There remaineth therefore a Rest for the people of God."

In this chapter we have a brief but conclusive argument for the doctrine of a future Retribution, in another world. There was this reason for Paul's making an arg. on this subject at that time: the people to whom he was writing, and whom he calls Hebrews, were divided into two Religious Sects or Denominations, the Pharisees and the Sadducees. Those latter religionists openly professed their disbelief in the doctrine of a future state, and were the Professional Skeptics of that age. Now as Paul earnestly desired the conversion of his own countrymen, and sought to convince them of the identity of the New or Christian Dispensation with the Mosaic,
he drew his reasonings and arg: from the Old Testament, in which the Sadducees professed to believe, although they rec the writings of the Old Testament under a false interpretation.

That point of doctrine to which Paul is addressing himself in this fourth chapter, then, is the doctrine of a Blessed futurity which is taught in the Old Testament out to all God's children as their gracious reward after this life of toil, and which he calls, Rest. These Sadducees (as the materialists of our day do) held that all the recompense that is granted, or that we have any right to expect, is merely temporal prosperity.

The Jews generally were prone to lose sight of the spiritual blessings which were included in the promises made by God to the Patriarchs, and to
confine themselves to an interpretation of God's covenant which held out only temporal good. The idea of both was that the promised land of Canaan was the real rest offered; that it was no emblem of any other good thing. But Paul's argument is this: that if Joshua who led them into Canaan had given them the final rest and no other was ever to succeed that, then no allusion would ever after have been made in the Old Testament to another rest. But he proceeds to show that in a subsequent part of the Old Testament, reference was made by David the inspired Psalmist in the 17th verse of the ninety-fifth Psalm, to another rest, and this reference was made, and this other rest spoken of four hundred years after Joshua had settled them.
in the Canaan which was but the emblem of the
better rest that was promised. Having thus drawn his
proofs from the O.T. whose authority they all
acknowledged, he closes the argument in the
words of our text: “There remaineth therefore
a rest for the people of God.” The forty years’
Pilgrimage of God’s and Chosen people into Canaan
the Wilderness, and the entrance of but two of
the entire 300000 who left Egypt, who was a
striking emblem of the state and condition of God’s
Chosen people in these latter days. They are now
on their pilgrim march through this earthly
wilderness of human life, and have not as yet
entered into their rest. But it remains “stores
up for them above,” and while it may still be true that “many shall seek to enter in but
shall not be able; it will be a failure for the
same reason that excluded the Israelites of old, viz.,
unbelief. And it is still true that all who
like Caleb and Joshua, believe in the word of
promise of God, shall share in that rest.

What then is that rest here spoken of? It is well,
for us to entertain suitable views of this rest
so as to ascertain our own fitness for it.

1. I remark then, that there is to every child
of God a double experience of this rest;
as he realizes it in time and in Eternity,
on earth and in Heaven. There are some elements
which are identical in this rest in both
periods and in both states of Being. There is
a present enjoyment of this rest, and this is
a foretaste of that which is to be enjoyed in
the endless future, there is a rest into which God's people enter here on this earth, and although greatly interrupted and much contorted by the surroundings of sin and sorrow, still it derives its origin from the same Divine source, which produces the Rest of Heaven. The Apostle in this Chapter says, "We who believe do enter into rest." John the Baptist said to the multitude, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." So that the one identical element common to the spiritual Rest of earth and of Heaven, of Time and of Eternity, is that which can only be found in God Himself, - in His Love and favor through Jesus Christ, - in His favor which is Life, and in His loving-kindness which is
better than life." If therefore any one supposes that the Rest that remaineth for the people of God is something that is to burst upon their enraptured vision, and to develop itself in a sudden burst of joy never before dreamed of; something in reserve for any one who wishes it, but who lives in this world without any experience of its inspiring influence, or its blessed peaceful manifestations, it is much to be feared that in most, or if not in all such cases, there is fatal delusion. It is certain that until the soul has been drawn by the Spirit to repose the heavy burden of its guilt upon the only Savior Jesus Christ, and thus through Christ to behold God as its reconciled Father, and
to feel that its choice is irrevocably made of God as the supreme object of its affections, that "God is its exceeding joy," it cannot know anything whatever of the soul-rest which is in reserve for every child of God. When this process of Heavenly influence has been experienced; when these powerful and radical operations have been wrought in the soul, then there is infused through all the departments of his being the sweet tranquillity that arises from a sense of Pardon, Peace, and reconciliation with God; then he knows of the existence within him of that "peace that passeth understanding." This then is the beginning of an endless Rest, the earnest of that inheritance that is incor
sceptible, undefiled, and that cannot fade away; a foretaste of that "rest that remaineth for the people of God" in Heaven.

2. Yet though the same in kind, derived from the same source, it is greatly inferior in degree. It is far from perfection; far from being complete. Mercifully granted to His children to cheer them, to strengthen them, to sustain them in the toilsome march through this world, it is still only a faint shadow of that rest of immortality above. For though "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him," yet
These things are modified greatly by what is seen and felt from the unavailing mingling with a sinful world around him; in the sweetest draught of his heavenly joy there are drops of bitterness mixed; the brightest sky of his heavenly prospects is often overcast; the most profound peace he ever enjoys is subject to be disturbed; the most exquisite joy that ever thrills his soul is incomplete. Many are the interrupting causes of Christian joy, just in this world; much of this disturbance arises from ourselves: we are not well balanced, easily disturbed; not fully on our guard; often slumbering or "at ease in Zion". There are also many causes of interruption to our peace in the
world around us; we are passing through an enemy's country; the atmosphere is unfriendly to spiritual peace; the inhabitants of this land through which we are traveling on to our home above, are hostile and uncivil; and while there is sweetness and peace, and many friends with us, and brightness beaming down upon our gloom from the throne of our Father; and sweet sympathy and tender Christian love shown us; yet amidst all these mingled joys and sorrows, these rests and toils, we can feel enough of the imperfection of our state to teach us that this is not our abiding city; that we are strangers and pilgrims, "seeking a better city even an heavenly;" whose builder and maker is God.

"
3. But now comes in the midst of the deepest depression of the Christian's soul when he finds his sweetest experience of the rest of God's people so much marred by opposing disturbances, comes the voice of the Spirit, the Comforter, in the words, "there remaineth a rest for the people of God" which is complete, uninterrupted and endless. Let us look into its nature, and we find that it is to be understood as something negative as well as something positive—rest from something, rest in something. So that we may best gather its significance by considering those matters now marred it from which we shall then be forever free. I remark then that the rest that remaineth is entire absence of freedom from all toil and labor such as is necessary here below.
far from being wrong or disreputable; it is noble and honorable. But many a child of God is worn and weak, by toils for which they have no strength, and hard and thankless, and ill requited labor has sunk many poor and feeble into the grave.

2. This rest is freedom from care and perplexity. There will be no cause for it; no painful harassing anxiety about your course or future to meet the responsibilities of life.

3. There will be none of the diseases and infirmities that sap the vitality of our perishable bodies here; the inhabitants of that blest land of immortal rest shall no more say "I am sick."

4. No fear, no doubts, no sorrows, no bereavements shall be found there.

5. The rest that remaineth is freedom from all
those temptations, those fiery darts of the wicked,
One which so often do fiercely assault us here.
6. We rest there from the convictions of an awakened conscience, which so often sting us here; from the dread forebodings of our guilt which arise in us here.
7. There we shall be no more conscious of rebellious thoughts of God; all insatiate passions and clamorous desires for unlawful gratifications will be excluded.
8. There will be no heart burnings, jealousies, no misunderstandings and coldness of friendships, none of those alienations which here so often separate chief friends.
9. There too we shall be forever free from all apprehension of death. Many true children
of God are all their lifetime subject unto bondage through the fear of death. But in that land of immortal rest, death shall never cast his gloomy shadow over the bright plains of glory. But positively it may be defined to consist. In brief, there will be this perfect rest in Heaven from every thing that is evil or troublesome, or disastrous, just because there will be an everlasting and complete rest from sin, which is the cause of all that mars the Christian's rest even in this world.

But it is something more than this mere freedom from evil; it is a positive enjoyment of all that is good and blissful.

(1) To see God, to repose our souls in Him, to be for
ever present with Him; no intervening cloud to hide from us the Light of God's countenance as He smiles upon us; the glass through which to look darkly, but face to face, knowing as we are known; filled with the fulness of God's knowledge, Righteousness and True Holiness; to find our Society to be the élite of the whole world, Prophets, Apostles, and Saints of all ages; and this rest is not indolent repose, but the most active engagement of all our powers and faculties in doing God's Will, singing the new song of Moses and the Lamb, the Lamb and the Gospel, and then what intensifies this glorious Rest is that it is endless. From those heavenly mansions, the chits of God "Shall go no more out forever!"
But how shall we test the question as to our selves? How decide that we shall be of the class for whom this "rest remaineth"? It is by attending to the question what constitutes this rest or Bliss in our present conception? Every one possesses some tastes and feelings to which he conceives that Heaven will correspond. Do you anticipate a Heaven because it is a place of Repose? Do you love to dwell upon the idea because of the simple hope that you shall there meet the dear departed whom you once loved here, and for whose society you have been yearning through all the long years of darkest sorrow? Or do you prize Heaven because you conceive it to be a place where you shall with perfected powers and
and a cloudless medium of all things connected with the mysteries of nature, the secrets of Providence, and the blessed but still unfolded treasures of God's plan of Grace? If these be your thoughts and anticipations, you need to be told that "you have none of that desire that proves a title to possession." We do not ignore these elements, but we hold them to be subordinate to the grand, essential substance of that bliss which constitutes Heaven. Let us ask ourselves whether we desire Heaven because God is there,—because Christ is there—in short whether it would be the Heaven of our desires, if God and Christ were the only objects there, to be enjoyed. We ask you to remember that John tells us that "The Lord God Almighty, the Lamb is the Temple of it."
4. It remains to inquire for whom is this rest provided? We answer it is provided for all the true people of God; for all who love our Lord Jesus Christ. Here introduce 17 (10) and the sight thereof. If these be our anticipations then it matters not how lowly, however obscure or unknown. God's people are often hid. It matters not how lofty, how great how eminent. This rest is for men of every class and condition. There is not among Earth's loftiest one who is worthy even of the least share in this glory; there is not among Earth's in himself considered lowest one who is beneath the possibility of being admitted to this Blissful rest. But it is not station or power or wealth, that can entitle one to this rest. Nor is it merely poverty, sickness or misery that
can move the Divine Sympathies to admit us to this Rest.

But it is a gift purchased by the blood of His Free, unmerited, and bestowed by God.

It is a rest in one of those mansions prepared by the Son of God of which He told His disciples there were many in His Father’s house, &c.

It is a rest promised to every child of God. We who believe do enter into, but we abide in this rest forever ever.

The seal of God’s promise this oath is upon the Covenant of Peace made with us, & the sanction is the precious blood of Jesus Christ shed for the sins of all God’s people to the end of time.
and through the roll of Eternity's years!

Application.

1. This subject has a very bright side for the dear people of God. To derive the benefit it holds forth, it must be dwelt upon more. The anct. racer in Olympic games, might sometimes grow weary, and almost despair of victory; but he would forget the crown, that was to reward his toil, was hung out before his view, and the very sight of it stirred his waning ambition and infused tenfold vigor into his frame, and he rushed forward to seize the prize.

Let us then turn our languid eye upon the great prize of Heavenly Rest, the crown of Glory that fades not away. It will...
cheer and comfort us, and send us on our way rejoicing in our prospects, and stimulate us to redouble our efforts to win the prize.

It has also a dark side for any who love not the Lord; i.e., for in this chapter we learn that there were some of whom God says they could not enter in because of unbelief—and in 95 Ps. 11 verse, He declares, that unto them He swear that they should never enter into this Rest. Dreadful fate, when you shall see one and another of ye, to be thrust out, when you shall see the door shut and when you knock for admittance, to be told, “Depart from me all ye workers of iniquity, I knew you!”