

Verse 1

**Wherefore** - This is an inference drawn from the examples produced in the preceding chapter, and on this account both should be read in connection.

**Compassed about** - Here is another allusion to the Olympic games: the agonistae, or contenders, were often greatly animated by the consideration that the eyes of the principal men of their country were fixed upon them; and by this they were induced to make the most extraordinary exertions.

**Cloud of witnesses** - Νεφος μαρτυρων . Both the Greeks and Latins frequently use the term cloud, to express a great number of persons or things; so in Euripides, Phoeniss. ver. 257: νεφος ασπιδων πυκνον , a dense cloud of shields; and Statius, Thebiad., lib. ix., ver. 120: *jaculantum nubes*, a cloud of spearmen. The same metaphor frequently occurs.

**Let us lay aside every weight** - As those who ran in the Olympic races would throw aside every thing that might impede them in their course; so Christians, professing to go to heaven, must throw aside every thing that might hinder them in their Christian race. Whatever weighs down our hearts or affections to earth and sense is to be carefully avoided; for no man, with the love of the world in his heart, can ever reach the kingdom of heaven.

**The sin which doth so easily beset** - Ευπεριστατον ἀμαρτιαν· The well circumstanced sin; that which has every thing in its favor, time, and place, and opportunity; the heart and the object; and a sin in which all these things frequently occur, and consequently the transgression is frequently committed. Ευπεριστατος is derived from ευ , well, περι , about, and ἵστημι , I stand; the sin that stands well, or is favorably situated, ever surrounding the person and soliciting his acquiescence. What we term the easily besetting sin is the sin of our constitution, the sin of our trade, that in which our worldly honor, secular profit, and sensual gratification are most frequently felt and consulted. Some understand it of original sin, as that by which we are enveloped in body, soul, and spirit. Whatever it may be, the word gives us to understand that it is what meets us at every turn; that it is always presenting itself to us; that as a pair of compasses describe a circle by the revolution of one leg, while the other is at rest in the center, so this, springing from that point of corruption within, called the carnal mind, surrounds us in every place; we are bounded by it, and often hemmed in on every side; it is a circular, well fortified wall, over which we must leap, or through which we must break. The man who is addicted to a particular species of sin (for every sinner has his way) is represented as a prisoner in this strong fortress.

In laying aside the weight, there is an allusion to the long garments worn in the eastern countries, which, if not laid aside or tucked up in the girdle, would greatly incommode the traveler, and utterly prevent a man from running a race. The easily besetting sin of the Hebrews was an aptness to be drawn aside from their attachment to the Gospel, for fear of persecution.

**Let us run with patience the race** - Τρεχωμεν τον προκειμενον ἡμιν αγωνα· Let us start, run on, and continue running, till we get to the goal. This figure is a favourite among the Greek writers; so Euripides, Alcest., ver. 489: Ου τον δ ' αγωνα πρωτον αν δραμοιμ ' εγω· This is not the first race that I shall run. Id. Iphig. in Aulid., ver. 1456: Δεινους αγωνας δια σε κεινον δει

δραμειν· He must run a hard race for thee. This is a race which is of infinite moment to us: the prize is ineffably great; and, if we lose it, it is not a simple loss, for the whole soul perishes.

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Verse 2

**Looking unto Jesus** - Αφορωντες· Looking off and on, or from and to; looking off or from the world and all secular concerns to Jesus and all the spiritual and heavenly things connected with him. This is still an allusion to the Grecian games: those who ran were to keep their eyes fixed on the mark of the prize; they must keep the goal in view. The exhortation implies,

1. That they should place all their hope and confidence in Christ, as their sole helper in this race of faith.

2. That they should consider him their leader in this contest and imitate his example.

**The author and finisher of - faith** - Αρχηγος , translated here author, signifies, in general, captain or leader, or the first inventor of a thing; see Hebrews 2:10. But the reference seems to be here to the βραβευς , or judge in the games, whose business it was to admit the contenders, and to give the prize to the conqueror. Jesus is here represented as this officer; every Christian is a contender in this race of life, and for eternal life. The heavenly course is begun under Jesus; and under him it is completed. He is the finisher, by awarding the prize to them that are faithful unto death. Thus he is the author or the judge under whom, and by whose permission and direction, according to the rules of the heavenly race, they are permitted to enter the lists, and commence the race, and he is the finisher, τελιωτης , the perfecter, by awarding and giving the prize which consummates the combatants at the end of the race.

**Who, for the joy that was set before him** - The joy of fulfilling the will of the Father, Psalm 40:6-8, etc., in tasting death for every man; and having endured the cross and despised the shame of this ignominious death, He is set down at the right hand of God, ever appearing in the presence of God for us, and continuing his exhibition of himself as our Sacrifice, and his intercession as our Mediator. See the notes on Hebrews 10:5, etc. There are different other explanations given of this clause, but I think that here offered is the most natural. It never can, in any sense, be said of Jesus that he endured the cross, etc., in the prospect of gaining an everlasting glory; when he had the fullness of that glory with the Father before the world began; John 17:5.

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Verse 3

**For consider him** - Αναλογισασθε - ινα μη καμητε, ταις ψυχαις - εκλυμενοι· Attentively observe and analyze every part of his conduct, enter into his spirit, examine his motives and object, and remember that, as he acted, ye are called to act; he will furnish you with the same Spirit, and will support you with the same strength. He bore a continual opposition of sinners against himself; but he conquered by meekness, patience, and perseverance: he has left you an

example that ye should follow his steps. If ye trust in him, ye shall receive strength; therefore, howsoever great your opposition may be, ye shall not be weary: if ye confide in and attentively look to him, ye shall have continual courage to go on, and never faint in your minds.

Here is a continued allusion to the contenders in the Grecian games, who, when exhausted in bodily strength and courage, yielded the palm to their opponents, and were said *καμνείν*, to be weary or exhausted; *εκλυεσθαι*, to be dissolved, disheartened, or to have lost all bravery and courage.

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#### Verse 4

**Ye have not yet resisted unto blood** - Many of those already mentioned were martyrs for the truth; they persevered unto death, and lost their lives in bearing testimony to the truth. Though you have had opposition and persecution, yet you have not been called, in bearing your testimony against sin and sinners, to seal the truth with your blood.

**Striving against sin** - Προς την άμαρτιαν ανταγωνι ζομενοι· An allusion to boxing at the Grecian games. In the former passages the apostle principally refers to the foot races.

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#### Verse 5

**And ye have forgotten** - Or, have ye forgotten the exhortation? This quotation is made from Proverbs 3:11, Proverbs 3:12, and shows that the address there, which at first sight appears to be from Solomon to his son, or from some fatherly man to a person in affliction, is properly from God himself to any person in persecution, affliction, or distress.

**Despise not thou the chastening** - Μη ολιγωρει παιδειας Κυριου· Do not neglect the correction of the Lord. That man neglects correction, and profits not by it, who does not see the hand of God in it; or, in other words, does not fear the rod and him who hath appointed it, and, consequently, does not humble himself under the mighty hand of God, deplore his sin, deprecate Divine judgment, and pray for mercy.

**Nor faint** - Do not be discouraged nor despair, for the reasons immediately alleged.

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#### Verse 6

**For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth** - Here is the reason why we should neither neglect correction, nor faint under it: it is a proof of the fatherly love of God Almighty, and shows his most gracious designs towards us; from which we may be fully convinced that the affliction will prove the means of good to our souls, if we make a proper use of it.

**And scourgeth every son whom he receiveth** - Μαστιγοι δε παντα υιον, ον παραδεχεται . This is a quotation, literatim from the Septuagint, of Proverbs 3:12, of which place our version is:

Even as the father the son in whom he delighteth. But, howsoever near this may appear to be the Hebrew, it bears scarcely any affinity to the apostle's words. The Hebrew text is as follows: ירצה את-בן וכאב (uchab eth) -(ben yirtseh). Now, וכאב may be a noun, compounded of the conjunction ו (vau), "and," the comparative particle כ (ke), "as" or "like;" and אב (ab), "a father:" or it may be the third person preterite kal of כאב (caab), "he spoiled, wasted, marred, ulcerated," compounded with the conjunction ו (vau), "and." And in this sense the Septuagint most evidently understood it; and it is so understood by the Arabic; and both readings seem to be combined by the Syriac and Chaldee versions. And as to רצה (ratsah), one of its prime meanings is to accept, to receive graciously, to take into favor; the translation, therefore, of the Septuagint and apostle is perfectly consonant to the Hebrew text, and our version of Proverbs 3:12 is wrong.

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#### Verse 7

**If ye endure chastening** - If ye submit to his authority, humble yourselves under his hand, and pray for his blessing, you will find that he deals with you as beloved children, correcting you that he may make you partakers of his holiness.

**God dealeth with you as with sons** - He acknowledges by this that you belong to the family, and that he, as your Father, has you under proper discipline. It is a maxim among the Jewish rabbins that "the love which is not conjoined with reproof is not genuine."

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#### Verse 8

**Then are ye bastards** - This proceeds on the general fact, that bastards are neglected in their manners and education; the fathers of such, feeling little affection for, or obligation to regard, their spurious issue. But all that are legitimate children are partakers of chastisement or discipline; for the original word παιδεία does not imply stripes and punishments, but the whole discipline of a child, both at home and at school.

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#### Verse 9

**We have had fathers of our flesh** - The fathers of our flesh, i.e. our natural parents, were correctors; and we revered them, notwithstanding their corrections often arose from whim or caprice: but shall we not rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits; to him from whom we have received both body and soul; who is our Creator, Preserver, and Supporter; to whom both we and our parents owe our life and our blessings; and who corrects us only for our profit; that we may live and be partakers of his holiness? The apostle in asking, Shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live? alludes to the punishment of the stubborn and rebellious son, Deuteronomy 21:18-21: "If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, who will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them; then shall his father and mother lay hold on him and bring him

to the elders of the city, and they shall say, This our son is stubborn and rebellious; he will not obey our voice: and all the men of the city shall stone him with stones that he Die.” Had he been subject to his earthly parents, he would have lived; because not subject, he dies. If we be subject to our heavenly Father, we shall Live, and be partakers of his holiness; if not, we shall Die, and be treated as bastards and not sons. This is the sum of the apostle’s meaning; and the fact and the law to which he alludes.

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Verse 10

**For - a few days** - The chastisement of our earthly parents lasted only a short time; that of our heavenly Father will also be but a short time, if we submit: and as our parents ceased to correct when we learned obedience; so will our heavenly Father when the end for which he sent the chastisement is accomplished. God delights not in the rod; judgment is his strange work.

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Verse 11

**No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous** - Neither correction, wholesome restraint, domestic regulations, nor gymnastic discipline, are pleasant to them that are thus exercised; but it is by these means that obedient children, scholars, and great men are made. And it is by God’s discipline that Christians are made. He who does not bear the yoke of Christ is good for nothing to others, and never gains rest to his own soul.

**The peaceable fruit of righteousness** - i.e. The joyous, prosperous fruits; those fruits by which we gain much, and through which we are made happy.

**Exercised thereby** - Γεγυμνασμενοις: To the trained. There is still an allusion to the Grecian games; and in the word before us to those gymnastic exercises by which the candidates for the prizes were trained to the different kinds of exercises in which they were to contend when the games were publicly opened.

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Verse 12

**Wherefore lift up the hands** - The apostle refers to Isaiah 35:3. The words are an address to persons almost worn out with sickness and fatigue, whose hands hang down, whose knees shake, and who are totally discouraged. These are exhorted to exert themselves, and take courage, with the assurance that they shall infallibly conquer if they persevere.

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Verse 13

**Make straight paths for your feet** - That is, Take the straight path that is before you, do not go in crooked or rough ways, where are stones, briars, and thorns, by which you will be inevitably

lamed, and so totally prevented from proceeding in the way; whereas, if you go in the even, proper path, though you have been wounded by getting into a wrong way, that which was wounded will be healed by moderate, equal exercise, all impediments being removed. The application of all this to a correct, holy deportment in religious life, is both natural and easy.

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Verse 14

**Follow peace with all men** - Cultivate, as far as you possibly can, a good understanding, both with Jews and Gentiles. Ειρηνην διωκετε , pursue peace with the same care, attention, and diligence, as beasts do their game; follow it through all places; trace it through all winding circumstances; and have it with all men, if you can with a safe conscience.

**And holiness** - Τον αγιασμον· That state of continual sanctification, that life of purity and detachment from the world and all its lusts, without which detachment and sanctity no man shall see the Lord - shall never enjoy his presence in the world of blessedness. To see God, in the Hebrew phrase, is to enjoy him; and without holiness of heart and life this is impossible. No soul can be fit for heaven that has not suitable dispositions for the place.

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Verse 15

**Looking diligently** - Επισκοπουντες· Looking about, over, and upon; being constantly on your guard.

**Lest any man fail of the grace of God** - Μη τις υστερων απο της χαριτος του Θεου· Lest any person should come behind, or fall off from, this grace or Gift of God; this state of salvation, viz. the Gospel system or Christianity; for this is most evidently the meaning of the apostle. It is not the falling from a work of grace in their own souls, but from the Gospel, to apostatize from which they had now many temptations; and to guard them against this, the whole epistle was written.

**Lest any root of bitterness springing up** - A root of bitterness signifies a poisonous plant. The Hebrews call every species of poison a bitter, and with considerable propriety, as most plants are poisonous in proportion to the quantum of the bitter principle they possess. The root of bitterness is here used metaphorically for a bad man, or a man holding unsound doctrines, and endeavoring to spread them in the Church.

**Trouble you** - This alludes to the effects of poison taken into the body: the whole animal system is disturbed, sometimes violent retchings, great disturbances through the whole alimentary canal, together with the most fatal changes in the whole sanguineous system, are the consequences of poison taken into the stomach. The blood itself (the principle, under God, of life) becomes putrescent; and probably to this the intelligent apostle alludes when he says, and thereby many be defiled, μιανθωσι , corrupted or contaminated.

Bad example and false teaching have corrupted thousands, and are still making desolation in the world and in the Church.

Verse 16

**Lest there be any fornicator** - Any licentious person who would turn the Gospel of the grace of God into lasciviousness.

**Or profane person, as Esau** - It is not intimated that Esau was a fornicator; and the disjunctive η , or, separates the profane person from the fornicator. And Esau is here termed profane, because he so far disregarded the spiritual advantages connected with his rights of primogeniture, that he alienated the whole for a single mess of pottage. See the note on Genesis 25:34. The word βεβηλος , which we translate profane, is compounded of βε , which in composition has a negative signification, and βηλος , the threshold of a temple or sacred edifice; and was applied to those who were not initiated into the sacred mysteries, or who were despisers of sacred things, and consequently were to be denied admittance to the temple, and were not permitted to assist at holy rites. Indeed, among the Greeks βεβηλος signified any thing or person which was not consecrated to the gods. Hence, in the opening of their worship, they were accustomed to proclaim,  
*Procul, O procul, este profani!*  
*Virg.*  
“Hence! O hence! ye profane.”

And,  
*Odi profanum vulgus, et arceo.*  
*Hor.*  
“I abominate the profane vulgus, and drive them from the temple.”

The Latin *profanus*, from which we have our word, is compounded of *procul a fano*, “far from the temple,” properly an irreligious man.

**Sold his birthright** - The first-born, in patriarchal times,

1. Had a right to the priesthood, Exodus 22:29.

2. And a double portion of all the father’s possessions, Deuteronomy 21:17.

3. And was lord over his brethren, Genesis 27:29, Genesis 27:37; Genesis 49:3.

4. And in the family of Abraham the first-born was the very source whence the Messiah as the Redeemer of the world, and the Church of God, were to spring. Farther,

5. The first-born had the right of conveying especial blessings and privileges when he came to die. See the case of Isaac and his two sons, Jacob and Esau, in the history to which the apostle alludes, Genesis 27; and that of Jacob and his twelve sons, Genesis 49;

In short, the rights of primogeniture were among the most noble, honorable, and spiritual in the ancient world.

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Verse 17

**When he would have inherited the blessing** - When he wished to have the lordship over the whole family conveyed to him, and sought it earnestly with tears, he found no place for a change in his father's mind and counsel, who now perceived that it was the will of God that Jacob should be made lord of all.

**Repentance** - Here μετανοια is not to be taken in a theological sense, as implying contrition for sin, but merely change of mind or purpose; nor does the word refer here to Esau at all, but to his father, whom Esau could not, with all his tears and entreaties, persuade to reverse what he had done. I have blessed him, said he, yea, and he must be blessed; I cannot reverse it now. See the whole of this transaction largely considered and explained, See the notes on Genesis 25:29, etc., and see Genesis 27:1 (note), etc. Nothing spoken here by the apostle, nor in the history in Genesis to which he refers, concerns the eternal state of either of the two brothers. The use made of the transaction by the apostle is of great importance: Take heed lest, by apostatizing from the Gospel, ye forfeit all right and title to the heavenly birthright, and never again be able to retrieve it; because they who reject the Gospel reject the only means of salvation.

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Verses 18-21

**For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched** - I believe the words ψηλαφωμενω ορει should be translated to a palpable or material mountain; for that it was not a mountain that on this occasion might be touched, the history, Exodus 19:12, Exodus 19:13, shows; and the apostle himself, in Hebrews 12:20, confirms. It is called here a palpable or material mount, to distinguish it from that spiritual mount Sion, of which the apostle is speaking. Some contend that it should be translated *tacto de caelo*, thunder-struck; this sense would agree well enough with the scope of the place. The apostle's design is to show that the dispensation of the law engendered terror; that it was most awful and exclusive; that it belonged only to the Jewish people; and that, even to them, it was so terrible that they could not endure that which was commanded, and entreated that God would not communicate with them in his own person, but by the ministry of Moses: and even to Moses, who held the highest intimacy with Jehovah, the revealed glories, the burning fire, the blackness, the darkness, the tempest, the loud-sounding trumpet, and the voice of words, were so terrible that he said, I exceedingly fear and tremble.

These were the things which were exhibited on that material mountain; but the Gospel dispensation is one grand, copious, and interesting display of the infinite love of God. It is all encouragement; breathes nothing but mercy; is not an exclusive system; embraces the whole human race; has Jesus, the sinner's friend, for its mediator; is ratified by his blood; and is suited, most gloriously suited, to all the wants and wishes of every soul of man.

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Verse 22



**But ye are come unto mount Sion** - In order to enter fully into the apostle's meaning, we must observe,

1. That the Church, which is called here the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and mount Sion, is represented under the notion of a City.

2. That the great assembly of believers in Christ is here opposed to the congregation of the Israelites assembled at Mount Sinai.

3. That the innumerable company of angels is here opposed to, those angels by whom the law was ushered in, Acts 7:53; Galatians 3:19.

4. That the Gospel first-born, whose names are written in heaven, are here opposed to the enrolled first-born among the Israelites, Exodus 24:5, Exodus 19:22.

5. That the mediator of the new covenant, the Lord Jesus, is here opposed to Moses, the mediator of the old.

6. And that the blood of sprinkling, of Christ, our High Priest, refers to the act of Moses, Exodus 24:8: "And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words."

1. The description in these verses does not refer to a heavenly state; for the terrible nature of the Mosaic dispensation is never opposed to heaven or life eternal, but to the economy of the New Testament.

2. In heaven there is no need of a mediator, or sprinkling of blood; but these are mentioned in the state which the apostle describes.

**The heavenly Jerusalem** - This phrase means the Church of the New Testament, as Schoettgen has amply proved in his dissertation on this subject.

**To an innumerable company of angels** - Μυριασιν αγγελων· To myriads, tens of thousands, of angels. These are represented as the attendants upon God, when he manifests himself in any external manner to mankind. When he gave the law at Mount Sinai, it is intimated that myriads of these holy beings attended him. "The chariots of the Lord are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels; the Lord is among them as in Sinai, in the holy place;" Psalm 68:17. And when he shall come to judge the world, he will be attended with a similar company. "Thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him;" Daniel 7:10. In both these cases, as in several others, these seem to be, speaking after the manner of men, the body guard of the Almighty. Though angels make a part of the inhabitants of the New Jerusalem, yet they belong also to the Church below. Christ has in some sort incorporated them with his followers, for "they are all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them that shall be heirs of salvation," and they are all ever considered as making a part of God's subjects.

**To the general assembly** - Πανηγυρει . This word is joined to the preceding by some of the best MSS., and is quoted in connection by several of the fathers: Ye are come - to the general assembly of innumerable angels; and this is probably the true connection.

The word πανηγυρις is compounded of παν , all, and αγωρις , an assembly; and means, particularly, an assembly collected on festive occasions. It is applied to the assembly of the Grecian states at their national games, Olympic, Isthmian, etc.; and hence a speech pronounced in favor of any person at such festive assemblies was called πανηγυρικός λογος , a panegyric discourse; and hence our word panegyric.

**The first-born** - Those who first received the Gospel of Christ, and who are elsewhere termed the first fruits: this is spoken in allusion to the first-born among the Israelites, who were all considered as the Lord's property, and were dedicated to him. The Jews gave the title בכור (bechor), first-born, to those who were very eminent or excellent; what we would term the head or top of his kin. The Church of the first-born is the assembly of the most excellent.

**Which are written in heaven** - Who are enrolled as citizens of the New Jerusalem, and are entitled to all the rights, privileges, and immunities of the Church here, and of heaven above. This is spoken in allusion to the custom of enrolling or writing on tables, etc., the names of all the citizens of a particular city; and all those thus registered were considered as having a right to live there, and to enjoy all its privileges. All genuine believers are denizens of heaven. That is their country, and there they have their rights, etc. And every member of Christ has a right to, and can demand, every ordinance in the Church of his Redeemer; and wo to him who attempts to prevent them!

**God the Judge of all** - The supreme God is ever present in this general assembly: to him they are all gathered; by him they are admitted to all those rights, etc.; under his inspection they continue to act; and it is he alone who erases from the register those who act unworthily of their citizenship. Judge here is to be taken in the Jewish use of the term, i.e. one who exercises sovereign rule and authority.

**The spirits of just men made perfect** - We cannot understand these terms without the assistance of Jewish phraseology. The Jews divide mankind into three classes: -

1. The Just Perfect, גמורים צדיקים (tsaddikim gemurim).
  2. The wicked perfect, גמורים רשעים (reshaim gemurim).
  3. Those between both, בינוניים (beinoniyim).
1. The just perfect are those,
    1. Who have conquered all brutal appetites and gross passions.
    2. Who have stood in the time of strong temptation.
    3. Who give alms with a sincere heart.
    4. Who worship the true God only.
    5. Who are not invidious.

6. Those from whom God has taken הרע יצר (yetser hara), evil concupiscence, and given טוב יצר (yetser tob), the good principle.

2. The wicked perfect are those,

1. Who never repent.

2. They receive their portion in this life, because they can have none in the life to come, and are under the influence of הרע יצר (yetser hara), the evil principle.

3. The intermediate are those who are influenced partly by the evil principle, and partly by the good. - See Schoettgen.

In several parts of this epistle τελειος, the just man, signifies one who has a full knowledge of the Christian system, who is justified and saved by Christ Jesus; and the τετελειωμενοι are the adult Christians, who are opposed to the νηπιου or babes in knowledge and grace. See Hebrews 5:12-14; Hebrews 8:11; and Galatians 4:1-3. The spirits of the just men made perfect, or the righteous perfect, are the full grown Christians; those who are justified by the blood and sanctified by the Spirit of Christ. Being come to such, implies that spiritual union which the disciples of Christ have with each other, and which they possess how far soever separate; for they are all joined in one spirit, Ephesians 2:18; they are in the unity of the spirit, Ephesians 4:3, Ephesians 4:4; and of one soul, Acts 4:32. This is a unity which was never possessed even by the Jews themselves in their best state; it is peculiar to real Christianity: as to nominal Christianity, wars and desolations between man and his fellows are quite consistent with its spirit. See at the end of the chapter, (note).

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Verse 24

**And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant** - The old covenant and its mediator, Moses, are passed away. See Hebrews 8:13. The new covenant, i.e. the Gospel, is now in force, and will be to the end of the world; and Jesus, the Son of God, the brightness of the Father's glory, the Maker and Preserver of all things, the Savior and the Judge of all men, is its mediator. Both the covenant and its mediator are infinitely superior to those of the Jews, and they are very properly set down here among the superior benefits and glories of Christianity.

**To the blood of sprinkling** - This is an allusion, as was before observed, to the sprinkling of the blood of the covenant sacrifice upon the people, when that covenant was made upon Mount Sinai; to the sprinkling of the blood of the sin-offerings before the mercy-seat; and probably to the sprinkling of the blood of the paschal lamb on their houses, to prevent their destruction by the destroying angel. But all these sprinklings were partial and inefficacious, and had no meaning but as they referred to this: the blood of sprinkling under the new covenant is ever ready; all may have it applied; it continues through ages; and is the highest glory of Christianity, because by it we draw nigh to God, and through it get our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience; and, in a word, have an entrance unto the holiest by the blood of Jesus.

**Better things than that of Abel** - God accepted Abel's sacrifice, and, was well pleased with it; for Abel was a righteous man, and offered his sacrifice by faith in the great promise. But the blood of Christ's sacrifice was infinitely more precious than the blood of Abel's sacrifice, as Jesus is infinitely greater than Abel; and the blood of Christ avails for the sins of the whole world, whereas the blood of Abel's sacrifice could avail only for himself.

Many have supposed that the blood of Abel means here the blood that was shed by Cain in the murder of this holy man, and that the blood of Jesus speaks better things than it does, because the blood of Abel called for vengeance, but the blood of Christ for pardon; this interpretation reflects little credit on the understanding of the apostle. To say that the blood of Christ spoke better things than that of Abel is saying little indeed; it might speak very little good to any soul of man, and yet speak better things than that blood of Abel which spoke no kind of good to any human creature, and only called for vengeance against him that shed it. The truth is, the sacrifice offered by Abel is that which is intended; that, as we have already seen, was pleasing in the sight of God, and was accepted in behalf of him who offered it: but the blood of Christ is infinitely more acceptable with God; it was shed for the whole human race, and cleanses all who believe from all unrighteousness.

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Verse 25

**See** - ΒΛΕΠΕΤΕ· Take heed, that ye refuse not him - the Lord Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, who now speaketh from heaven, by his Gospel, to the Jews and to the Gentiles, having in his incarnation come down from God.

**Him that spake on earth** - Moses, who spoke on the part of God to the Hebrews, every transgression of whose word received a just recompense of reward, none being permitted to escape punishment; consequently, if ye turn away from Christ, who speaks to you from heaven, you may expect a much sorer punishment, the offense against God being so much the more heinous, as the privileges slighted are more important and glorious.

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Verse 26

**Whose voice then shook the earth** - Namely, at the giving of the law on Mount Sinai; and from this it seems that it was the voice of Jesus that then shook the earth, and that it was he who came down on the mount. But others refer this simply to God the Father giving the law.

**Not the earth only, but also heaven** - Probably referring to the approaching destruction of Jerusalem, and the total abolition of the political and ecclesiastical constitution of the Jews; the one being signified by the earth, the other by heaven; for the Jewish state and worship are frequently thus termed in the prophetic writings. And this seems to be the apostle's meaning, as he evidently refers to Haggai 2:6, where this event is predicted. It may also remotely refer to the final dissolution of all things.

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Verse 27

**The removing of those things that are shaken** - The whole of the Jewish polity, which had been in a shaken state from the time that Judea had fallen under the power of the Romans.

**As of things that are made** - That is, subjects intended to last only for a time. God never designed that the Jewish religion should become general, nor be permanent.

**Those things which cannot be shaken** - The whole Gospel system, which cannot be moved by the power of man.

**May remain** - Be permanent; God designing that this shall be the last dispensation of his grace and mercy, and that it shall continue till the earth and the heavens are no more.

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Verse 28

**We receiving a kingdom** - The Gospel dispensation, frequently termed the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven, because in it God reigns among men, and he reigns in the hearts of them that believe, and his kingdom is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

**Which cannot be moved** - Which never can fail, because it is the last dispensation.

**Let us have grace** - Εχωμεν χαριν· Let us have, keep, or hold fast, the benefit or gift, that is, the heavenly kingdom which God has given us. This is the meaning of the word, 2 Corinthians 8:4, and is so rendered by our translators; and it is only by this heavenly gift of the Gospel that we can serve God acceptably, for he can be pleased with no service that is not performed according to the Gospel of his Son.

If we prefer the common meaning of the word grace it comes to the same thing; without the grace - the especial succor and influence of Christ, we cannot serve, λατρευωμεν, pay religious worship to God; for he receives no burnt-offering that is not kindled by fire from his own altar.

**Acceptably** - Ευαρεστωσ; In such a way as to please him well. And the offering, with which he is well pleased, he will graciously accept; and if he accept our service, his Spirit will testify in our conscience that our ways please him. When Abel sacrifices, God is well pleased; where Cain offers, there is no approbation.

**Reverence** - Αιδουσ; With shamefacedness or modesty.

**Godly fear** - Ευλαβειασ; Religious fear. We have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, but let that boldness be ever tempered with modesty and religious fear; for we should never forget that we have sinned, and that God is a consuming fire. Instead of αιδουσ και ευλαβειασ, modesty and religious fear, ACD\*, several others, with the Slavonic and Chrysostom, have ευλαβειασ και δεουσ, and others have φοβου και τρομου, fear and trembling; but the sense is nearly the same.

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Verse 29

**For our God is a consuming fire** - The apostle quotes Deuteronomy 4:24, and by doing so he teaches us this great truth, that sin under the Gospel is as abominable in God's sight as it was under the law; and that the man who does not labor to serve God with the principle and in the way already prescribed, will find that fire to consume him which would otherwise have consumed his sin.