

## HEBREWS *Fear to Faith*

### STUDY 13

# Together

## A. Let us draw near [10:19-22]

### 10:19,20 Through the blood of Jesus what should we have?

[1] That which was under the Law a privilege of one only, once a year, is now the privilege of all Christians at all times. **B.F. Westcott** *Hebrews* p. 320

### 10:21 What additional assurance of forgiveness can we have? (7:24,25; 1 John 2:1,2)

### 10:22 Why can we draw near continually? (Eph.3:12)

[2] We are to “draw near,” continually making use of the entrance which is ours, not standing aloof, as was the case under the old covenant (Num. 18:22). **W.H. Griffith Thomas** *Let Us Go On* p.133

[3] The two phrases appear to contain allusions to the Christian sacraments. That to the Eucharist is veiled: that is Baptism is unquestionable. **B.F. Westcott** *Hebrews* p. 325

## B. Our duty to the assembly [10:23-25]

### 10:23,24 An often-overlooked aspect of ‘confession’! (Matt.10:32,33; 1 John 2:23)

[4] The phrase ‘confession of hope’ is remarkable. The Apostle substitutes for the more general word ‘faith,’ that word which gives distinctness to special objects of faith to be realised in the future. Hope gives a definite shape to the absolute confidence of Faith. Faith reposes completely in the love of God: Hope vividly anticipates that God will fulfill His promises in a particular way. The conception of Hope naturally occupies a prominent place in an Epistle directed to meet despondency. ... The well-being of each believer is bound up with the well-being of the whole body ... There is an intimate connexion between considering Jesus and considering one another. We see one another in Him. **B.F. Westcott** *Hebrews* p. 325, 326

“Let us hold fast  
the confession of  
our hope ...”

[5] [10:24] The use of the word “provoke” is a beautiful paradox. It expresses the Greek word, which is transliterated in English by “paroxysm.” This is the only “exasperation” which is permissible, and it is impossible to have too much of it. We are to “exasperate” our fellow-Christians in the sense of “provoking” or inciting them to “love and good works.” ... While we are justified in relation to Christ solitarily and alone, we are sanctified in connection with other Christians, and we shall never know what it is to be a “saint” unless we make much of “the communion of saints.” Dr. Mackintosh has well pointed out that the word saint never occurs in the singular, and that “invariably it is plural” (*The Divine Initiative*, p. 100). **W.H. Griffith Thomas** *Let Us Go On* p.134

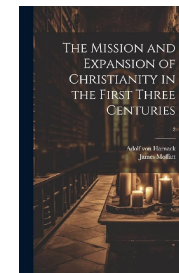
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### 10:25 What is the primary reason for Christian fellowship? (3:12,13)

[6] [10:24,25] ... here love is provoked in the sense of being stimulated in the lives of Christians by the considerateness and example of other members of their fellowship. This will never happen, however, if they keep one another at a distance. Therefore, every opportunity of coming together and enjoying their fellowship in faith and hope must be welcomed and used for mutual encouragement. Our author exhorts his readers to continue meeting together the more earnestly because he knows of some who were withdrawing from the Christian fellowship. Paul had urged the Roman Christians to welcome one another for God’s glory, as Christ had welcomed them (Rom. 15:7). **F.F. Bruce** *The Epistle to the Hebrews* p.253

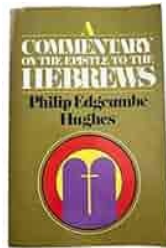
[8] [10:25] At first and indeed always there were naturally some people who imagined that one could secure the holy contents and blessings of Christianity as one did those of Isis and the Magna Mater, and then withdraw. Or, in cases where people were not so short-sighted, levity, laziness, or weariness were often enough to detach a person from the society. A vainglorious sense of superiority, and of being able to dispense with the spiritual aid of the society, was also the means of inducing many to withdraw from fellowship and from the common worship. Many, too, were actuated by fear of the authorities; they shunned attendance at public worship, to avoid being recognized as Christians. **Adolf von Harnack** *Mission and Expansion of Christianity* Vol 1 p. 434

[9] [10:25] The fulfilment of this social duty is presented under a twofold aspect, negatively and positively: Christians are not to abandon the opportunities of meeting; and they are to use the power of mutual influence. The word [*gkatalaipontes*] conveys the notion not simply of leaving, as no longer taking part in the assembly, but of abandoning, leaving the assembly exposed to peril in the conflict. **B.F. Westcott** *The Epistle to the Hebrews* p. 327



## Are we concerned for fellow believers?

[7] This, the third part of what is a threefold exhortation ("let us draw near ... let us hold fast ... let us consider ..."), is an appeal for thoughtful and loving concern both for fellow members of the Christian community and for the integrity of that community ... the first appeal (v. 22) is related to faith, the second (v. 23) to hope, and the third (v. 24) to love (cf. 1 Cor. 13:13). ... The implication is that there are signs of a weakening of the bonds of Christian fellowship, resulting from a deficiency of that love which should unite them in Christ, and resulting in a falling off of those compassionate deeds by which Christian love expresses itself. Unconcern for the well-being of the body, of which they are members, is symptomatic of self-concern and egocentricity. Selfishness and divisiveness go hand in hand; for self-love breeds the spirit of isolationism. He who does not love his fellow Christians fervently from the heart (1 Pet. 1:22) feels no compelling need to associate himself with them. Indeed, the genuineness of the Christian profession of a man in this state must be seriously suspect, for those who are one in Christ cannot help loving one another. ... "Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another" (1 Jn. 4:7-12). The failure of love shows itself, then, in selfish individualism ... Such unconcern for one's fellow believers argues unconcern for Christ himself and portends the danger of apostasy, concerning which our author is about to issue another earnest warning (vv. 26ff.). ... And it will be found that not only does love promote fellowship but also that fellowship stimulates love ... Chrysostom, with the words of Proverbs 27:17 in mind, observes that "as iron sharpens iron so also fellowship increases love; for if a stone rubbed against a stone sends forth fire, how much more person in contact with person!" **Philip Edgcumbe Hughes** *Hebrews* p.415



### STUDY 14

## Onward, overcomers!

*They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.*

– REVELATION 12:11 [see 2:7,11,17,26; 3:5,12,21; 21:7]

### A. Are we fear-full? ... [10:26-31]

#### 10:26-29 To what does wilful sin amount?

[10] Such conduct on the side of Christians would arise partly from fear lest they should provoke the active hostility of the Jewish authorities; partly from self-

confidence, as though they no longer needed the assistance of ordinary common worship where the general average of spiritual life might be counted too low to aid more mature believers. And yet more than this, the Christian assemblies must have appeared insignificant when compare with those to which the Hebrews were accustomed. ... We must use the help which God has provided and in His way; for if we set this at naught nothing remains for our relief. **B.F. Westcott** *Hebrews* p. 328, 329

[11] [10:28,29] The designation "Son of God" would seem to indicate that the form of apostasy in view involves a scornful denial of the deity of Christ. This would bring the apostate into line not only with contemporary Jewish officialdom (c.f. Mk. 14:61-64; Mt. 26:63-68; Lk. 22:70f.) but also with Judaism as a whole in the diversity of its manifestations. **Philip E. Hughes** *Hebrews* p.422

[12] [10:26-29] What he has in mind is rather that "falling away from the living God" of which he spoke in Ch. 3:12, that renunciation of Christianity against which he warned his readers in Ch. 6:4-8. **F.F. Bruce** *The Epistle to the Hebrews* p.258

**Who has  
"trampled  
underfoot the  
Son of God"?**

#### 10:30,31 Will God coddle sinners – especially sinning saints? (Gal.6:7)

[13] [10:31] When King David was commanded to choose between three forms of judgement after his numbering of the people, his wise reply was the fruit of his previous experience of God: "let us fall now into the hand of Jehovah; for his mercies are great" (II Sam. 24:14). Perhaps this very passage was in our author's mind and suggested the form of words he chose: "to fall into the hands of the living God". For "the living God" appears repeatedly in the Bible as a synonym of Yahweh. **F.F. Bruce** *Hebrews* p.264

### B. ... or are we faith-full? [10:32-39]

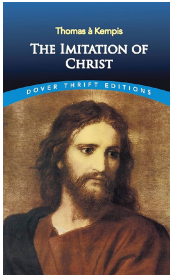
#### 10:32-34 What history encouraged hope in the writer of Hebrews?

[14] [10:32-34] It is a reasonable inference from these words that, while the people addressed had undergone persecution, none of them had thus far suffered martyrdom. This appears to rule out, for example, the Church of Jerusalem. Members of that church had suffered death in the persecution that broke out immediately after Stephen's execution about A.D. 33, as also in A.D. 44, under Herod Agrippa I, when James the son of Zebedee was beheaded, and in A.D. 62, when James the Just was stoned at the instance of the high priest Annas II (if indeed the last named incident had taken place by the writing of this epistle. **F.F. Bruce** *Hebrews* p.266

#### 10:35,36 How must we 'take up our cross'? (Matt.24:9-14, esp. v.13)

[15] [10:35,36] Jesus hath now many lovers of his heavenly kingdom, but few

bearers of his cross. He hath many desirous of comfort, but few of tribulation. He findeth many companions of his table, but few of his abstinence. All desire to rejoice with him, but few will suffer anything for him. Many follow Jesus unto the breaking of bread, but few to the drinking of the cup of his passion. Many reverence his miracles, but few follow the ignominy of his cross. Many love Jesus as long as adversities do not happen. Many praise and bless him as long as they receive any comforts from him. But if Jesus hide himself and leave them but a while, they fall either into complaining or into too much dejection of mind. But they that love Jesus for Jesus, and not for some comfort of their own, bless him in all tribulation and anguish of heart as well as in the highest comfort. And although he should never choose to give them comfort, they notwithstanding would ever praise him and always wish to give him thanks. O how powerful is the pure love of Jesus which is mixed with no self-love or self-interest. **Thomas a Kempis** *The Imitation of Christ* 2:11



**10:37-39 Like Paul, where does our writer find his exhortation? (Rom.1:17; Hab.2:3,4 – note v.1)**

**[16]** [10:39] The word “saving” does not refer to what we generally understand as salvation from sin, but is a word meaning “complete possession.” Faith is first receptive in spreading its sails to catch the breeze of God’s revelation, and then it is responsive to His Word and grace. The believer may be said to “possess” his soul partly in this life, and fully hereafter. Thus the message is twofold – we are to “draw near” and “draw not back.” **W.H. Griffith Thomas** *Let Us Go On* p.139