



LESSON SIX

The Author and Perfecter of Faith and the Way to Run the Race

Scripture Reading:

HEBREWS 12:1-4

- 1 Therefore let us also, having so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, put away every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us and run with endurance the race which is set before us,
- 2 Looking away unto Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down on the right hand of the throne of God.
- 3 For compare Him who has endured such contradiction by sinners against Himself, so that you may not grow weary, fainting in your souls.
- 4 A You have not yet resisted unto blood, struggling against sin,

QUESTIONS:

Section 1:

1. What is the significance of the phrase 'a cloud of witnesses'?
2. What does the title of Jesus as 'the author of faith' signifies? How is it related to us? Please relate this to your own experience.
3. What does it mean that Jesus is 'the perfecter of faith'?

Section 2:

1. Where does faith comes from according to Ephesians 2:8?
2. Please describe the process of our believing, using the example given.
3. What is faith in the context of Ephesians 2:8 and Galatian 2:20? How can we see it consistently throughout the Bible? Please refer to Hebrews chapter 8 and 11.

Section 3:

1. What is the race mentioned in Hebrews 12? How can we see it from the Bible?
2. What can distract us from running the race? Please share some examples.
3. What is the difference between walking the way and running the race?

Section 4:

1. How do we run the race?
2. Why did Paul point us particularly to the Christ seated in heaven with so many different aspects in the book of Hebrews?

-----[SECTION 1]-----

I. THE SAINTS OF THE OLD COVENANT ONLY BEING WITNESSES OF FAITH

In this message we come to the Author and Perfecter of faith (12:2). The saints of the old covenant were only witnesses of faith. None of them was the author, source, perfecter, or finisher of faith. In verse 1 of this chapter the witnesses of faith are considered as “a cloud of witnesses surrounding us.” The Lord was in the cloud to be with His people (Exo. 13:21-22). The children of Israel followed the Lord according to the move of the cloud. Where the cloud was, there the Lord was also. Furthermore, the cloud is for leading people in following the Lord. If you have a heart to seek out the Lord and you read Hebrews 11, you may immediately have the sense that by the people of faith you can have the Lord’s presence and His leading. If you have the cloud, you will have the Lord. But if you miss the cloud, you will also miss the Lord. All the people of faith, the church people, are the cloud. The best way to seek the Lord’s presence is to come to the church. If anyone is seeking the Lord’s leading, he must follow the cloud, the church. The Lord is in the cloud, meaning that He is with the people of faith. Since we are the people of faith, we are today’s cloud, and people can follow the Lord by following us. Those who seek Him can find His presence with us. The Lord is where we are, and where we are is the direction in which the Lord is moving in these days.

II. ONLY JESUS BEING THE AUTHOR AND PERFECTER OF FAITH

A. The Author of Faith

Only Jesus is the Author and Perfecter of faith. As we have seen, the saints of the old covenant were only the witnesses of faith, but Jesus is the Author and Perfecter of faith. The Greek word translated “Author” may also be rendered “Originator,” “Inaugurator,” “Leader,” “Pioneer,” “Forerunner.” It is the same word in Greek that is used for Captain in 2:10. Jesus is the Author of faith; He is the Originator, the Inaugurator, the source, and the cause of faith. The Author is the Originator and the Inaugurator; then He is the source and the cause. Since the Author is the Originator, He is also the Pioneer and Forerunner. Therefore, He is also the Leader and the Captain. If we put all these titles together, we have an adequate definition of Jesus as the Author of faith.

We need Jesus as the Author of faith because, according to our natural man, we do not have any believing ability. We do not have faith by ourselves. The faith we have through which we are saved is “not of ourselves; it is the gift of God” (Eph. 2:8). We have “obtained” this “precious faith” by God’s gift (2 Pet. 1:1). When we look unto Jesus, He, as “the life-giving Spirit” (1 Cor. 15:45 ASV), transfuses us with Himself, with His believing element. Then, spontaneously, the believing ability arises in our being, and we have the faith to believe in Him. It is not of ourselves, but of Him who imparts Himself into us as the believing element to believe for us. Hence, it is He Himself who is our faith. We live by Him as our faith, by His faith (Gal. 2:20), not by our own faith.

Jesus is the Author and the Originator of faith mainly in His life and in His path on earth. The Lord Jesus originated faith when He was here on earth. The life He lived was a life of faith, and the path He walked was a path of faith. In His life and path He originated faith. Hence, He is the Author of faith.

Jesus, being the Pioneer and the Forerunner, has cut the way of faith. If you read the four Gospels again, you will see that His life was a cutting life, a life that cut the way of faith. Wherever He went, it seems that there was a mountain or a river frustrating Him. But step after step, He cut the way of faith. If we have this view in reading the Gospels, we shall see that the very Jesus who is the Originator of faith was always cutting the way of faith, closing the gaps and removing the mountains like the builder of a highway. Since He has cut the way of faith, He is also the Pioneer and Forerunner on the pathway of faith.

As the Pioneer and the Forerunner of faith, Jesus is also the Leader and Captain of faith. He has cut the way of faith and, as the Forerunner, has taken the lead to pioneer it. Hence, He, as the Captain, can carry us through the pathway of faith in His footsteps. As we look unto Him as the Originator of faith in His life and in His path on earth, and as the Perfecter of faith in His glory and on His throne in heaven, He transfuses and even infuses us with the faith which He has originated and perfected.

B. The Perfecter of Faith

Jesus is also the Perfecter of faith. The Greek word translated “Perfecter” may also be rendered “Finisher” or “Completer.” Jesus is also the

Finisher, the Completer, of faith. By looking unto Him continually, we shall have Him finish and complete the faith which we need for running the heavenly race.

Jesus is the Perfector of faith mainly in His glory and on His throne in heaven. He is sitting on the throne in glory to complete the faith which He originated while He was on earth. Being the Finisher and the Completer of faith, He will finish and complete what He has originated and inaugurated.

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III. THE TRANSFUSION OF FAITH

A. We Having No Believing Ability Naturally

Now we come to the matter of the transfusion of faith. As we have seen, according to our natural man, we have no believing ability. The believing element is absent from our natural being. Naturally, we only have the unbelieving ability, the ability to disbelieve.

B. The Saving Faith Being Not of Ourselves

The saving faith is “not of ourselves; it is the gift of God” (Eph. 2:8). Ephesians 2:8 tells us clearly that the faith through which we were saved is not of ourselves. We have received it as a gift from God. God is the source and giver of faith, and we are the recipients of this divine gift. God has put something into our being which becomes our faith. Second Peter 1:1 says that we “have obtained like precious faith.” Faith is precious because it has been given to us as a gift by God.

C. Having Christ as the Believing Element Transfused into Us

When we look unto Jesus, He transfuses us with Himself as the believing element and He becomes our faith. We have seen that faith, the substantiating ability, is like a sixth sense. We acquired this substantiating sense through the preaching of the gospel. Proper gospel preaching is not merely a matter of teaching; it must also be a matter of transfusion. Suppose I am preaching the gospel to some sinners. Before I can preach the gospel to them, I must first receive something of and from the Lord. Then, as I am preaching, what I have received of the Lord will enter, like electricity, into those who are listening. While I am speaking and the people are looking at and listening to me, something spontaneously and unconsciously is transfused into them. Although

they may shake their heads, not consenting to my preaching, deep within they believe what I am saying. Although some may say to themselves that it is silly to believe, something within them continues to react and brings them to the point where they say, “Lord Jesus, thank You. You are so good. Lord, You are my Savior.” Because some element has been transfused into their being, they are able to believe in the Lord. I know of many stubborn ones who would not express in the meeting that they had come to believe in the Lord Jesus. They went home, but they had no peace, for something within stirred and troubled them. When it was time for the next gospel meeting, they said, “I would like to go there again.” This is the result of the transfusion of faith by God through a preacher.

Every gospel preacher must be a charming person. He must firstly be charmed himself and then he will be able to charm others. What he says may not seem logical, but, like a battery that is being charged, the hearers will be charmed. For this reason, the church must pray a great deal for the preaching of the gospel. The more we pray, the more charming the gospel meeting will be. The gospel preacher must pray until he has a heavenly charm and is fully charged with the divine element. If he is charged and charming, as he stands in front of the people, he will have the sense that something is being transfused into them. Some have even been afraid of such a preacher, saying, “Don’t look at him. If you do, you will be attracted by him because he is so charming.” This is the power of the gospel. Other speakers may be eloquent and well educated, but they are not charming. The gospel preacher may lack eloquence, but because he is so charming, others are charmed as they listen to him. Some element is infused into them through that charming preacher, and nothing can take it out of them. This infused element is faith.

This principle not only applies to the preaching of the gospel but to other forms of ministry as well. Ministry does not depend upon our eloquence but upon our utterance. Utterance is different from eloquence. Eloquence, like music, is something pleasant to the ear. Utterance, on the contrary, is the release of the divine element. If your ministry is correct, you will be charmed and charming whenever you come to minister. The proper ministry is altogether a matter of being fully transfused with God Himself. Firstly, we are charged with the divine element, and then, in the ministry, we radiate that divine element into

others in a charming way. This is altogether a matter of God's grace.

As we have seen, God's grace is simply God Himself dispensed into us to meet our need. Sinners certainly need to have faith, but how can they have it? Naturally, we have no belief, only disbelief. But when the sinners come to the church and hear the proper preaching of the gospel, they are charged with God. The heavenly electricity, which is God Himself, is transmitted into them. Because God Himself is transfused into them in this way, they find that they have faith. This is the gift of faith, the nature and element of which is God Himself.

If we would have faith, we must look away unto Jesus, the source of faith. When we look away from all other things unto Him, He will radiate Himself into us, charging us with Himself. As a result, spontaneously we shall have faith. Faith does not originate with us; it originates with Him. Faith is Christ Himself believing for us in a very subjective way. He transfuses us with Himself, working Himself into us, until He, the very Person, becomes the believing element in our being. Thus, it is not we who believe; it is He who believes within us. In this way, He makes us a believing being. Apparently it is our believing; actually it is His believing. This is genuine faith.

Once Christ has originated this faith within us, He will never let it go. Rather, He will complete, finish, and perfect it. Do not think that you can be a giant of faith on your own. No, we do not have the slightest amount of faith. All the faith we have is just Christ Himself believing in us and for us. We live by His faith, by Him as our faith (Gal. 2:20).

Christ's believing element is charged into our being through the law of life. The more we allow the law of life to work in our being, the more we are able to believe. If we give the law of life the opportunity to work continuously in our mind, emotion, and will, its working will produce great faith in us. The book of Hebrews is focused on the law of life, and faith is the firstfruit of the working of the law of life in our being.

We have seen that the ultimate and consummate point of the arrangement of the furniture in the tabernacle is the law of life typified by the tables of the testimony. The law is called the testimony because it is the expression and definition of what God is. Every law is the expression of the

lawgiver. A good man makes good laws, and a bad man makes bad laws. The law one makes reflects what he is. Hence, the law of God is the reflection of God's being. Because God is a God of light and love and because He is righteous and holy, His law is also a law of light and love and is righteous and holy. The law, being the reflection of God, is the expression and testimony of God. It is also a shadow of the law of life. The law of life within us today is actually God's reflection and expression. The more the law of life works in our being, the more we bear God's image. In this way we become His expression and testimony.

The arrangement of the furniture in the tabernacle ultimately leads to the law of life—the expression and testimony of God. In like manner, the experience of Christ which begins at the cross and consummates with the law of life issues in the testimony of God. Its goal is to have the expression of God. As the law of life works within us to bring about the expression and testimony of God, the first issue of its working is our believing. The most believing person is the one in whom the law of life has worked the most. Such a person will have the faith to believe God to the uttermost without any strain or strife. His believing is spontaneous because it comes from the working of the law of life within him.

The Bible is consistent. Although many different words, expressions, and terms are used, they all reflect one point. The law of life in Hebrews 8 issues in the believing ability, the faith, in Hebrews 11. Although we cannot understand this simply by reading the Bible, we can know it by our experience. Firstly, we have the experience and then we have the confirmation from the revelation of the Bible. Apparently Hebrews 11 is unrelated to Hebrews 8. Nevertheless, according to life, Hebrews 11 is the issue of Hebrews 8, for the believing ability results from the working of the law of the divine life. When the law of life operates within us to make us the very reflection, expression, and testimony of God, we find it easy to believe. Our believing is spontaneous. In fact, we are unable to disbelieve, because the believing ability has been wrought into us. Now we can see why we must look away from all things unto Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith. When we look away unto Him, we give Him the opportunity and the freedom to work Himself into us. In this way the law of life can work in every inward part of our being until we are fully saturated with Him. The more we are saturated with Him, the easier it is to believe. This is the

way to have faith. May we all experience faith in such a subjective way by looking away unto Jesus.

-----[SECTION 3]-----

I. THE CHRISTIAN LIFE BEING A RACE

In this message we come to the Christian race. The Christian life is a race. Every saved Christian must run the race to win the prize (1 Cor. 9:24). This prize is not salvation in a common sense (Eph. 2:8; 1 Cor. 3:15), but a reward in a special sense (Heb. 10:35; 1 Cor. 3:14). The Apostle Paul, who has run the race and won the prize, was nearly the only one who likened the Christian life to a race. In the book of Hebrews he charged the Hebrew believers to run the race, saying, “run with endurance the race which is set before us” (12:1).

Now we must ask a very puzzling question: what is this race? We should not say that the race is perfection or glorification, for that is the goal of the race. Neither is the race the inward working of the law of life, for that is the process of the race. The race is not even the losing of the soul, because that is the way to run the race; it is not the race itself. In order to answer this question, we need to consider the Lord’s word in John 14:6: “I am the way.” A race is a way, a course. Because Christ is the way, He is also the race. The race we are running is Christ. Our way is our race. These are not two things, one the way and the other the race. No, the way we are walking is the race we are running. Therefore, Christ, who is the way, is the race.

In the universe God has prepared the unique way which we must take. This way has no beginning or ending; it is endless, reaching from eternity to eternity. From Genesis 1 through Revelation 22 there is only one way—Christ. Before Christ was manifested, God used types to signify this matter of Christ as God’s way, the most striking of which was the tabernacle. As we have seen, the tabernacle has three parts: the outer court, the Holy Place, and the Holy of Holies. In these three parts of the tabernacle there is a way, starting from the altar; passing through the laver, the showbread table, the lampstand, and the incense altar; and ushering us into the ark, the place where the law of life is. The way in the tabernacle is a picture of Christ as our unique way. As we shall see, there is a reason why this way is called a race.

Genesis 1 and 2 reveal that God’s intention was that man, who was created in His image, would be on His way. According to 2 Corinthians 4:4 and Colossians 1:15, the image of God is Christ. Thus, for man to be created in the image of God meant that he was made according to Christ. He was created according to Christ that he might be on God’s way, which is Christ. In Genesis 2 man was put in front of the tree of life, which signified Christ as our life. Therefore, man was not only made according to Christ, but also was destined to take in Christ as his life. If man had done this, he would immediately have been on God’s way. However, soon after the creation of man and before man was on God’s unique way, Satan came in to distract man from God’s way to something other than Christ. But, in His mercy, God came in to establish the way of redemption that the distracted man might be brought back to God’s way. Abel followed this, but Cain did not. Although Abel was brought back to God’s way, Cain was distracted by a further step of Satan, never returning to God’s original way. Later, God commanded the children of Israel to erect the tabernacle. With the tabernacle there was a clear way by which sinners could enter into the reality of what God is. When the children of Israel were called by God, they all were sinners distracted from the way of God. But God showed them the tabernacle, in which there was a way to go from the altar in the outer court to the consummate point in the Holy of Holies—the enjoyment of God’s element, the law of life. Everything on this way indicates an aspect of Christ. Hence, the way for man to reach God is just Christ Himself.

However, Judaism, the Jewish religion, misused the tabernacle and everything revealed in the Old Testament to make a religion. The very religion which was constituted according to God’s holy word eventually distracted God’s people from God’s way. Both the tabernacle and the temple were constructed for the purpose of showing God’s people the way by which they might reach God and enter into Him. When the Lord Jesus came, the priests were worshipping God in the temple, offering sacrifices on the altar, dressing the lamp, displaying the showbread, and burning the incense. They did all this for the purpose of contacting God. But the Lord Jesus went to the house of Simon the leper in Bethany, where He enjoyed fellowship with those brothers and sisters. While the priests were worshipping God in the temple, God was in Simon’s house in Bethany. The way was not in the temple; the way—Christ—was in that house in Bethany. Even the worship and service which had been

ordained by God to show the way to reach God was utilized by Satan to distract people from Christ, God's unique way.

Consider the example of Saul of Tarsus, who was absolutely for the Jewish religion. When he realized that some of his countrymen, such as Peter, John, and Stephen, were not in this religion, he was stirred up to oppose them. By that time, the way had become a race, and Peter, John, Stephen, and all the other believers were running in it. As Saul of Tarsus was running alongside of this way, attempting to hinder those on the way, the Lord Jesus appeared to him, striking him down and turning him to this way (Acts 9:1-6). I believe that once Saul was in Christ and was walking on this way, he considered his religious background and all the distractions along the way, thinking that he had been born a Hebrew and circumcised on the eighth day and wondering whether he should give it all up. Eventually he realized that he had to forget about being a Hebrew and not only walk on the way but run the race. Whenever you drive a car fast, you are not looking for an exit. But once you slow down, it means that you are seeking an exit. Saul began to speed up, and his name was changed to Paul. By running, the way was changed into a race.

Are you walking the way or running the race? If we are walking the way, one day we shall walk out. If we are walking gently and slowly, we shall be distracted by some other way. But if we run the race, taking no time to look around and keeping our eyes fixed on the goal, we shall not be distracted. Paul had the greatest incentive for pressing on and for running the race; he no longer had the time to look around or to consider anything else. Although Paul might never have staggered, as a typical Hebrew believer, he must have considered his background. I believe that after he was knocked down by the Lord on the road to Damascus, he recalled his life in the Jewish religion. Perhaps he said, "I had so many good things. Is the temple false and is the priesthood wrong? Were they not ordained by God?" If he had never considered his religious background, he could not have written Galatians 1, Philippians 3, and the whole book of Hebrews so clearly. If he had not been a typical Hebrew believer experiencing all these things, he could not have helped the staggering Hebrew Christians. But he had been in the same situation and had suffered from the same disease, being an experienced patient. There is a proverb which says that an experienced patient becomes a good

doctor. As we shall see, Paul was a doctor and could heal those who were in danger of being crippled. He himself had once been in the same danger, but he had been healed. As a result, he knew the cure for the staggering Hebrew Christians and was able to give them the right medicine. In the book of Hebrews, Paul gave the best medication to the crippled ones that they might be brought back to running the race.

God's intention is to put us into Christ and to work Christ into our being, making Christ our standard and all of us a reproduction of the standard. As we have seen, this will result in our perfection and glorification. When the book of Hebrews was written, many of the Hebrew believers were considering their background and were walking on the way or even standing still. They were in danger of being distracted by the temple, the priesthood, and the offerings. They were in danger of either being stranded or of shrinking back to Judaism and not coming forward to the Holy of Holies. This means that they were in danger of turning from God's goal to something used by the enemy to distract God's people from His way. Thus, after eleven chapters in which he presented the Hebrew believers a clear view of the way, the writer seemed to say, "Let us run the race. Don't stand still, look back, or look around. Don't even walk—run." We should not only refuse to leave Christ and go back to Judaism; we should not even stand still in Christ. Even walking in Christ is inadequate. We must run the race. Do not take the time to consider or look around, to stand still or walk slowly. You must run the race. By now we should be clear what the race is—it is Christ Himself as our way. But we should not take this way as a way; we must take it as a race to run.

In chapter six Paul told us to flee. We must flee everything into the Holy of Holies where our Forerunner, Jesus Christ, has entered within the veil. This is what it means to run the race.

-----[SECTION 4] -----

II. ALL THE BELIEVERS OF THE NEW COVENANT MUST RUN THIS RACE

A. By Putting Off Every Encumbrance, Weight, Burden, and Impediment

Hebrews 12:1 says, "Therefore let us also, having so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, putting off every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, run with endurance the

race which is set before us.” The Greek word translated “encumbrance” may also be rendered “weight,” “burden,” “impediment.” The runners in a race must strip off every unnecessary weight, every encumbering burden, that they might have no impediment to winning the race. Notice that here Paul says “us,” not “you,” including himself in this matter.

B. By Putting Off the Entangling Sin

Verse 1 mentions “the sin which so easily entangles us.” Sin here refers mainly to the thing which entangles us from running the race, just as the willful sin mentioned in 10:26 would keep the Hebrew believers away from the new covenant way in God’s economy. Both the encumbering weight and the entangling sin would frustrate the Hebrew believers and restrain them from running the heavenly race in the new covenant way of following the Jesus who was rejected by Judaism. To the staggering Hebrew believers, the thought of shrinking back and returning to Judaism was an entangling sin. The sin mentioned in this verse is particular and unique, for Paul uses the definite article, saying, “the sin.” This unique, entangling sin was the willful sin of forsaking the assembling together with the saints, of giving up the new covenant way, and of going back to Judaism.

C. With Endurance

There is much opposition to this race. Thus, we must run it with endurance (12:1). This means that in order to run the race of Christ, we must suffer the opposition with endurance, never growing weary or fainting in our souls.

D. By Looking Away from All Things

In verse 2 Paul told the Hebrew believers to look away unto Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of faith. The Greek word translated “looking away unto” means to look with undivided attention by turning away from every other object. The runners in a race, such as the hundred yard dash, turn away from everything else and look at the goal with undivided attention. In this verse Paul seemed to be saying, “Hebrew brothers, do not stand there considering and looking around. You must turn away from everything other than Christ and look to Him with undivided attention. This is the way to run the race.” The Hebrew believers had to look away from all the things of their situation, away from their old religion and its persecution, and away from all earthly things that they might look unto Jesus who is now seated at the right hand of the throne of God in the heavens.

E. By Looking unto Jesus Who Is Now Seated at the Right Hand of the Throne of God in the Heavens

Paul told the Hebrew believers to look “away unto Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of faith, Who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.” From 1:3, this book points us continually to the Christ seated in heaven. In all his other epistles, Paul mainly presents to us the Christ who dwells in our spirit (Rom. 8:10; 2 Tim. 4:22) as the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45, ASV) to be our life and our everything. But in this book, he points us particularly to the Christ seated in heaven with so many aspects to care for us in every way. In Paul’s other epistles, the indwelling Christ is versus our flesh, self, and natural man. In this book, the heavenly Christ is contrasted with the earthly religion and all earthly things. To experience the indwelling Christ we need to turn to our spirit and contact Him. To enjoy the heavenly Christ we need to look away from all things on earth unto Him who is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. By His death and resurrection He has accomplished everything that is needed for both God and us. Now in His ascension He is sitting in the heavens, in the Person of the Son of God (1:5) and the Son of Man (2:6), in the Person of God (1:8) and man (2:6), as the appointed Heir of all things (1:2), the Anointed One of God (1:9), the Captain of our salvation (2:10), the Sanctifier (2:11), the instant Helper and constant Succor (2:18), the Apostle from God (3:1), the High Priest (2:17; 4:14; 7:26), the Minister in the true tabernacle (8:2) with a more excellent ministry (8:6), the Surety and the Mediator of a better covenant (7:22; 8:6; 12:24), the Executor of the new testament (9:16-17), the Forerunner (6:20), the Author and Perfecter of faith (12:2), and as the great Shepherd of the sheep (13:20). If we look unto Him as such a wonderful and all-inclusive One, He, ministering heaven, life, and strength to us, will transfuse and infuse us with all that He is to enable us to run the heavenly race and to live the heavenly life on earth, carrying us through all the lifelong pathway and leading and bringing us into glory (2:10).

The wonderful Jesus, who is enthroned in heaven and “crowned with glory and honor” (2:9) is the greatest attraction in the universe, like an immense magnet drawing all His seekers unto Him. It is by being attracted by His charming beauty that we look away from all things other

than Him. Without such a charming object, how could we look away from so many distracting things on this earth?

**F. By Considering Jesus
Who Has Endured Contradiction
from Sinners against Himself**

Verse 3 says, “Consider Him Who has endured such contradiction from sinners against Himself, lest you grow weary, fainting in your souls.” This short word refers us to the four Gospels, where we see how Christ endured such contradiction from sinners. At that time, the sinners were all the religionists, Judaizers, priests, scribes, and elders of the people. When the Lord Jesus was on earth, He confronted all these opposers who were doing their best to frustrate or stop Him from the way of God’s new covenant. But He was not frustrated; rather, He cut the way, slaying it by suffering the death of the cross.

**G. By Resisting unto Blood,
Struggling against Sin**

Verse 4 says, “You have not yet resisted unto blood, struggling against sin.” Sin here must refer to something evil in the sight of God that frustrates the believers and holds them back from the new covenant way, for it needs to be resisted, even unto blood.

**III. THE APOSTLE PAUL
BEING AN EXAMPLE OF RUNNING THE
RACE**

Because Paul’s background was exactly that of the Hebrew believers, he was qualified to be an example in running the race. Galatians 2:2 and 1 Corinthians 9:26 and 27 show how he began to run the race. Philippians 3:5-8 and 12-14 show how he was still running the race. In Philippians 3 we see that Paul was a typical Hebrew believer running the race away from the old Jewish religion. In 2 Timothy 4:7 and 8, written shortly before his martyrdom, he told us that he had finished the race.

As Paul was running the race, he said, “I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway” (1 Cor. 9:27). Although a saved person can never perish, it is quite possible for him to be a castaway. To be a castaway is to fail in the race, missing the opportunity of reaching the goal. Paul feared that he might be a castaway. The Greek word rendered “castaway” also means a reprobate, one not

qualified or approved. Paul seemed to be saying to the Hebrew believers, “Hebrew brothers, you must be careful. Although you have been saved, it is possible that you will be a castaway, one who is disapproved.” This concept fits in with that of reaching the goal and winning the prize as a reward. But there is the possibility that a runner may be a castaway and not be approved for the reward. In Hebrews 12 Paul was warning the Hebrew brothers and encouraging them, giving them a great incentive to run the race. We, like them, must not only walk the way but also run the race.