

PREFACE TO THE ADDENDUM

This is the final study in the present Authentic Christian Discipleship series, and constitutes the final chapter in the concluded book and in Volume III. In the series and in particular in this final Volume III, Christian discipleship has been viewed as Christ presented it. Every exposition or chapter has attempted to examine and to explain Jesus' personal teaching on just what true Christian discipleship is. However, this last in the series is from Christ's apostle's writing that constitutes a New Testament Epistle. This exposition of a passage from the Book of Hebrews seems to deviate from the "according to Jesus" basis and practice of the book. But really is that true?

This passage, as declared and plainly expounded in this study, relates the truth of Christ's own attendance upon all His Word, not just the record of His personal teaching. Though for most of us Jesus' own recorded Words mean something special from our Lord and Savior, all God's Word has the equal authority as the "red letters" in the Gospels. Nevertheless, the main point in choosing this passage is its clear reference to Jesus in the final words of this Scripture text in Hebrews, *Him with Whom we have to do* (Hebrews 4:13 KJV). The translator could with equal accuracy render this phrase, "Him [Christ] with Whom we have business,"¹ or "Him [Christ] Whom we are discoursing,"² or "Him [Christ] to Whom we must give an accounting,"³ or "Him [Christ] with Whom we have to reckon,"⁴ or "Him[Christ] to Whom we are to answer,"⁵ or "Him [Christ] to Whom we must explain all that we have done."⁶ Clearly in every case of translation or paraphrase, it is Christ indeed *with Whom we have to do* with every hearing of the Word of God. Amen!

¹ Brown ² Rotherham ³ The Twentieth Century New Testament ⁴ Moffatt
⁵ Lamsa ⁶ Taylor

This Scripture text is a distinct reference to Christ's constant attendance upon His Word. He is shown with a dedication to each responder to and neglecter of His Word without regard to his or her being good or evil. Jesus, in our text, scrutinizes closely every profession of Him as Lord and Savior, i.e. any claim of authentic Christian discipleship. His devotion to God and scrutiny of men is as it was when physically present on earth, only now He does it through His written Word and from heaven with His Spirit constantly everywhere, with everyone, and as Almighty. Amen!

ADDENDUM CONTENTS

<i>Heading</i>	<i>page</i>
AUTHENTIC CHALLENGED DISCIPLESHIP	220
Christ Works through His Word	223
The Word is the Will of Christ Declared in Advance	224
The Setting of our Text Verses	224
Challenged by the Word	225
Christ Challenges Disciples in His Written Word	227
The Context	227
What Rest?	229
What Faith?	229
I. CHRIST'S CHALLENGE IN THE WORD	
HAZARDS A LIFE-SHATTERING FALL	231
The Paradoxical Toil	231
A Peremptory Tumble	235
II. CHRIST'S CHALLENGE IN THE WORD	
INTERVENES WITH A HEART-SEEKING POWER	237
The Word Intercedes through its Ability	237
The Word Intercedes through its Penetrability	239
The Word Separates	
the Joints of the Soul and Spirit.	240
A Diagram of Man's Original Nature	242
The Word Penetrates to	
the Marrow of the Soul and Spirit.	244
The Word Intercedes through its Arbitrability	244
III. CHRIST'S CHALLENGE IN THE WORD	
SEARCHES WITH AN ALL-SEEING EYE	247
The Look of His Eye is All-knowing	247
Christ Exposes the Vitals	248
Christ Cleaves the Innards	249
The Accounting to God's Son is All-Methodical	250
The Methodical Accounting.	250
Him with Whom we have to do.	251

AUTHENTIC CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP

According to Jesus and His Doctrines of Grace

VOLUME III, CHAPTER 7, A CONCLUDING ADDENDUM

AUTHENTIC CHALLENGED DISCIPLESHIP

—A DUEL—

An Expository Study of *Hebrews 4: 11-13*

Christ challenged discipleship during His personal ministry. On occasion, when teaching the multitudes, Jesus contested the authenticity and genuineness of men who sought to become, and sometimes even those who would remain, His followers, His learners, His spiritual students, His disciples.⁷ His challenges continue today as the spiritual test of one's profession of faith. In a sort of personal duel, His own spoken and apostolic Word faces off with persons who seek, and even claim to possess, authentic discipleship.

A most noticeable challenge to authentic discipleship occurred in His great Sermon recorded in Matthew. The basic message of the Sermon concerns His Kingdom's intents and designs as they relate to the lives of His true subjects, that is, of His authentic disciples. Through the Sermon, Christ calls men to a life of stricture, narrowness, and stringency. He challenged all professors of His lordship and saviorhood that an sequential life of strenuousness attended authentic discipleship. In concluding His Sermon, the Christ made clear that discipleship—real, genuine, authentic discipleship—was entered only through a narrow, confining, and difficult gate,⁸ and that only a life entered and lived in a narrowness, confinement, and difficulty would consummate in a broad *life* eternally. Any other kind of life would end in

⁷ *Mark 10:21; Luke 9:57-62; John 6:25-27; 8:30-32; Matthew 5:20*, et al..

⁸ *Matthew 7:13-14*, Vol. I Authentic Narrow Discipleship, Chap. 3, pp23-47.

destruction. He warned of making false professions of a true discipleship, and predicted many would find nothing but disappointing separation from Him in *that day*,⁹ that is, the final judgment day. On *that day* a great fall under the holy judgment of God was inevitable for the false disciple,¹⁰ the ultimate and final test of authentic discipleship being hearing and obeying His Word. Thus, His Sermon from beginning to end challenged through His Word all discipleship with regard to its authenticity.

A more combative challenge to professed or claimed discipleship occurred on one particular Sabbath day recorded by Luke.¹¹ After pronouncing His judgment and final word against the failure of His people, Israel,¹² the Christ set a high bar of operative mercy, humility, and graciousness in the lives of all who would attempt to replace Israel as His people—His learners, His disciples.¹³ Luke recorded His challenge to all enthusiastic followers with the absoluteness of a special spiritual calling from the Servant-Spirit, Who would usher Spirit-invited, and so Spirit-prepared, disciples into the true Kingdom festivities.¹⁴ And in close proximity with those challenges of character and calling, Luke recorded Jesus' confrontation with a great multitude that physically and fleshly followed Him during His final journey to Jerusalem.¹⁵ Beginning that encounter, Jesus whirled around to face this great number of supposed disciples who were following Him with a verbal challenge that sought to forbid all false discipleship. He spoke sharply that He only must exist as number one in disciples' lives, that He only must occupy predominance, and that He only must continue favored after all else is forsaken.¹⁶ This physical challenge was astoundingly confrontational. He

⁹ *Matthew 7:21-23*, q.v. Vol. I, Chap. 5, pp. 66-93.

¹⁰ *Matthew 7:26-27*, q.v. Vol. I, Chap. 6, pp. 94-112.

¹¹ The events of that day covered in Luke's history are recorded in *Luke 14:1-17:10*.

¹² *Luke 13:34-35*, q.v. Vol. II Authentic Severe Discipleship, Chap. 1, pp. 3, 5-6, 8-10, 78-80.

¹³ *Luke 14:1-14*, q.v. Vol. II, Chap. 1, pp. 5-48.

¹⁴ *Luke 14:15-24*, q.v. Vol. II, Chap. 2, pp. 49-73.

¹⁵ *Luke 14:25-35*, q.v. Vol. II, Chap. 3, pp. 74-112.

¹⁶ *Luke 14:26, 33*, q.v. Vol. II, Chap. 3, pp. 103-109.

affronted any casual disciples among them and us with an abusive drama and a derogatory audacity. That type of confrontation from Jesus challenges all discipleship as to its veracity, but now it occurs through His written Word in the Spirit. That very sort of challenge is contained in our Scripture text in Hebrews.

In every case of Christ's challenge to authentic Christian discipleship, He used His Word. This is Christ's enduring methodology today during His physical absence. He continues to use His Word, either His own personally spoken Word recorded in the Gospel accounts, or His inspired Word recorded and penned by His holy apostles. Our present text falls into the latter category.

The enemies of God also challenge Christian discipleship. That challenge is usually called tribulations, persecutions, and trials, through which Christ promises to carry the authentic disciple. No genuine disciple of Christ will fail or fall utterly under the difficulties of living in this fallen world. But the greater challenges that many professors of religion—professors of Christian discipleship—fail at miserably, and which confront all authentic disciples, are those manifold invitations for faith and obedience found in the Word of God. Christ challenges every disciple throughout this life in the written Word of God. In the same way as during His personal ministry, His challenges are occupied with the authentic nature of supposed and professed discipleship. The Spirit-breathed Word of God calls out to every person who hears the testimony of Jesus in His Word, "Believe and obey. Believe and obey." It was this Wisdom of the Word of Jesus to which Solomon referred in the Proverbs,

Doth not wisdom cry? and understanding put forth her voice?

She standeth in the top of high places, by the way in the places of the paths.

She crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in at the doors:

Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of man.

Proverbs 8:1-4

This is the Living Christ speaking through His Inspired Word. He calls out, “Come, you simple ones. Hear and believe. Obey My challenge and live the life eternal.” Every challenge in the Word of God is from Jesus as the consummate dare, far greater than any from the lesser-created hosts of heaven or of hell. Our Hebrew text relates an audacious challenge from the Almighty to the inferior rational creature, man.

Christ Works through His Word

God has from the very beginning worked out in the material universe through His Word. Through His Word He communicates His will to His creatures. Christ desires that His disciples obey Him, and in order to obey, they must know His will in advance of its execution into reality. Christians need to know His will in advance of even their opportunity to choose to do either this or that. Consequently, Christ first speaks and then He performs or creates or judges or blesses or curses. His disciple can know in advance the action that God will take in certain situations, because He has revealed His ways in the inspired Word. Therefore, the Word is the medium for knowing the will of Christ. Because God desires that His rational creatures—especially His children—know His will, He has recorded it for them in the inspired Word. That is the rationale behind God’s way of “speaking” before “acting.”

God, of course, could produce and work and perform any function in complete silence, but that is not His way. Each of the acts recorded in *Genesis, Chapter 1*, is said to have been spoken into being, *And God said. And God said.* Likewise, in the written Word of God, God has spoken into existence certain things, having recorded those words of creative powers in print, so to speak. That recorded Word is the Bible, which is another major reason for God’s requirement for an infallible Word. Now, when those Words are read, heard, taught, or preached, Christ moves in accord with their revelation. After all, it is particularly His will, but recorded for us and for our benefit, in advance of its advent into reality.

The Word is the Will of Christ Declared in Advance

That “in advance” principle is innate within the Word of God and is its challenge to its hearers. That Christ always effects His will as absolute Sovereign is a truth clearly designated in His Word. Because Christ has all power to effect anything He will,¹⁷ He performs to the utmost everything that He wills. To hear the Word of God is a challenge to believe it and to obey it as it is in fact, the will and the way of the Living God and His Reigning Christ. And to disbelieve and disobey is to fail to meet its challenge, and is to fall into the same tragedy as did Israel at Kadesh-Barnea.¹⁸

The Setting of our Text Verses

It is to that particular challenge, brought to Israel at Kadesh by the Word of God, to which our text verses are vitally connected. At Kadesh Israel was about to begin a unique series of experiences with the Living God. They had been sovereignly chosen by God in Abraham to become His people, a nation ordained to produce salvation for all the earth through their Messiah.¹⁹ God had ruled in Providential Government to place them in Egypt, where they grew into a large nation of people; and at the proper time, God redeemed them from the bondage of Egyptian oppression by a strong hand. Whereupon, He led them from Egypt, through the wilderness journey, gave them His Law, and brought them to the Land of Canaan. This was the land promised first to Abraham, then to Isaac, and to Jacob. Now, at long last, they heard the Word of God through Moses, His prophet:

*Behold, the Lord thy God hath set the land before thee:
go up and possess it, as the Lord God of thy fathers hath
said unto thee; fear not, neither be discouraged.*

Deuteronomy 1:21

¹⁷ As God, *Colossians 1:15-17*; and as Man, *Matthew 28:18*, *All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth..*

¹⁸ *Numbers, Chapters 13 & 14* ¹⁹ *Genesis 12:1-3*

After about 400 years of servitude in Egypt, and after about two years of wandering in the wilderness, they were finally about to enter into the *rest* of God. Now they needed faith in the Word of God and obedience to its demands. What God told them was His will given to them in advance. Surely, Israel would simply believe and obey; and thereby fulfill His will in their taking possession of the Land of Canaan, the land promised to their forefathers, and promised to them also in the command, *Go up, and take possession of the land.*

Challenged by the Word

Israel was challenged by the Word of God to go up and take what was theirs by divine decree and by preceptive utterance. God had said, “It is yours, take it,” theirs was only to believe and to take it. The order is always the same in this matter of His Word. First, we hear the Word. Second, we believe the Word. Third, we obey the Word. And in the hearing and believing and obeying, we fulfill the divine decree of the Word, which fulfilling is by our simply doing what He has declared to be His will as in His Word.²⁰ This divine order of His way is precisely why God condemns disbelief toward His Word. If viewed entirely from His lofty position, failing to believe God’s announced will is like criticizing His work as less than good. Since the fulfillment of all that God says is sure to be performed, then the consequence of unbelief is paramount to faulting God with less than acceptable ways. Since what God does has always been spoken into completion, it would sensibly follow that not to believe what He speaks is censuring God with a sort of culpability in what He does. What a reproach upon God to disbelieve the inspired Word! How evil is unbelief!

²⁰ Consequently, this is what is theologically termed God’s preceptive will—His will as declared in His precepts, His Law, and His Word—; as contrasted with God’s decretive will—His will as declared in His decrees, His eternal counsel, and His predestined programme. The great blessings of God come when both the decretive and preceptive wills are met in one obedience by His sons, i.e. His authentic disciples. In only such a way is the perfect will of God realized in one’s living.

Yet more than that, how challenging is His Word to us. In each syllable there is a clarion call to high accountability to believe God, for in that faith there is an endorsement and approval of His will, His way, and His works. Conversely, disbelief amounts to a scathing disapproval of His will, way, and works. This challenge resident in the Word to believe and obey or not to believe and obey is exactly the content of our text in *Hebrews 4:11-13*. The Israelites met the challenge at Kadesh with disbelief and failure, leading God to meet them with doom and destruction. What we meet with will be determined by our yet future answers to Christ's similar challenges in His Word to us.

In the passage now before us, the writer applies Israel's experience of failure to his readers when she refused to answer the challenge of God's Word with a faith-filled obedience. The Hebrew Christians written to in our text verses had heard the Word of God, and had believed so that they had entered into the positional rest of Christ. This rest is not the ultimate rest, but is one where the burden of sin (Egypt) is rolled away, and peace with God is a reality.²¹ He referred to that kind of initial rest in *Hebrews 4:3*, "*For we which have believed do enter into rest....* But they had difficulties with the life of faith as opposed to the sight-experience of the Temple ritual. They were hesitant about continuing in their Christian profession, and were tempted to return to the Temple sacrifice system. The writer likens his readers to Israel at Kadesh who had fallen in the wilderness so many years before. Because they had heard the Word challenge them to go on to a deeper commitment to Christ in their lives, these Hebrew Christians were near to becoming guilty of disbelieving that Word of Promise which assured them of a realization of Christ in this life. They were close to a fall into the same example of disbelief as that into which Israel had fallen so many years before.

²¹ *Romans 5:1*

Christ Challenges Disciples in His Written Word

Every Christian disciple has a deeply felt desire to fulfill in his or her life what Christ has for him or her to bring about for His honor and glory. The ultimate for every Christian disciple is to be made into His image, but that kind of perfect fulfillment comes after this life is over. Meanwhile, we seek to reach that goal in our living. How near to Christ we live depends largely upon the place the Word of God has in our consciousness. The Spirit-breathed Word breathes Christ, and that Christ-likeness will come only as it is known and believed and obeyed. Our inmost desires to delight Him in service can only be realized as we hear, believe, and obey his Word. These two truths—likeness to Christ and the fulfillment of our lives for Him—are mutually inclusive; the one will not come without the other. Consequently, the Word that challenges us also enables us. For that reason the Christian responds to His Word. The church or individual, who truly is willing to grow and to be challenged by the Word of God, will, as they/he listens with a hearing or discerning ear, find that advancement is inevitable. Some are willing for a time to hear the Word, and even listen to its demands, and then think to return to the former, to disregard, or to stand still concerning its influence and power, but this will end only in disaster. Authentic Christian discipleship consists not so much of external profession and lip service, but of the place the Word of God has within our souls and within our lives. Our text is directed to this type of Christian professor, and to warn of the danger of not possessing authentic discipleship; it emphasizes the importance of hearing and obeying the Word. Our text verses sound a foreboding prediction for those who refuse to heed the Word of the Living God; namely, that a fall is coming to any disciple who hears the Word and disbelieves and disobeys it.

The Context

The Hebrew writer has introduced Christian rest in order to parallel Israel's experience in the wilderness as she stood about to possess the land promised her. In *Hebrews 3:1-6*, the writer began emphasizing the worthiness of Christ and the necessity

of continuing in Him. Whereupon, he applies to his readers Christ's position as *Apostle and High Priest of our profession* (3:1), His faithfulness to the Father (3:2), and as God, *the Builder of all things* (3:3-4). Then the writer uses the experience of the Israelites as a somewhat possible parallel to his readers. They were in danger of turning back from Christ to the old ritual in the Temple that Christ had fulfilled. The Hebrew Christians' refusal to *hold the beginning of their confidence steadfast unto the end* (3:14) would result in a failure to enter the promised and provided rest of God, just as the Israelites had failed. The reality of Christ as first professed and possessed must be *held* (embraced) *unto the end*. The Israelites failed because they *obeyed not* (3:18) and *believed not* (3:19). They proved themselves to be false in their devotion to Jehovah. The Hebrew readers were in danger of proving themselves false also.

In Chapter Four, Scripture references and clear annunciation prove a promised future rest *remains for the people of God* (4:4-9). Therefore, since there is a rest for his readers, the writer uses its promise and reality as the basis for the challenging exhortation in our text,

Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief,

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

Hebrews 4:11-13

What Rest?

The rest of our text cannot be the rest of the Land of Canaan. Canaan's rest is only a parallel to the rest for us believers today. David wrote in *Psalms 95:7* (quoted in 4:7) of another rest much later (4:5-8). In 4:9 the writer of Hebrews definitely stated, *There remaineth therefore a rest for the people of God*. This rest is a rather comprehensive reference to the happiness, either that on earth or in heaven, that comes when believing in Christ unto salvation from sin. It is God's rest because it is authored by Him and is known in Him. This rest is the ultimate joy and peace of God's own joy and peace, entered into as an experiential reality upon conversion.²²

What Faith?

At conversion we believers begin tasting this rest in some degree by faith. We are delivered from sin and its miseries and a new life of inward joy is begun. But the writer's emphasis upon believing shows the enjoyment and benefits and peace of this rest depend upon the faith with which we view it. Authentic disciples know personally this rest and continue in its reality as it was begun. However, this is through a persevering faith brought to experience through the Word, as in our text, by which the true believer continues to know experientially this rest. That is, the joy and peace continue as first possessed through faith found from the Word. To be believing in this rest of God is nearly equivalent to basking and reveling in its blessed experience. Faith digests its reality into the mind and heart of the believer. The truth of this peace and joy—this rest—must be mingled with its former experience within the mind in overt and objective thoughts in order to be meaningfully experienced anew. The readers, and we believers today, are to seek this rest in active endeavors of the mind and life—in thought and deed—in order to maintain and enjoy the rest already possessed.

²² But this promised rest that *remaineth for the people of God (4:9)* is a Sabbath rest, which will be in part explained later; q.v. The second reality, pp. 233-235.

This text provides three reasons why Christians must with this faith and obedience answer the challenge that Christ brings to bear upon our discipleship in the Word of God

Reason #1

I. First, Christ's Challenge to Authentic Christian Discipleship in the Word of God Hazards a Life-shattering Fall, *Hebrews 4: 11*.

Reason #2

II. Second, Christ's Challenge to Authentic Christian Discipleship in the Word of God Intervenes with a Heart-seeking Power, *Hebrews 4: 12*

Reason #3

III. Third, Christ's Challenge to Authentic Christian Discipleship in the Word of God Searches with an All-Seeing Eye, *Hebrews 4:13*

Keeping in mind the "Hebraic" complexion of both the writer of these words and his original readers, we will attempt to grasp his intended meaning, and to comprehend the terrifying ministration which hearing Christ's challenge in God's Word occasions.²³

²³ Indeed, the Word that challenges the authenticity of our discipleship is not limited to our text in Hebrews, but is the entire Word of God. In fact, our text verifies and defines and characterizes the challenge of the comprehensive Word

#1 Reason for faith and obedience

I. CHRIST'S CHALLENGE IN THE WORD
HAZARDS A LIFE-SHATTERING FALL

Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

Hebrews 4: 11

All three verses of the text are somewhat negative in that they stress the dangers of not meeting properly Christ's challenge in the Word. There are countless very positive faith-checks written out in God's Word that richly bless the endorsers. But this section of Scripture is a warning to believe and to obey; and carries with it exposure to the possibility of being unsuccessful, lost, or greatly injured in this life and in the next. The writer warns of the risk of a life-shattering *fall* such as Israel experienced at Kadesh. That *fall* can be avoided by giving heed to the exhortation in this verse, concerning:

The Paradoxical Toil

Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest.

The Christian is to “strive earnestly,” or “to give diligence” to active exertion, in order that he may secure what God has promised him. God promised and then provided for Israel to enter, conquer, and possess the Land of Canaan, *but the word did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.*²⁴ One might ask, “Well, if the promise was to give them rest, why were they expected to toil to enter into that rest? How can one toil and rest at the same time, if indeed they are simultaneous experiences?” To answer that question one must take note of two important realities concerning laboring to enter this rest.

First, entreating us to labor—to striving earnestly and to giving diligence—in order to enter into this rest of joy and peace already possessed now and already promised for our future, is indicative of many such exhortations from Christ's apostles. Though promised

²⁴ *Hebrews 4:2*

the likeness of Christ, *For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son,*²⁵ yet Christians are told of the apostle's *pressing toward the mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*²⁶ As Christians devoted to Jesus and longing to be with Him, and so by necessity desiring to be like Him, it is entirely comprehensible that we would indulge every chance to be more like Him and to be more pleasing to Him. Thus it is quite characteristic of Christians to strive to reach both Him and His likeness now in this life, though both are promised to be ours and both are unconditionally believed to be ours.

Again, another apostle, after referring to our being called to glory and virtue, and writing of the exceeding great and precious promises by which we are partners with the divine nature, exhorts Christians,

And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;

And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;

And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.]

Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:

For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

II Peter 1:5-11

²⁵ Romans 8:29 ²⁶ Philippians 3:14

The second reality that concerns laboring to enter this rest has to do with the particular rest that is included in the words, *that rest*. This is the rest spoken of as the Sabbath rest that always remains for the people of God,

*There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of
God.* *Hebrews 4: 9*

This Greek word translated *rest* is different from every other word that is translated *rest* in this passage. It is sabbatismos, “a Sabbath rest.” This is a reference to the Sabbath kind of rest that is always the “remaining” rest for the people of God. Every people of God in every age, and in every circumstance, have always had this kind of rest “remaining” for them to fulfill, and it is *that rest* to which *Hebrews 4:11* mostly refers. To understand *that rest* and how we can toil to enter into it, we must first understand what God’s original Sabbath rest was.

When God *rested* on the seventh day,²⁷ He rested only from the physical creation, but not from the spiritual creation, that is, not from the work of producing His image perfect and maturely in man. God knew what He was doing: the plan was sure and the outcome undeniably and unquestionably certain. When He had decreed *Let us make man in our image*,²⁸ He fully intended to effect that in man’s experience. Adam never was maturely in God’s image. He was not a mature son, but only the Last Adam, Christ, was a perfect man and mature Son of God, Who did indeed fulfill the spiritual destiny of mankind.²⁹ Adam did not fulfill the ideal of God’s likeness or image, but only partially and incompletely. Consequently, we would suggest that the sabbatismos or “Sabbath rest” into which God entered was one of redemption. It was according to the plan of God that Christ is the *Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world*.³⁰ The original Sabbath rest that God took was not a cessation from all labor, but was a cessation from temporal, temporary, and preparatory labor. The Sabbath that God took was at the finish of all temporal effort

²⁷ *Genesis 2:1-3* ²⁸ *Genesis 1:26* ²⁹ *I Corinthians 15:45-49*

³⁰ *Revelation 13:8*

and from perishing enterprises. The earth and all therein will finally be burned up,³¹ but God began on the seventh day to do a work that would be eternal. God began, then, to work out the eternal purpose in Himself in order to bring to pass His own decree to create a man in His own image.³² Jesus said, *My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.*³³ That was a reference to the eternal, spiritual, and redemptive work of the Godhead, as was Christ's particular work also at that time. God, while in Sabbath rest, works at what is sure of eternal outcome, because it has been firmly fixed by God's prior eternal decree, foreknowledge, and preordination. Immediately, on the seventh day, so to speak, God set about to work out what had been already foreordained to be done—which was the perfect will of God according to what He Himself had already established as Sovereign Ruler over all. Consequently, the original Sabbath rest was a working out of God's established decree to provide Himself with men made in His own likeness through the redemptive work of His Son, Jesus Christ

That redemptive concept is the reason we are to *labor* or “strive earnestly” to enter therein, and why that rest always will remain for the people of God. No matter how much we labor to enter into that rest, *there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed.*³⁴ In other words, the fulfillment of God's redemptive purpose in the work of His Son is for what all our laboring, striving, and longing must seek. In practical reference it is evangelism and edifying and maturing that will always be remaining for the people of God. Entrance into that rest is to fulfill the divine purposes of calling out the chosen of God. This paradoxical toil is really not paradoxical at all, but is to join in with God in His redemptive purposes in calling out His chosen sons by preaching the Word, and by fulfilling the corresponding support ministries which accompany it in the church.

³¹ *II Peter 3:10; Revelation 20:11* ³² *Genesis 1:26* ³³ *John 5:17*

³⁴ *Joshua 13:1*

While some insecure Christians seem to labor only at keeping themselves in Christ, the writer of Hebrews retorts,

For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works as God did from his.

Hebrews 4:10

This means that the Christian disciple should cease from his own temporal, temporary, and finite labors to preserve himself and thus only profit himself, and is to begin to join in as a steward together with God, in order to effect the redemptive purpose of God. The salvation of lost souls and their growth into Christ's image is the true Sabbath rest of our God and Savior and of us. God began His ministry of salvation on the Sabbath. We also are to strive earnestly to enter into His Sabbath Rest (σαββατισμος) with Him, cease from our own works, rest in His joy and peace, and thereby be able to concentrate upon the spiritual order to make disciples out of every nation. Let us thus glorify God by *laboring to enter into that rest.*

A Peremptory Tumble

Lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

If the Christian is not "laboring" to enter into that rest, then there is a real danger of his or her "falling." The Hebrews fell because they did not do what God told them to do, as recorded in the Holy Word,

Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness, and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me,

But as for you, your carcasses, they shall fall in this wilderness.

And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcasses be wasted in the wilderness. [Added emph.]

Numbers 14:29 32,33

This *fall* did not mean a return to Egypt and to the bondage under evil oppression, but meant a loss of fulfillment which barred any further debate. The loss was final, absolute, and

decisive. That one act of refusal to believe and obey God's Word was the single cause of a whole generation of men perishing in the wilderness. Christians do indeed have the same awesome choices in their lives. Every time the Word is heard, there comes with it this accountability to believe and obey. At what point one today *falls* irretrievably from the best God has for one, only God knows. But the hazard of a similar fall is present always with every challenge from Christ in the Word.

It is interesting to note that after Israel realized what their unbelief was and what it had caused, they decided to change and go up to obey the Word previously given. *In Numbers 14:39-45* the story is told that the morning after they had refused the Word of God, they said, *Lo, we be here, and will go up into the place which the Lord hath promised: for we have sinned.* While there seems to be a degree of repentance in their words, still the opportunity was lost forever. That was the *fall* of disbelief! Similarly, we Christians are placed strategically in the world, and have opportunity to fulfill redemptive σαββατισμος-works constantly, but if we fail to obey and to go up immediately to enter, to conquer, and to *possess* for Christ, we are in danger of falling in this same sense. That opportunity will never repeat itself just in that way again. God controls our lives, and gives to us opportunity to work with Him in His redemptive plan, and when we hear the Word of God speak to our hearts, we must act immediately, unhesitatingly, and unreservedly, or the chance will pass away forever. To *fall after the same example of unbelief* as Israel did is to have missed God's best for one's life and to have insulted His goodness, as did Israel. God forbid that any of us should step into those deep and irreversible footprints which Israel left across the wilderness, because they lead only to utter failure in the purposes of God for our lives. The Word of God hazards a peremptory tumble if one fails to engage in this "paradoxical toil" at every opportunity. God's Word is the direction-finder for God's will in the Christian life. Let us therefore listen to Him and give heed to Christ's challenges to our discipleship.

#2 Reason for faith and obedience

II. CHRIST'S CHALLENGE IN THE WORD
INTERVENES WITH A HEART-SEEKING POWER

For the Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Hebrews 4:12

In *verses 12 and 13*, the inspired writer introduces two additional reasons for responding correctly to the challenge of God's Word. The reasons for pressing on in faith and obedience is drawn from the nature of and the effect produced by the Word in *verse 12*, and by the One Who wields it in *verse 13*. The two might be said to be one in authority and purpose. Just as no one can *stay His hand*, neither can one control the Word of God as it thrusts its truth into the deepest recesses of men. Hearing is the only prerequisite for its entry without invitation or personal authorization. That power to force its truth in a sort of invasion of God's will over man's will is precisely the subject of this verse. That is a challenge brought to bear, not on its hearers, but in its hearers.

We shall break this verse into three corresponding parts concerning the Word's intrusive power within man:

First, The Word Intrudes through its Ability.

Secondly, The Word Intrudes through its Penetrability.

Thirdly, The Word Intrudes through its Arbitrability.

The Word Intercedes (Intrudes) through its Ability

For the word of God is quick and powerful.

Innate in the Word is the Life of God. The word, *quick* KJV, means, "living." God's Word has living power in the same sense in which God Himself is often called the Living God. This life of the Word will co-join with the life and spirit of man to bring conviction of sin, hardening or repentance, and greater judgment or new life.

He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.

John 12:48

And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

Revelation 20:12

The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life

John 6:63

Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.

I Peter 2: 23

God has chosen to use His Word in dealing with man. To judge man, He uses His Word. To give life, He uses His Word. The Word therefore lives as God lives. It dooms disobedience to it as to God Himself. Through it God doomed the disbelieving Israelites to exclusion from Canaan. That same living Word challenges today in the same way. "It is living as being instinct with the life of its source."³⁵ This life of the Word is seen clearly in the life-changing work that it does as it intrudes into the lives of men with all the force of the Living God.

At Kadesh-Barnea the Israelites found out about this Living Word. They were punished with a loss to the armies of the Amalekites immediately following their disbelief and disobedience to the Word delivered to them.³⁶ That Word delivered to all became very alive and real to those who died as a result of disregarding it. When one reads the history of Israel from Egypt to Canaan, one is impressed with the presence of God there always with them. At every Word from Him, He was always there, to bless obedience and help weakness, or to curse disobedience and judge presumption. His Word, therefore, was alive with Him. He was always there and at every utterance they knew He was alive.

³⁵ Delitzsch, printed resource unknown.

³⁶ Numbers. 14:45

That is the best meaning of the Living Word. God is always there with His Word, because it is His will and way. He carefully attends its presentation to “back up” its authority with His authority. Israel found out about the Living Word from the Living God. He is not appearing today in a pillar of cloud or fire, but He is just as devotedly occupied with His Word now as He was then.

This “Presence” also accounts for its being *powerful*. The Greek word is ενεργης, which means “operative, energetic.” This would emphasize the validity of God’s Word. Because God is constantly in attendance with its presentation, it becomes effectual to do just what it represents God as doing. Since God acts through His Word, then the validity of its essence as being “of God,” is that kind of efficacious performance of its rationale. It actually accomplishes rigid conformity to its revelation. Ask the Israelites after Kadesh, “Say, is there any power or validity to God’s Word when Moses utters it?” I think I can hear their answer, echoing back and forth across a barren wilderness for forty years, or perhaps you can see its power in a multitude of graves strewn along their trail.

The Word Intercedes (Intrudes) through its Penetrability

And sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow.

This reference to a *sword* accommodates the writer’s allusion to the *sword* of the Amalakites, which pierced many because the challenges of God’s Word were not heeded.

For the Arnalekites and the Canaanites are there before you, and ye shall fall by the sword: because ye are turned away from the Lord, therefore the Lord will not be with you.

But they presumed to go up unto the hilltop: nevertheless the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and Moses departed not out of the camp.

Then the Arnalekites came down, and the Canaanites which dwelt in that hill, and smote them, and discomfited them, even unto Hannah. [Added emph.]

Numbers 14:43-45

The writer of Hebrews would have his readers picture in their minds those swords drawn against Israel by the Amalakites, but really borne by the living and powerful Word of God. The Word brought the enemies of God's people to exercise discipline upon them as if by the very hand of God. They disbelieved: they perished by the sword. That sword, in one sense, was the Sword of the Word of the Living God.

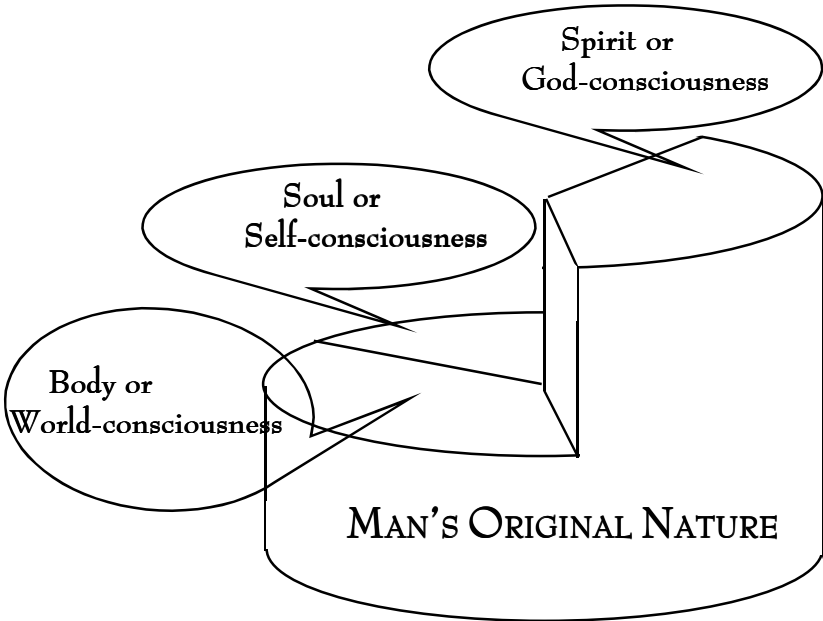
The Word is said to be *sharper than any two-edged sword*, literally, "a two-mouthed" sword. Two cutting edges give a sword extra penetrating power, as indeed, the Word has an incisive and penetrating quality to lay bare selfdelusions and moral arguments, right down to the nerve of man. This is no superficial scathe by a passing sweep, but the Word scores deeply within its hearers with a penetrating sureness *even to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow*. Therefore, there is a two- fold aspect to this two-mouthed sword; it separates the *joints* of the soul and spirit, and penetrates to the *marrow* of the soul and spirit. We shall deal with these in turn.

The Word Separates the Joints of the Soul and Spirit. God originally created man in perfect harmony with himself, with his surroundings (the world) and with his God. He existed a soul, spirit, and body in perfect balance.³⁷ His soul was properly self-conscious. His spirit was altogether God conscious. His body was adjusted to a proper view of world consciousness. This meant that as a trichotomous being (as God is), and with a correctly adjusted inter-relationship within himself, he possessed a sort of three-dimensional awareness. His threefold being had a close connection (*joints*) within its composition. Each of his parts had a perfectly adjusted, balanced, and intricate relation (*joints*) with each of the other. He had different consciousness levels, but each was in perfect

³⁷ *Thessalonians 5:23*. After creating man in perfect balance with himself, with the whole creation, and with his God, only then God would say on the creation at that sixth day, *it is very good, Genesis 1:31*.

accord with each of the others. He was perfectly self-conscious, but that awareness did not interrupt or struggle with his God-consciousness. He was perfectly world-conscious, and similarly, his awareness of and responsibility towards his surroundings in no way interfered with his awareness of and responsibility toward God. And so it was with his three-fold person, each entity was absolutely beneficial to each of the other two. Altogether, he constituted man as really balanced in every respect with regard to himself, his created surroundings, and his God. All his trichotomous being existed in a perfect harmony with God, with his surroundings, and with himself.

But when man sinned he changed. His knowledge of evil made him evil in his total being. After sin, his balanced existence ended. With sin came an imbalance in the *joints* between soul and spirit and body that disassociated his consciousness levels from the former adjusted inter-relationship. Now as a sinner and a corrupted being, his self-awareness became perverted above the God-consciousness. His world consciousness now was only held with regard to his self consciousness. All his God awareness was dead, non-existent, because that is precisely what sin is. Sin is rejection of God and His ways and His supremacy. When man became a sinner, he of necessity had to have only a consciousness of God that related to the supremacy of himself, in that way he had no consciousness of the true God at all. God and self showed no distinction in consciousness. Sin is the selfish state of the will, which precludes any consideration of God's will. Thus man became a depraved being, whose fundamental substance changed dramatically and irreversibly. The *joints* of his being were now fixed so that the spirit and body members of his trichotomy related only to, and altogether submitted to, the supremacy of his soul, his self-consciousness, himself. His *joints* between the soul, spirit, and body by which all were in perfect and holy balance were now in error, in havoc, in sin. These *joints* now fitted together the spirit, the soul, and the body in a unity of sin against God and in the supremacy of self.



This diagram represents man as he was originally created before the fall in the garden. Now, because of a “fallen” nature, he (his body, soul, and spirit) exists in a single dimension.

Since and because of this fall, there is no apparent difference between the consciousness levels of the soul and spirit in the lost man. Every concept that he has of God is wrapped up in his self-consciousness. His level of God consciousness has fallen to the level as his human mind, will, and affections. Similarly, the soul (with the spirit) has fallen to the level of his body. The lost man thinks, he reasons, he chooses in accord with the likes and dislikes of his body. World consciousness has pervaded his conscious awareness of God, so that, God, to him, has been brought down to serve only his own desires of the body and the fallen desires of a corrupt heart and mind. That is why the lost man, without the sovereign act of regeneration, will never entertain a real God-consciousness. It takes a change in his makeup to effect that. He must be born of God by the power of the Word of God in the Gospel.

This fall of man's consciousness levels to the same level as the drives of his body and to the five senses of the physical is a curse of the adamic nature. Our text refers to the *joints* that determine the boundaries or limits of the soul and spirit as being touched by the Word of God. Indeed, the Word of God does reach them and does re-establish them both—soul and spirit—as entirely separate entities, and by regeneration raises the level of the spirit back to the original level of Adam's creation. That is the Sword of the Word of God. The Word cuts into man to distinguish the separate parts of his being. That is power!

The lost man's spirit lies dormant within him, dead—separated from God. He has a conscience, an intuitive sense of God, and still desires to worship; but it all has fallen to the same vantage point as the drives of his body, to the senses of its feelings, and is discerned only and always in the context of the physical values. This fall produced a man who is no longer three dimensional, but is virtually only one dimensional—self-pleasing and separate from God. But the believer in Jesus Christ experiences a disconnect between these devastated *joints* of his nature. The Word/Spirit of God makes the spirit of the regenerated believer fresh with new life and God-created vitality.³⁸ The Word has intruded into the *joints* of the soul and spirit. That intrusion has worked a separation between them once again, and in the process, has introduced the Word into the soul (the mind, will, and motions) of the new convert. This introduction of the Word produces a new creature in Christ Jesus with the mind of Christ. His God-consciousness is absolutely and perfectly restored.³⁹ The level of his soul, spirit, and body are again distinct, and as *he receives with meekness the engrafted Word*, it will deliberately and methodically raise his soul to the higher level of his spirit.⁴⁰ That is the penetrating power of the heart-seeking Word.

³⁸ *John 3:3,5; I Peter 2:23; James 1:18; Titus 3:5*

³⁹ *I John 3:0* ⁴⁰ *Romans 12:2; James 1:25; II Peter 3:18*

The Word Penetrates to the Marrow of the Soul and Spirit.

While this work of separation at the *joints* of the soul and spirit is performed, there is also a stirring within the *marrow* of soul and spirit. Reaching the *marrow* of a man means the Word “plumbs the depths,” so to speak. It gets to the center, the gist, the kernel, of a person to work change. There is no recess into which the divine revelation fails to reach; it penetrates into all the powers of man. The Word penetrates and separates within the soul and spirit, within the *marrow* of both. The Word probes the inmost recesses of man’s being. It has that ability just as the God who spoke it knows every detail of man’s nature. God constantly attends His Word into the soul and spirit of men.

Therefore, He uses His Word to take soundings of both the soul and the spirit. The God Who created the *soul* of man determined the emotions of man. He created the capacity of the mind, and masters the volition of His creatures. It is through the Word that every thought is valued. It is through the Word that the correctness of one’s volition is weighed. The Word takes the soul of man and constantly measures it against God’s own emotions, mind, and will. The God Who created the *spirit* of man determines just what the spirit of man is, and uses the Word to effect changes within the very *marrow* of the spirit. God penetrates the *marrow* of man through His Word, and thoroughly appraises all that is therein, both in the soul and in the spirit of man.

The Word Intercedes (Intrudes) through its Arbitrability
And is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

God’s Word invades the heart of man and discerns it. The heart is the seat of emotional and rational life, and controls the life of man. His heart determines his activities, his thoughts, his likes and dislikes. It is the real person, being the deepest control center of man, which determines all courses of life’s activities and responses. The Word *discerns*—judges or arbitrates—differences between *the thoughts and intents* of man’s heart, and the thoughts and intents of God. This means that the Word has an arbitrability that contrasts man’s differences with his God. Mr. Vincent

rendered these two words, *thoughts and intents*, as “reflections and conceptions” of the heart.⁴¹ In this phrase, the writer of Hebrews is referring again to the experience of Israel after their unbelief at Kadesh-Barnea. Just as the *sword* of the Amalekites *discerned*—distinguished or judged—between the outward features of men, in order to differentiate the Israelites from their own fellow-Amalekites, so the “Sword of the Word” goes deeper. It arbitrates between the reflections and conceptions of man’s deepest control center, the human heart. The *sword* of the Amalekites distinguished the Israelites from all other kinds of men. It searched them out and slew them only after identifying them as their enemy, Israel, through external characteristics. The writer draws a picture of the Sword of the Word doing likewise, only its arbitrating power looks much deeper than to mere outward or external differences. It judges those unseen reflections and conceptions of the heart of man. Just as Israel faced a threatened fall when identified, so the Word of God challenges every hearer with exposure of his heart’s reflections and conceptions to God and to himself, there to be immediately judged. That judgment distinguishes between man’s and God’s character. The Word then brings the results of that judgment to bear upon the mind of the one being judged. Consequently, the Word is an arbitrator that is constantly determining the value of the reflections and conceptions of the human heart. It brings all the knowledge and particulars of God to weigh upon that heart, causing it to judge itself as either good or evil. The Word is a divine instrument, which tests the heart’s output, whether it is good or bad.

The Word is God’s heart-meter. It appraises the out-flowing of the heart and signals each heart a precise critique regarding quality. “But,” you ask, “how does it do that? The Bible reaches in? Into my heart? How can words judge within my heart, and judge the quality of its reflections and conceptions?” The key is to remember the principle truth of the Living Word. It lives because the Living God carefully and closely attends it. Just the same is

⁴¹ Vincent, Word Studies in the New Testament, Volume IV

here found to be true of the discernment of the Word. The One Who created the heart brings this discernment home to the heart of man. He knows the heart and understands every intricate detail of its symmetry and design. Consequently, He turns back into the heart its own witness; that is, God uses His Word to mirror a heart's own reflections and conceptions back upon itself.⁴² The heart not only is the source of human affections, it also is the sensitive organ of the mind. God's Word turns what comes out of the human heart back upon its own sensibilities. The Word reflects one's own thoughts back to a discernment by the heart who originated them. Oh how the Word of God does that! God stands always alive and active with the Word to make men's hearts feel their own reflections and conceptions, and discern the worth of both.

⁴² *James 1:23-25*

#3 Reason for faith and obedience

III. CHRIST'S CHALLENGE IN THE WORD
SEARCHES WITH AN ALL-SEEING EYE

Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: for all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do. Hebrews 4: 13

This verse contains the second reason for responding correctly to Christ's challenge in His Word. In *verse 12* the writer has presented the Word of God as the medium through which God thrusts His will and way into men. Now he involves the God Who wields the Word. Just as the Living Word has a Living God Who attends its presentation, this verse is centered upon Him as that Living God Who is supporting that Word. The writer passes over from the Word to God Himself. "This transition is all the more natural, in that the attributes, previously ascribed to the word, point collectively to its origin from God, and to the power of God prevailing in it."⁴³ In other words, God's Word challenges all its hearers to a face-off with Christ Himself.

Furthermore, the writer of Hebrews continues with the picture of the *sword* of the Amalekites drawn against Israel as a result of their disbelief of God's Word.⁴⁴ God was, in effect, the controller of that sword, since God used the Amalekites as His agents of discipline against Israel. Now the writer turns attention to the One Who controls and attends that Word with a sword, Christ Himself. It is as if the hearers of the Word were in an arena of combat, not with the enemies of God, but with Christ through His Word. Two things will command our attention in this verse. First, The Look of His Eye is All-Knowing. Second, The Accounting to His Son is All-Methodical.

The Look of His Eye is All-knowing

Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him. Hebrews 4:13a

⁴³ Lange ⁴⁴ Numbers 14:43-45

This portion of the verse contains a negative in the first section, followed by a positive in the last section, the former simply firming up and supporting the latter. As there is no creature (created thing) which is *not manifest in His sight*, so *all things are naked and opened before the eyes of Him*. The negative, *nothing not manifest*, emphasizes the general omniscience of God. He knows all and sees all. But the positive of this portion of our verse, *all things are naked and opened before the eyes of Him*, takes the truth of the former negative and places it in the metaphorical picture of the “Sword of the Word.” *Naked and opened unto His eyes* was the experience of those who perished by the sword of the Amalekites.

Christ Exposes the Vitals, all things are naked ... unto the eyes of Him. This exposure by Christ is intimated in the word, *naked*. It refers to that portion of a warrior that is left uncovered during combat. The Liddle-Scott Greek Lexicon defines this word as “naked, unclad,...unarmed,”⁴⁵ and gives an example of its meaning as the body parts not covered by armor, “exposed parts...especially the right side (the left being covered by the shields).” That is the picture in our verse also. Christ takes the offense with His Word and because of Who He is, there is no armor or shield to hold up against His Word. “Upon the awesome and awful revelation of the power of the Word [in *verse 12*], the author produces this terrible and majestic climax. He Who sends the Word, He the author and creator of all, sees all. We are literally naked before Him, intellectually, morally, spiritually, we are unclad. We are stripped.” (Roddy)

Is it not like the sinful nature of man to attempt to shield himself from the Sword of God’s Word? How many of us at one time or another thought to erect some fleshly barrier to prevent His entrance unto our most secret places? But Christ is the Mighty Warrior with His Word. There is no helmet that will guard the mind from Him. There is no asylum or refuge to hide from the *Sword* that He wields, called the Word of God.

⁴⁵ Liddel and Scott Greek Lexicon

Christ Cleaves the Innards, *all things are ...opened unto the eyes of Him*. This cleaving is alluded to in the word, *opened*, the Greek being τετραχηλισμενα, a perfect passive participle of τραχηλιζω, “to bend back the neck.” It is evidently connected with τραχηλος, “neck, throat,” from which we get our English word, trachea, “the respiratory track.” The mood, voice, and verbal requirements of the Greek would render the word, “having had a neck laid open” to the eyes of Him. This word was used of the gladiators when they triumphed over an opponent. They would pull his head back to expose his face to the shame of the crowd’s view, and to expose the most vulnerable and unprotected area of his body, his neck, to the sword and to certain death. Both ideas are in the word’s use here. As was the custom after defeating an opponent, the gladiator took the point of his sword, held it against his opponent’s chin, and forced him to look squarely into his eyes and into the eyes of the cheering spectators. They then sometimes determined the fate of the defeated with either a thumbs up or thumbs down. The exposed neck became the area of dispatch, the throat was slit quickly, and the defeated victim bled to death.

That is the picture of Christ with the Sword of the Word. He forces its hearers into the vulnerable position of bent back heads, and with necks exposed He swiftly can render us unable to resist His will. His Word, because His hand wields it, gains the victory, and exposes us to His choices for our lives. Oftentimes, we are forced by the Word to look squarely into the eyes of the One Whom we have resisted. And we with shame lay quivering and exposed before Him. Oh! How graciously He allows us to gain our footing anew. He, instead of dispatching us unto death, restores us gently to obedience and faith. Why do we resist the irresistible? Do we sometimes think that He could be a weak opponent? Oh, that we would submit early in the contest! And meet with Him outside the Arena of Antagonism, and fall before Him in sincere repentance to gain His approval. His Word brings us to the arena and to sure exposure of our vitals and to a certain shame of defeat at its/His hand. We, like criminals being taken to

execution, try to look down from the gaze of our Savior when He brings correction through his Word. But unable to escape the dagger-like Word under our chins, we are compelled to look upon Him with Whom we must deal. That look always produces either shame or joy, in accord with our willingness to submit to His Word. May we, therefore, willingly submit to His Word, and avoid these kinds of shameful confrontations with Him and His Word.

The Accounting to God's Son is All-Methodical
Him with whom we have to do. Hebrews 4: 13b

The Methodical Accounting. On the surface this phrase is misleading. It literally reads, “with Whom to us [is] the account...” He used the same Greek rendered *word* as in *verse 12*, λογος. He makes a play on words by using the word λογος in another of its primary meanings, “account.” It is rendered *to do* KJV, where the translators interpreted the sense of it correctly as “giving account” to someone. The writer says that, “God through His λογος (Word both Living and written) has to do with our λογος (account).”⁴⁶ It may be more than a simple play on words that he used λογος in this derivative sense, “account,” in *verse 13*. While the meaning of it would be, “with Whom we give account,” still this accounting will be by the Word or λογος. Every man shall be judged on the basis of Jesus Christ, the Eternal Logos, and on the basis of the written Word, the Bible. The Living Word, Jesus, shall judge His own people, and the written Word will judge the lost (at the Living Word’s personal hand of course). That Logos assures a methodical accounting of *every idle word and deed*. Christ will hold accountable *every deed done in the body, whether it be good or evil*.⁴⁷

The word λογος, as it is used here, refers to an “accounting” or “reckoning” up in orderly arrangement. The word so used in the ancient Greek world carried the idea of accuracy in figures, and was used of the accountingability of stewards or estate-managers.

⁴⁶ Hobbs ⁴⁷ Romans 14:10; II Corinthians 5:10

They had to give “account,” λογος, to their employers. A strict record was required to show the use of every expenditure. In the end, it is to that accounting Christ will hold all, and determine how each met the challenge of His Word. It is to a precise and infallibly accurate accounting (λογος) in a precise and infallibly accurate Word (λογος) to which all will be called on to answer. All men must be careful attendants to know the logos, both the written and living.

Him with Whom we have to do. The power and efficacy of the Word of God is drawn from the nature of Him Whose Word it is, Christ Jesus. Understanding the derivative meanings of λογος makes possible several emphatic renditions. The translator could with equal accuracy render this logos phrase, “Him with Whom we have business,” or “Him Whom we are discoursing,” or “Him to Whom we must give an accounting.” In every phrase possible from the use here of logos, our Lord Jesus Christ is Who to Whom the phrase refers. The one Mediator between God and man is only our Lord. He only is our one Accountant Who by His Gospel work earned the position of Administrating Judge. Who being Himself the Searcher of the heart and discerner of all things, is pleased to exercise that power in and by the ministry and application of His Word in a proven love. It is in that sense of awesomeness that He challenges every hearer to believe and obey. Some who meet the challenge with disbelief, fall as did Israel in the wilderness, but some *believe to the saving of the soul*.⁴⁸ Christ challenges us with sharpness that pierces us to our very core, not just because of His majestic power, but the intensity and penetration of Jesus’ challenge proceeds from His utter devotion to die for us Christians. The greatest persuasion and allurements of Jesus’ Word is Whose Word it is. Our Savior’s Presence with scarred hands and feet, and with a gaping hole in His side, makes His challenge of the utmost regard and esteem.

⁴⁸ *Hebrews 10: 39*

Christ's love is the cause of the great penetration of Christ's Word in the hearts of us for whom He died. We are thus assured that our disobedience will not go unnoticed or unrequited. His Word will not be disregarded without a most frightening remedy from and accounting to that Love, either in this life or in the next.

The Inspired Word makes divine intervention inevitable. To fail to heed its claims is to fail to heed Christ Himself. Therefore, it is imperative upon us to answer every challenge of a "Thus saith the Lord" with a resounding, "I believe." Because of its ability to engage the Living and Reigning Christ, because of its penetrability to reach the *joints and marrow* of man's nature, and because of its arbitrability to weigh every reflection and conception of the heart, we are without excuse if we fail to react with spontaneous faith bringing obedience. May God give to us a believing heart, filled with the challenges of His Word, to motivate us to go forth into our respective Canaans, to engage the enemies, to win ground for the honor of Christ, and to live as Christ's Authentic Disciples.

Amen