand years they will serve the imperfect race as rulers, instructors, uplifting priests, in contact with imperfect humanity, assisting them back to harmony with God and to all that was lost.

Is it asked what reward will be granted to these Ancient Worthies for the labor accomplished during the Millennium in the uplifting of the world? We reply that the privileges of such a labor for mankind would of itself be quite a sufficient reward; but certain things in the Scriptures seem to *imply* that these Ancient Worthies will at the close of the Millennium receive a still further blessing, namely, that they will be *changed* from human to spirit nature.

This is not distinctly stated in the Bible, but merely may be inferred. We have already seen that these faith heroes who preceded this Gospel Age were typically represented by "the red heifer" which was burned without the camp and whose ashes

served to sprinkle the unclean. We have also seen that as a class these were represented as members of the tribe of Levi. In other words, the household of faith, as typified in the tribe of Levi, was represented in times past as well as now. And it was from that "household of faith" that during this Gospel Age the antitypical priests are being called, chosen and found faithful. We have seen that all who will constitute the "Royal Priesthood" and all who will constitute the "great company" were originally represented in this "household of faith," typified by the Levites.

We have seen that the "little flock" and the "great company" both make consecration with a view to becoming sacrificing priests, but that only the few who have lived up to the terms and conditions of self-sacrifice will win the prize of membership in the High Priest's Body – membership in The Christ – membership in the Mediator of the New (Law) Covenant. Of the remainder, some will draw back completely and die the Second Death, while others, neither drawing back into perdition nor going forward into voluntary sacrifice, will be developed, proven, tested by the judgments of the Lord and be found worthy of life on the spirit plane as conquerors with palm branches, but not as "more than conquerors" with crowns. The justified who fail to go on to consecration pass back and become part of the world, while the consecrated who fail to go on to voluntary sacrifice nevertheless maintain their justification as New Creatures because in their testing they prove true.

Thus the "*great company*" of this Gospel Age and the *faith heroes* of preceding times still remain members of the "household of faith," the antitypical Levites; while the "little flock" of crown-wearers, belonging to the same household of antitypical Levites, passes on to the position of "royal priesthood" in glory. During the Millennium some of those antitypical Levites (the "great company") will serve on the spirit plane, while others, the Ancient Worthies, the faith heroes of ancient times, will be serving on the

earthly plane. What is more reasonable than to suppose that when their service upon the earthly plane shall have ended the latter class also will be received to the heavenly plane? This thought is confirmed by the fact that the typical Levites were *granted no inheritance in the land* – the earth. Thus in advance God intimated that they were to have no earthly inheritance – but a spiritual one.

In Revelation 20:7-9 we are informed that at the close of the Millennial Age Satan will be released from restraint and permitted to bring temptation upon the restored world; and that some of mankind under his false teaching will become rebellious against the Divine authority and "go up and encompass the camp of the saints and the beloved city." This camp of the saints seems to symbolically tell us that even at the close of the Millennial Age, when all mankind shall have reached *perfection of human nature* (or, failing to do so, shall have been destroyed in the Second Death), there will still be a distinction between this camp of the Holy Ones and mankind in general? Why the distinction when all are perfected? Because, we believe, the Divine intention was to show that even when mankind shall have reached perfection the Ancient Worthies will still in some sense be separate and apart from the remainder of the perfect race. It is at that time that we understand the Ancient Worthies will be changed from earthly to heavenly organism.

"SO GREAT A CLOUD OF WITNESSES"

The moral of our lesson is summed up in the first verse of Hebrews 12th chapter, in which the Apostle says, "Wherefore, seeing that we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses (martyrs), let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith."

What a grand exhortation! Let us heed it! Let us give faith its proper place. Let us feed our faith upon the Word of God and upon all the Divine providences of our experiences in life as they daily come to us! Let us thus follow in the footsteps of our great High Priest, the Captain of our salvation, our Leader, our Forerunner, whose sacrifice is the foundation for our faith and whose power in glory is to be its consummation, when he shall receive us unto himself in the First Resurrection, "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye."

