

Editorial

With this issue *Historicism* shifts its focus of attention from the Old Testament book of Daniel to the New Testament book of Hebrews. Misunderstanding both books, some have pitted them against each other as if they disagreed. It is true that their authors do not have identical points of view, but what we should emphasize is the fact that they do not contradict each other.

One difference between Daniel and Hebrews is that there is nothing apocalyptic about Hebrews. Heaven and earth symbolism are well represented but there is no mention of the distant future. The emphasis throughout is on present realities. This is a major point. The author of Hebrews is not setting out to show what would happen later in 1844. Daniel is. And so we need to have a paradigm that is large enough to accommodate both points of view.

There are two other facts about the book of Hebrews that we must come to grips with at the outset. First, the author develops his thought gradually. It does not spring forth fully developed at Heb 1:1. On the contrary, later sections build on earlier ones over the entire course of the discussion. Thus, in chap. 1 Christ is in heaven. In chaps. 4 and 5 He serves as our High Priest. In chap. 8 His priestly ministry occurs in a sanctuary. And in chap. 9 the sanctuary on earth at least has two apartments. If the "copy and shadow" (Heb 8:5) resembles what it was copied from, this feature could be extended to the one in heaven. But in chap. 6 we have not yet gotten this far.

The second fact mentioned above is that the author uses his sanctuary terminology in a flexible manner. If we forget such other passages as John 2:20; 1 Cor 3:16-17; 6:19-20; 2 Cor 6:16; Eph 2:21; and Rev 3:12 and demand that in Hebrews all sanctuary terminology must apply either to the typical sanctuary on earth or to the antitypical sanctuary in heaven, then Hebrews will prove a very frustrating object of study. The author does not limit himself in this way and we will have to learn not to if we wish to understand his intent.

In this regard consider Heb 10:20 ("by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body"). Here the author is not speaking of the heavenly sanctuary in a metaphorical way which compromises its reality. Instead he is speaking of something altogether different. The terms are borrowed from the sanctuary, but the contrast is between heaven and earth (see Heb 7:26b). In Hebrews this is another major category of usage. But if there is no third sanctuary, nor in saying this do we take anything away from the two sanctuaries that we know about. The veil in Heb 10:20 is what separates us from God's presence. Christ transcends that barrier by going to heaven and entering the presence of God on our behalf. The heavenly sanctuary is real, but in this case the author is not talking about it.

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