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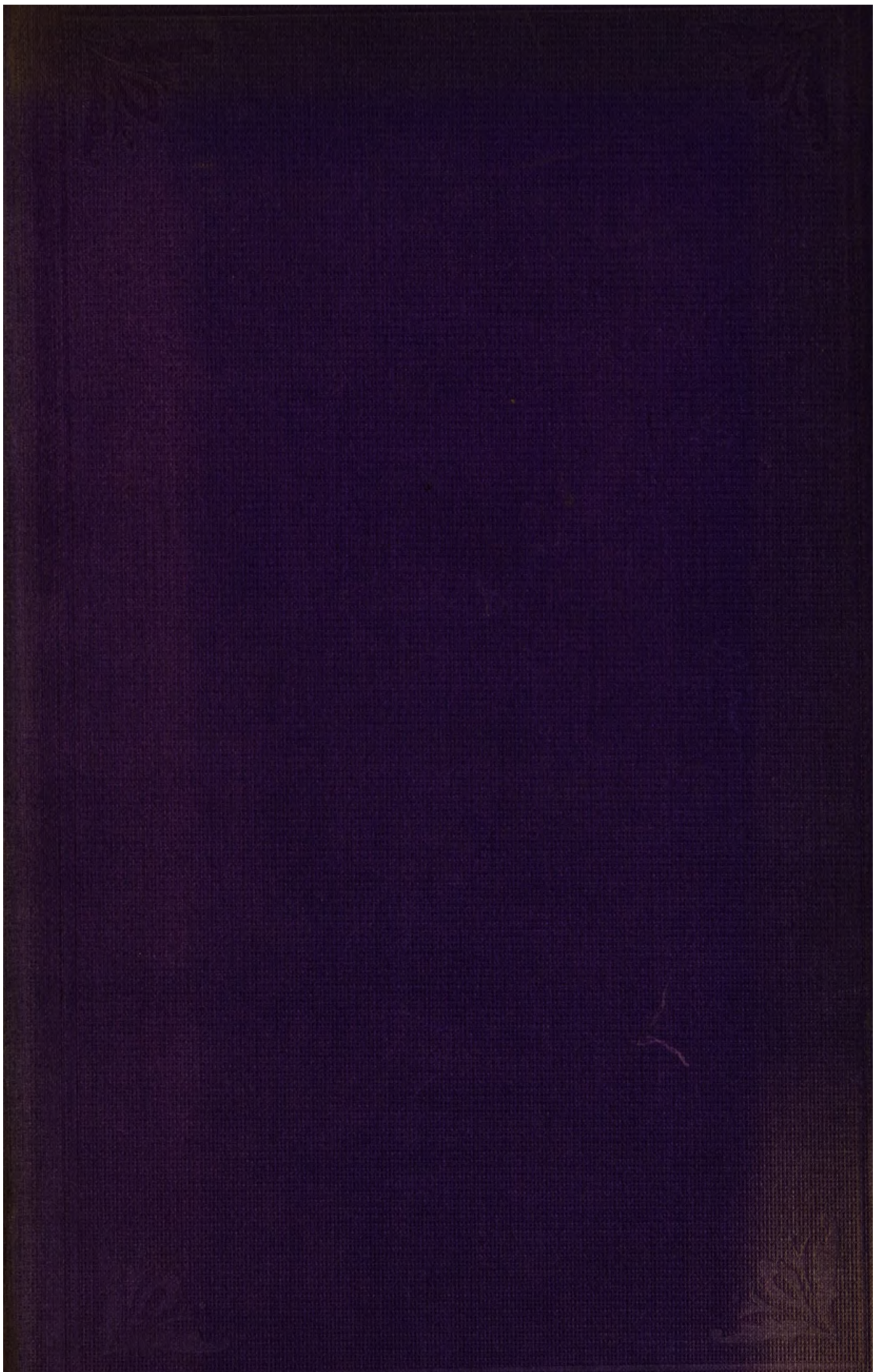
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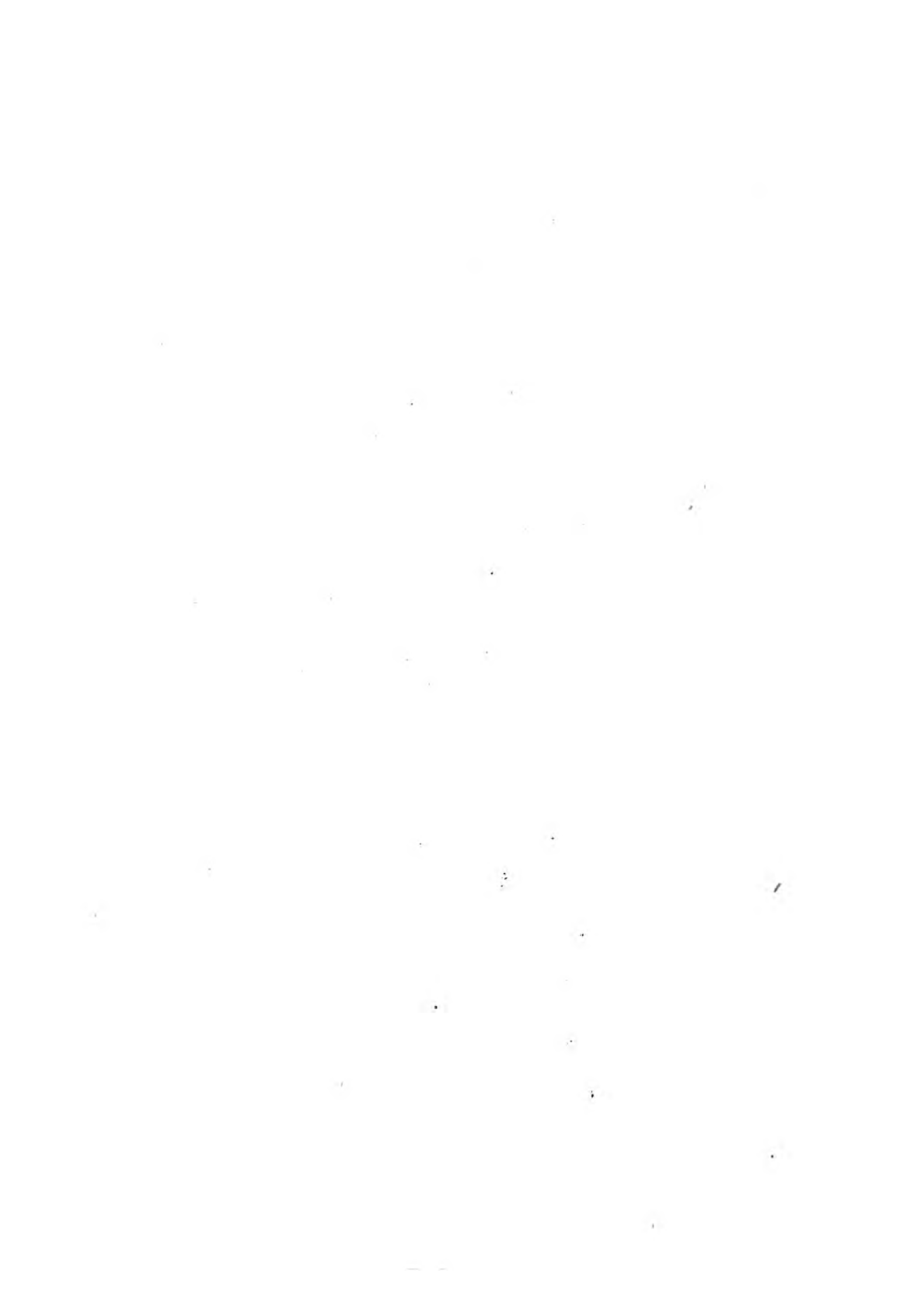
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THE
DONNELLAN LECTURES
FOR
1871 & 1872.



THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

A Justification

OF ITS

National Title and Character,

AND AN

EXPOSITION OF CONTROVERTED PASSAGES IN
CONFORMITY THEREWITH.

THE DONNELLAN LECTURES,

PREACHED BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN, IN
THE YEARS 1871 & 1872.

BY

JOHN LEECH, M.A., T.C.D.



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PREFACE.

THE writer, while preparing many years ago to take Holy Orders in the United Church of England and Ireland, felt dissatisfied with the explanations hitherto given by Commentators to Heb. xiii. 10-17, and framed an explanation contained in a letter published in "The Christian Examiner," Jan. 7, 1860. This exposition he subsequently supported by another letter, published in the same periodical, in reply to a serious objection raised by a learned Divine,—an ornament of the Church of Ireland. The principle laid down in those letters (embodied and expanded in the sixth lecture) is,—that the passage refers to the Hebrew people, and not to any Christian Church. This principle has been in the following pages extended to the Epistle itself,—by attempting (as in the first lecture), to shew that the Epistle (to whomsoever sent) was designed for the benefit of the Hebrew people, and not for only the believing section thereof, and by explaining in that sense, portions of the epistle, which in their ordinary

application have been encompassed with considerable difficulty.

To the kindness of the Provost and Senior Fellows of Trinity College in the University of Dublin, the writer is deeply indebted for the favourable auspices under which he is enabled to bring these lectures before the public.

The views advocated in the following pages are, he confesses, new ; and run counter to those found in even the latest and most esteemed commentaries ; but the author would respectfully ask of his readers the favour of a patient and impartial hearing before the verdict is pronounced.

MITCHELSTOWN,

April 10, 1874.

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LECTURE I.

A JUSTIFICATION OF TITLE.

“God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.”—HEB. i. 1, 2.

IN the first of this course of lectures we shall endeavour to ascertain ‘for what readers the Epistle was designed;’ for this question once settled will materially aid us in our subsequent investigations.

Commentators have carelessly treated as one the two very distinct questions,—‘To whom was the Epistle sent?’—and, ‘For what readers was it designed?’ In our search for the answer to the latter question, we shall endeavour to avoid this confusion.

In their views with regard to our question expositors seem to us to be as inconsistent with the truth, as they are divergent from each other: they have not even noticed the only answer, which appears to us to satisfy the question, ‘For what readers was it written?’—an answer, nevertheless, suggested by the very title, which for ages the Epistle has borne, ‘The Epistle to the Hebrews.’

This ancient title, we admit, possesses no authority ; still it is suggestive ; and on due examination we trust to make it clear—that to whomsoever the Epistle was sent, it was written for the Hebrew nation at large, as its readers.

Unquestionably it was intended to strengthen and comfort the believing section of the Jews, who acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah, and to confirm the wavering among them ; but it was also intended that the Hebrew Christians should, by its means, persuade their unbelieving Brethren to embrace the faith of Jesus ; for it was the prayer and heart's desire of all believing Hebrews for Israel that they might be saved. In this Epistle arguments were supplied as well for attack as for defence, not only such as were fitted to silence the foe, but also those best suited for his conversion. If, on the one hand, the Jew is shown the inefficacy of any or all the ordinances of the law to make the comers thereunto perfect, on the other the power of Jesus, our great High Priest, through the offering of himself, to save for evermore all that come unto God through Him, is forcibly proved ; an evidence in itself that the Epistle was designed for the nation.

Without venturing to express any estimate of the value of one commentary (M'Knight's) we desire to direct your attention to language in its preface expressing, in the main, our views ; language the more singular from the fact, that its author strenu-

ously opposes, throughout the pages of his exposition, the opinions expressed in his preface. The language I refer to is the following: "As the arguments made use of in this Epistle for explaining and proving the important matters, of which it treats, are all taken from Jewish Scriptures, there can be little doubt that it was written for the purpose of persuading the unbelieving Jews everywhere to renounce Judaism and embrace the Gospel; as well as for the purpose of establishing the believing Jews in the profession of Christianity. Being therefore a letter to the whole Jewish nation, the writer intended that the believing Hebrews in Judea, to whom it was sent, should communicate it to their unbelieving Brethren everywhere who choosed to read it."

In support of the thesis, that the Epistle to the Hebrews was designed for the Hebrew nation at large, I proceed to examine the character of the arguments employed by the Sacred Writer in the first two chapters of this Epistle, and in entering on the consideration of the proof I adopt the grave and apposite remarks of the learned Ebrard, that "the readers on their part could not possibly have understood the Epistle to the Hebrews, if, like the rest of the New Testament Epistles, it had been read a single time before an assembly of the Church. The Epistle to the Hebrews, in order to be understood, must be gone through section by section, slowly, carefully, and repeatedly, with continued

comparison of the Old Testament passages cited in it, and their connection. Upon this the author has evidently reckoned."

In the beginning of this Epistle the inspired writer states, that "God, who in many parts or fragments, and in divers manners, spake in timepast to the Fathers in the Prophets, at the end of these days spake unto us in His Son;" and our present object is to ascertain who are the people designated by the term "us," contrasted (as it manifestly is) with the phrase—"the Fathers."

With such contrasts, in regard to the past and present or future generations of the house of Jacob, occurring so frequently in Holy Scripture, you are doubtless familiar. It may, however, be desirable to bring under your notice one or two examples: passing by those in which the term 'our Fathers' is met, we quote two more nearly approaching the expressions in our text. In Acts iii., St. Peter, on the day of Pentecost, in the course of his address speaks thus:—"Moses truly said unto the Fathers a Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you,"—that is, unto the nation at some future period. And St. Paul, in the Synagogue of Antioch (as we read Acts xiii., 32, 33), uses these words, viz.:—"The promise which was made unto the Fathers God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children." These suffice to show, under the terms 'us' and 'you,' the Hebrew nation in the days of the Apostles in contrast with preceding generations styled "the

Fathers ;” and it is our aim to show that by the term ‘us’ in our text, placed as it is in antithesis to the term ‘the Fathers,’ is signified in like manner the Hebrew nation at the date of our epistle, and not any church of Hebrew Christians only, nor “all* who have heard God’s voice or to whom it is to be announced.”

Let us proceed with our examination of the proof: in our text and the two following verses we have a statement of his position made by our author: in them he says, as part of his statement, that God “spake unto us by his Son,” and it is manifestly his object to establish that Jesus, spoken of as “the Lord” in chap. ii., 3, and expressly named “Jesus” in chap. ii., 9, is this Son of God,—is “His Son.”

Now you remember that this title, “His Son” or “the Son of God,” is the very title for the assumption of which by Jesus the Hebrew nation became his “Betrayers and murderers;” “we have,” said his accusers, “we have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God:” here is the indictment against Jesus: it professes to be grounded on Holy Scripture, though no passage therefrom is produced in its support.

In opposition to this charge preferred by the Rulers, passages from the Psalms and other books of Holy Writ, admitted at the time to speak of Messiah, are adduced in evidence in the first two chapters of this Epistle. In considering these

* Dean Alford in *loco*.

passages we must not forget that these two titles—“Messiah” or “Christ” and “the Son of God,” were attached by the Jews to the same expected Personage. This is distinctly brought out on the trial of Jesus, when the High Priest adjures him thus, Matt. xxvi. 63, “I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ the Son of God;” and this was the faith of the disciples of Jesus, for they confessed him to be both “the Christ” and “the Son of the living God.” (Matt. xvi. 16, John vi. 69, and xx. 31).

And what is the nature of the evidence (without entering into minute detail) presented to our view? We have several titles in support of his statement, appropriated by our author to Jesus. These messianic titles style him “the Son of God,” *e. g.* in the second Psalm: “Thou art my Son:” in another, the 45th, Messiah is addressed as “God,” in a third, he is styled Lord or Jehovah, and creation is ascribed to him. The angels, in another, are commanded to worship Him; and further, both Messiah’s session at the right hand of God, and his brotherhood with the Hebrew nation, are directly asserted from the cx. and xxii. Psalms—and here we cannot refrain from drawing your attention to the admirable skill with which the inspired writer of this Epistle handles the writings of the Old Testament: he quotes the xxii. Psalm to prove that, in common with the children, Messiah is partaker of the flesh and blood of Abraham; but by quoting

that Psalm for his readers he, with incomparable tact, insinuates to the Jewish mind the passion, and death, and resurrection of Messiah ; just as by his quotation of Psalm cx., he gently leads to the fact—that Messiah is a Priest after the order of Melchisedec. Thus our author reasons out of the Scriptures, and portrays, in truest colours, the dignity and majesty, the humiliation and the crowning with honour and glory of Messiah.

Now wherein lay the force of these passages of Holy Writ ? Was it not in this, that these Psalms, in the time of our Saviour and his Apostles, were admitted universally by the Hebrew nation to belong to the Messiah ? Otherwise their keen edge could have been turned with ease, by denying their application. They are applied, you observe, directly as proof by the sacred writer, not by way of accommodation ; and we may conclude, from the manner of quotation, (without any attempt whatever to prove that they belong to Him), that they were all acknowledged, at the time, to speak of Messiah.

But, admitting that these prophecies quoted relate to the Messiah, how are we able to show that Jesus is the Messiah—the Son of God ? Only by showing that they all meet and find their fulfilment in Jesus.

About some points no difficulty could arise, viz., about the crucifixion and death of Jesus ; about the parting His garments and casting lots for His vesture ; in a word, about those things that

come within the range of ordinary testimony. The rest must be proved, whether to Jew or Gentile, in the only way in which they could be proved, by an appeal to miracles, and by an appeal to such they were proved.

That in Jesus those portions of Scripture were fulfilled, which relate to His divine nature, His condescension, His resurrection, His ascension, reception to glory, and session at His Father's right hand, was proved by miracles wrought by the Apostles and Saints :—" God," as recorded in Heb. ii., "bearing witness both with signs and wonders and divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost."

Let us, for a few moments, reflect on the mode of proof employed to show that Jesus is "the Son of God."

Two methods were at hand, by either of which the writer might have proved his position, and established the right of Jesus to the title which he claimed—one by an appeal to miracles, which would have established the divine character of the writer's mission ; then he could with authority proclaim Jesus to be the "Son of God ;" the other, by an appeal to the Scriptures as to the birth and sufferings of Messiah, and a reference to the history of the life of Jesus for their fulfilment, combined with an appeal to the miracles wrought, not by the writer himself, but by the followers of Jesus, and this in proof of those prophecies and

events being fulfilled, which could not be confirmed except by miracle (*e. g.*, the ascension and session at the right hand of the Majesty on high), the divine authority of the writer's own mission being, for the time, suffered to lie in abeyance.

Now, it is the latter method, which has in this epistle been adopted ; reliance is not placed on miracles and authoritative preaching, but the first resort is to Holy Scripture, to prove all that can be proved therefrom, and when an appeal to miracles is made, it is to miracles publicly wrought (as a matter of historic fact and notoriety), and not to miracles wrought, or capable of being wrought, by the writer himself.

Now, if all the readers for whom this Epistle was intended were by profession Christians, acknowledging the divine mission of the Apostles and Evangelists, is not such a mode of procedure, such a line of argument, without parallel in the whole of the New Testament? We see very clearly that the statements made by the sacred writer, are not pressed home by one who, in the Epistle, claims the inspiration of an apostle boldly and avowedly, but unimpeachable testimony from Holy Writ is laid out before the readers and left to find its way by the force of its truth. Would not all this have been a most round-about method with a people who, having professed Christianity, had already embraced the truths now sought to be inculcated by our author ?

To the body of believers, whether Jew or Gentile, or both, the miraculous powers with which the early Christians were so largely endowed, while the Jewish Synagogue was not so favoured, afforded in themselves abundant proof that Jesus was what he claimed to be, "the Son of God." Such portions, then, of the New Testament, as were written for Christian readers, do not attempt to prove the truth of the Gospel revelation, or of the offices of Jesus. That would have been superfluous in what was designed for those who had already become Christians, and had become such, not like us, from having been born and educated in a Christian country, but who had enrolled themselves under Christ's banner, in contradiction to all their early prejudices, in opposition, often, to the entreaties of their friends, and to the threats of opponents, in defiance, often, of persecution and ridicule, and various other difficulties : To such persons any arguments, tending to prove what they so firmly believed already, would have been manifestly out of place.

To the Christian, then, of the Apostolic age, Scripture, as proof, was superfluous ; but proofs from the sacred volume were a mighty weapon against the unbelief of the Jews. They induced them to believe, or fastened on them their guilt. If they denied the application of the passages of Scripture to Messiah, they ran counter to the interpretation heretofore allowed by the nation ; and

if they admitted their application, they established (in conjunction with the miracles His disciples wrought), the claim of Jesus to be their Messiah, and exposed themselves to the retort: "Why did ye not then believe him?"

Ere the prophetic psalms relating to Messiah, and quoted in this Epistle, were fulfilled, Jesus said to the Jews: "Believe the works;" but after the day of Pentecost the testimony of Scripture, and the historic facts concerning Jesus, together with the gifts and mighty works of the Holy Ghost, are the moving power against the unbelief of the Jewish nation.

And now we would found an argument on a remarkable fact, noted both by Estius and by Grotius; a fact of too great importance to be overlooked, and which ought to be accounted for—that the calling of the Gentiles is designedly kept out of view, throughout the whole of this Epistle!

In Epistles to Churches, composed of believing Jews and Gentiles, such a studied reserve does not occur: in them the believing Jews, in common with their Gentile brethren, have their minds constantly directed to the bringing in of the Gentiles into the Church; and it is assumed by the writers of those Epistles that against receiving and reading such Epistles no prejudice would exist; for the calling of the Gentiles is now implied, now stated, now reasoned on; as for instance, in the Epistles to the Galatians and the Romans; to the latter of whom,

according to Dean Alford, the Epistle to the Hebrews was sent. Now, how is this to be accounted for? Why is this mystery—the admission of the Gentiles into the fold, suppressed in this Epistle so completely, that a hint of it does not crop up throughout the whole! Surely the believing Jews, to whom it was sent, recognized the decrees which (Acts xvi. 4) “were ordained by the Apostles and Elders.” On the hypothesis that the Epistle to the Hebrews was not only sent to but designed for the believing Jews, and not for the Hebrew nation, this fact (like the suppression of the writer’s name) cannot be explained. But if, as we suggest, the Epistle was sent to converted Jews, while designed for the benefit of the whole nation, we can see a valid reason for such a prudent reserve on the subject of the mystery of the Gentiles; all the prejudices of the unconverted Jew would at once have been aroused, if such a subject, as that of the calling of the Gentiles had appeared in the Epistle. We cannot forget that, when the Apostle of the Gentiles, in making his defence at Jerusalem, avowed that his mission was to the Gentiles “they gave him audience to this word, and then lifted up their voices and said, away with such a fellow from the earth” (Acts xxii. 22), and that the Jews are characterised as “forbidding” “to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved” (1 Thess. ii. 16).

Since then the prejudices of the Jews were of such strength, and the writer’s heart yearned for

the salvation of his unbelieving brethren, he would, with consummate judgment, refrain from presenting to their notice the subject of the calling of the Gentiles, on the principle avowed in the Epistle to the Corinthians :—"unto the Jews I became a Jew, that I might gain the Jews" (1 Cor. ix. 20).

Remember too that the writer was (as we learn especially from the last chapter) well known to those to whom he wrote. Had he written only for them as well as to them, his name might, with perfect safety, have been attached ; but if he hoped that his letter would, through the hands of those to whom he wrote, come under the notice of his unconverted brethren, then the suppression of his name is at once explained, and the concealment of the calling of the Gentiles is accounted for.

In accordance with this remarkable fact, and confirmatory of the view, which is advocated in this discourse, is another fact, which, if noticed at all, has not received due attention. It is very clear that as God has granted to the nations repentance unto life, so hath he redeemed the Gentile equally with the Jew ; yet this redemption is unrevealed in this Epistle from beginning to the end ; and where opportunity of it occurs, the subject is, by the peculiar choice of words, most carefully avoided. To Christians, and to Christian Churches it is written "that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself;" that "Jesus Christ the righteous" . . . "is the propitiation" . . .

“for the sins of the whole world;” and that he “hath redeemed us to God by his blood . . . out of every people and nation;” but in this Epistle Jesus is said to “sanctify *the people* with his blood;” and calm and impartial criticism will, we are persuaded, lead to the conclusion—that only the Hebrew nation is meant by the term “the people” in Heb. xiii. 12, where this expression is found. From chap. ii. 17, where “reconciliation for the sins of the people occurs, to the end of the Epistle we meet *λαός*—the people, at least twelve times besides: in most cases its reference to the Hebrew nation only, is undoubted, and in no instance can it be proved to apply to mankind. The deliberate avoidance of *κόσμος* and the use of *λαός* indicates that every word which would prejudice the Jewish mind against the gospel is avoided.

We now proceed to show that a line of argument, analogous to that contained in the first two chapters of this Epistle, was invariably adopted by Apostles and Evangelists in their addresses to the unconverted Jews, whether before the council or in the synagogue, before kings or priests of the Jewish people. Happily we are, in the Acts of the Apostles, furnished with specimens of the manner, in which not only the Church, but the Synagogue and the Gentiles—the nations, as yet outside the Church, were addressed.

We naturally turn first to the sketch of that

bold and striking discourse delivered on the day of Pentecost to the people of Israel, assembled as they were, "out of every nation under heaven." When St. Peter has indignantly repelled the slanderous charge of the "men of Judea," he then addresses the nation in these words—"Ye men of Israel hear these words—Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know;" (Acts ii. 22). And then, in the thirty-sixth verse, he concludes thus, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made the same Jesus, whom ye crucified, both Lord and Christ." While our Lord is styled only "Jesus," in the commencement of his discourse, "that same Jesus," at the conclusion is declared by St. Peter to have been made by God "both Lord and Christ." And how are the "men of Israel,"—"all the house of Israel," expected to arrive at and adopt the Apostle's conclusion? Why, (to use the words of Dean Alford's Commentary on this discourse), "all hitherto said has gone upon proofs and sayings belonging to Israel, and to all Israel." Like the author of our Epistle, St. Peter has recourse not only to signs and wonders, and miracles, but (as in Israel's case was essential) to Holy Scripture also; and one of the passages quoted in his discourse is from Psalm cx. (the very passage, among others,

selected by the writer of our Epistle) to prove to unbelieving Israel that Jesus is the Messiah "crowned with glory and honour."

From St. Peter's address to the "men of Israel" in Jerusalem we turn to that of St. Paul, at Antioch in Pisidia, to the "children of the stock of Abraham." He meets them in the Synagogue; and, having rapidly glanced at the successive governments of the nation, he proceeds with his address in these terms, "Men *and* Brethren." First he charges them with culpable ignorance of "the voices of the prophets," ignorance which led to the condemnation and murder of the "Saviour, Jesus;" and when he has borne testimony to the resurrection, he then explains and reasons from those voices of the prophets. Isaiah and David (exactly as in the first two chapters of the Epistles to the Hebrews) are adduced, and that portion of Psalm ii. employed in Heb. i. 5 for the same purpose, is quoted to prove (as stated in Heb. i. 2) that Jesus is "the Son of God;" and, as in these two instances, the speech of Peter to the "men of Israel," and the "word of exhortation" by Paul to the "children of the stock of Abraham," so uniformly (as far as we can learn) the Apostles and Evangelists "reasoned with" the Jews "out of the Scriptures," and "mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, showing by the Scriptures that Jesus is Christ."

How thoroughly identified are St. Peter and St. Paul, and Apollos, as to the method of arguing

in the Synagogue and with the people ; and our author, in his line of argument, corresponds with theirs, as he proves that Jesus is "the Son of God." He and they desire that all "the stock of Abraham," to whom they spake or wrote, should search the Scriptures whether those things they said were according to the Scriptures ; for Moses and the Prophets, and the Psalms were the touchstone of the truth. Appeal is made not to their own inspiration or apostleship, but to the facts, of which the readers were so cognizant, and to passages of Holy Writ, which were acknowledged by the house of Israel to speak of the Messiah.

This principle of appeal to the Scriptures ruled with the Apostles and Evangelists in all their intercourse with their Brethren of the Hebrew nation, wherever they were met. In the last chapter of the Acts we are introduced by the sacred historian to a conference between the Jews and St. Paul at Rome. Many had come to this solemn conference ; and Paul "expounded and testified" to them "the kingdom of God, persuading them" (as his manner was) "concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses and out of the prophets, from morning till evening."

How utterly unlike this is the method pursued by the Apostles in their efforts to persuade the Gentiles to become obedient to the faith ! When the Philosophers of the Epicureans and Stoics encountered them ; when they addressed not the

“men of Israel,” but the “men of Athens,” then on Mars’ Hill, a book, not the Holy Volume, but the book of nature is opened; the attention of the Athenians is directed to an “unknown God;” no reference is made to Isaiah, to David, or to any of the prophetic writings; but that magnificent description of the Creator is portrayed before them: “God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands, neither is worshipped with men’s hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he giveth to all life and breath and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men” . . . “that they should seek the Lord” . . . “for in him we live and move and have our being.” Thus the instructive pages of nature’s folios are spread before the Gentiles; and if indeed a literal book is opened or referred to, it is one of those, with whose pages they are likely to be familiar; words of “certain of their own poets:”—“For we are also his offspring.” Here the true ideas of the Godhead are exhibited to the Gentiles, and dissuasives from idolatry are urged; but no appeal is made to the Holy Books—‘the oracles of God’ committed to the Hebrews. They are reasoned with from the teaching of their own poets:—“For-as-much then, as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man’s device.” If they are admonished

of repentance and of the future judgment, assurance is given not by reference to Scripture, but simply by reference to miracle—the resurrection of Jesus. The appeal is in both cases to books and miracles: in the case of the Gentiles—to nature’s pages, to heathen poets, and to the miracle of the resurrection : In that of the Hebrew people—to the Holy Scriptures, the inspired poets—the prophets, and the resurrection. In the one case Jesus is proved to be the Christ—the Son of God—in the other not, but the mind of the Gentile is directed from idols to the living God. Such is the principle on which the approaches to the Gentiles were made to sap the foundations of idolatry and turn them to the living God. What a lively contrast to the mode of Apostolic preaching to the Jews !

But most happily we are furnished with samples of Apostolic intercourse, not only with Jew and Gentile, but also with the Church of God : Christian Churches consisting of Jew and Gentile, or of either, equally believed the Old Testament and the words of Jesus (for the New Testament was as yet unwritten). We may therefore expect naturally an appeal to either ; and, as recorded in Acts xx., we find an instance in which St. Paul enforces Christian duty by quoting one of the precious sayings of Jesus, ‘ how He said, “ It is more blessed to give than receive,” ’ and both Old and New Testaments are, very possibly, united in 1 Tim. v. 18, in these words: “ the Scripture saith, Thou shalt

not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn, and the labourer is worthy of his reward.”

To sum up : in the course of our enquiry we have found that the readers, for whom this Epistle was designed, are met with arguments, are plied with proofs, unused in the case of the Gentiles—superfluous in that of professing Christians, but exactly such as were invariably employed for the purpose of the conversion of the Hebrews, in the Synagogue, before Jewish Kings, or High Priests, from the commencement of the labours of the Apostles at the General Assembly of all the house of Israel, on the day of Pentecost to the end of the inspired history of the Church. We have found that the calling of the Gentiles, and their redemption, truths fully accepted by the converted Jews at the date of this Epistle, fully received therefore by those to whom it was sent, and to whom the writer was well known—that their redemption and calling, together with the writer’s name, are studiously kept out of view—at what conclusion then can we arrive but this, that the Epistle was written indeed to believing Hebrews, but was specially designed for the whole nation ; “ that it might believe that Jesus is the Christ—the Son of God, and that believing, it might have life through his name.”

To your calm and impartial consideration, my Brethren, I commend this important subject. May the God of Grace give us a right judgment in all things for Jesus Christ’s sake. Amen.

LECTURE II.

THE FOUNDATION.

“Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith towards God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead and of eternal judgment. And this will we do, if God permit.”—HEB. vi. 1—3.

THERE is a remarkable unity of opinion among learned expositors with regard to the explanation of our text. It is generally held that “the first principles of the oracles of God” in the 12th verse of Heb. v. and “the foundation” in the first and second verses of the sixth chapter are substantially the same in signification as “the principles of the doctrine of Christ” in the first verse, and therefore that “repentance from dead works and faith towards God,” “the doctrine of baptisms and laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead and of eternal judgment,” are “the common conditions, on which all mankind are invited to embrace the gospel,”—the principles of Christianity confessed, on their admission into the Church of Christ, by Jew and Gentile, in a word, the creed or symbol of our Faith.

It is quite beside our present purpose to enquire into the causes which have led to the conclusion

that the three expressions—the two in our text and the third in Heb. v. 12—are only different modes of embodying the same truth ; but to the reflecting mind it will naturally cause surprise that this conclusion should have become so firmly established, that at least a passing doubt should never have been entertained;—and this surprise will be increased, when it is observed that a note of warning has been sounded by the translators of the English version :—the marginal reading for “ the principles of the doctrine of Christ,” viz.,—“ the word of the beginning of Christ” (*τὸν τῆς ἀρχῆς τοῦ χριστοῦ λόγον*) would indicate that our Translators had some doubts, whether their translation conveyed the true sense. If the marginal reading be substituted for that in our translation, then the words may bear a very different meaning ; and on the meaning of the original must depend the true conception of the entire passage. If, for instance, the “ perfection” be that of Christ in regard to his priesthood, and not the perfection of those reprovèd in chap. v., and if “ the word of the beginning of Christ” signify his incarnation, his descent from Abraham, and perhaps the preparatory steps toward the fitting him for his priesthood or any of these, then the ordinary interpretation of the passage is utterly overturned.

The common exegesis of our text based on the assumption of the substantial identity of signification in the three phrases,—viz. the two in our text

and the third in Hebrews v. 12, has held its ground such a length of time, that we must be at some pains to uproot it first, in order to clear the way for what we believe to be the real interpretation of the passage. That which for the most part obtains, regards those whom the writer reproves, as Jewish Christians ; we look on them as Jews, who had never yet embraced Christianity, or rather who had persistently rejected it ; we regard them as strongly contrasted, in this sixth and other chapters of our epistle, with the Jewish Christians to whom the epistle was sent, and of whose faith and love our author speaks in very favourable terms.

The difficulties which have encompassed the commonly received, or any other explanation of our text hitherto put forth, seem to have arisen from errors in translation ; and these have sprung, we believe, from failing to perceive the sacred writer's purpose.

We hope to prove that the following is the correct translation—"Therefore leaving the explanation of the sovereignty or government of Christ let us go on to his perfection," that is, his perfection, not as God, not as man, but as High Priest after the order of Melchisedec. By this translation the connection between the fifth and following chapters is preserved.

Two great changes are made by the proposed translation ;—the word 'perfection' can no longer be applied to advanced doctrines, or to Christian

perfection ; for by the introduction of the pronoun 'his' before 'perfection,' as the article in the original suggests, the perfection is limited to our high Priest—Jesus the Son of God.

The second important change, which we venture to make, substitutes for "the principles of the doctrine of Christ,"—(a subject I may remark which was not under discussion) "the explanation of the sovereignty of Christ,"—a subject which had to a certain extent been already considered:—we justify these changes thus:—the term translated principles, *στοιχῆια*, in Heb. v. 12, is not the word used in our text for 'principles.'

Of the two words translated "the principles of the doctrine," (*τὸν τῆς ἀρχῆς λόγον*), one occurs thrice in the context, viz., Heb. v. 11, where Winer renders by the term 'explanation,' Dean Alford by 'discourse,' and Delitzsch by 'discussion.' We meet it again as 'the word,' (Heb. v. 13), 'the word of righteousness,' and in the marginal reading of our text it is translated 'the word'—'the word of the beginning of Christ.'

Again, for the expression the 'beginning' we substitute the 'sovereignty, rule or government.' This word so translated we find in some of the great messianic prophecies of the Old Testament in the Septuagint. In Ps. cx. 3, (before the priesthood of Christ is mentioned), it is translated 'sovereignty.' 'To thee belongeth the sovereignty in the day of thy power,' or 'with thee is the prin-

ciality '* as rendered by the Douay Translators. In Is. ix. 7, that prophecy of the future glory of the kingdom of Christ, we have 'empire' assigned as its signification in the Douay, while in our own authorised version it is rendered 'government.' In the Prophet Daniel also in three places, (chap. vii. † 12, 14, 26), the same word is translated by the term "dominion," where he speaks of the coming of the son of man in his kingdom. Since then this word, (*ἀρχή*) signifying in those three prophecies concerning the glory of Christ, 'government,' 'sovereignty,' 'dominion,' is appropriated to our Lord, it may, if the context suggests, be so translated in our text. But in the foregoing chapters of this epistle, the dignity, the crown, the throne of Messiah has been discussed. He is 'Son over his Father's house.' He is crowned with glory and honour. The mention of Ps. cx. and the name of Melchisidec suggests the sovereignty as well as the priesthood of Jesus; and as has been remarked by Delitzsch, the name Messiah or Christ, which occurs in the passage now under review, "is not our Lord's special title as priest but rather as king." To the same purpose is the remark of 'Langé' on that portion of Ps. ii. quoted in Heb. v. 6, "Thou art my son," he says, "declares Christ to be his world-ruling anointed one," or as Delitzsch, "He was

* Eph. i. 21, *ἀρχή* 'principality,' and Mich. iv. 8, 'dominion.' E. V. 'potestas prima' Vulg.

† Sept. Cambridge Edition.

thereby constituted king." And you will here observe, that so far this portion of our translation is in harmony with the context; the sovereignty of Christ has been under consideration, but not the so-called first principles of the doctrine of Christ. It is the sovereignty of Christ then, and not those principles, from which he passes, saying—"therefore leaving the discussion of the sovereignty of Christ let us go on to his perfection," a subject, on the discussion of which he has scarcely yet entered; and is it not in strict accordance with our context, with fact, that he does go on to the explanation of the perfection of the priesthood of Christ?

It is in accordance with the context; for, if we omit the parenthesis, which contains the stern rebuke administered in the last four verses preceding our text, we have the large subject of Messiah's priesthood according to the order of Melchisedec in proximate contact with his perfection in our text; and this, not christian perfection, nor the highest doctrines of the faith, is the great subject, which, from the fifth chapter to the end of chap. vii., is discussed. Thus, as we think, is shown the unison of this, our proposed correction of the text, with the subject matter of our epistle.

If the translation, as given above, be admitted to be a correct and faithful version, then "the principles of the doctrine of Christ, as a phrase, disappear from the text, and "the first principles of the oracles of God," (Heb. v. 12) which are identical

with the foundation or six points in our text, are less likely to be 'the principles of the doctrine of Christ.'

We now proceed to show that these latter are peculiar points or first principles of Patristic and Mosaic faith rather than the first principles of the doctrine of the Christian Church.

That the materials of the foundation set forth in our text, and 'the first principles of the oracles of God' (Heb. v. 12) are both substantially the same—this we are willing to admit; but we maintain that these are not the same as "the principles of the doctrine of Christ." In the phrase—"the principles of the doctrine of Christ," the language is precise—there is nothing vague or undefined. It implies that in the materials specified in the text, we have the fundamental principles of the Christian faith as taught by the Apostles,—those principles neither less nor more, which all must confess who call themselves Christians; for, as justly remarked by Archbishop Secker, it is not "in the power either of any man or any number of men to lessen or increase the fundamental articles of the Christian faith." Lect. v.

As we inspect the materials of the foundation, ("the principles of the doctrine of Christ," as they are assumed to be,) we are struck with astonishment at the vital defects, the fatal omissions, in this category. In vain do we search through it for the name of "Jesus Christ our Lord;"—where are his

incarnation and birth, his sufferings and crucifixion, his death and burial, his glorious resurrection and ascension, his session at the right hand of God, his coming again in power and great glory, and his kingdom which shall have no end? Why no mention direct or indirect of all or any one of these? They are all fundamental "principles of the doctrine of Christ,"—yet all are utterly ignored!

Again, are not the existence and Godhead of the Holy Ghost—Jehovah, the Giver of life, to be reckoned among these principles? or may we also omit these relating to the Spirit, as well as those relating to Christ? Impossible! We must hold more precious than life these essential articles of the Christian faith, so strangely omitted from "the principles of the doctrine of Christ," so called. Is it not gross injustice to the writer of this Epistle—to identify this "foundation" with the principles of our faith? Is it possible that he forgot the baptismal formula ordained by our Lord? Did he consider, and deliberately teach, that the doctrine of the Trinity should be omitted from the Christian creed, and that the very name and dignity, with the nature (both human and divine) of Christ Jesus, his sufferings and the glory that should follow, might and ought to be excluded from the fundamental principles of the Christian faith!!

It is clearly stated by the sound divines of our Church who have written on the subject, that in our creeds are united into one body "the principles of the doctrine of Christ." In the standard work,

for instance, on our catechism by Archbishop Secker, his judgment is expressed in the following terms:—"But as all the doctrines of Scripture, though equally true, are not of equal importance, the more necessary articles have been from the beginning of Christianity collected into one body, called in Scripture 'the form of sound words' (2 Tim. i. 13); 'the words of faith' (1 Tim. iv. 6); 'the principles of the doctrine of Christ' (Heb. vi. 1); but in our common way of speaking at present, 'The Creed.' "

Again, in Pearson's work on the Creed, are we not reminded that, as "the creed comprehendeth the principles of our religion, it must contain those truths which belong unto it, as it is a religion, and those which concern it, as it is ours"—and "it containeth such truths as were delivered by Christ and his Apostles, and *those especially concerning Christ himself.*"

From these examples we see how thoroughly, in the opinion of learned and revered sons of our Church, the creed sums up "the principles of the doctrine of Christ."

Already, then, before we have entered on a detailed examination of the specified materials of the foundation, do we not find the conviction forcing itself on our minds that the "foundation" or its materials, cannot be identical with the principles of the doctrine of Christ,—the first principles of Christianity,—which when truly stated must set forth "those especially concerning Christ himself."

Now let us briefly review in detail the materials of this foundation which are so commonly identified with "the principles of the doctrine of Christ." We take them in the order in which we find them in our text, and as they are grouped in pairs, with repentance and faith in the foreground, we proceed to consider these first.

These two are constantly joined together in the New Testament, or if Faith be not expressly added to repentance, it is implied in some word or ordinance accompanying it, as 'Repent and be baptized.' But you will observe the very important distinction made in our text by the Author of the Epistle (and without doubt designedly), in regard to the object of faith, as compared with its object when presented to the people (Jew or Gentile) by the Apostles and Evangelists in their discourses ; and this distinction is rendered the more marked by the difference of adjuncts to repentance in the two cases—of our Author on the one hand, and of the Apostles and Evangelists on the other. The great Apostle of the Gentiles, in common with all the Apostles and Evangelists, preached repentance and faith ; but both he and they (we learn in the Acts of the Apostles), published repentance toward *God* and faith toward our *Lord Jesus Christ*, whereas in the passage before us faith is connected with God—not with our Lord Jesus Christ ; and this is the more unaccountable, for his name occurs in the same verse, and yet is in a studied manner omitted from the foundation !

The two doctrines—repentance and faith—here combined (if he was setting forth and not shunning to declare the whole counsel of God), must have suggested to the mind of the sacred writer the Lord Jesus as the object of faith, and God as the object of repentance; nevertheless Christ's name is excluded from the foundation, and God's name is, in the text, severed from repentance, with which in Apostolic preaching it is connected; while the object of faith presented to the readers of the Epistle in the so-called principles of Christian doctrine, is not Jesus Christ but God!! Against such a dangerous error our Saviour appears to have guarded his disciples in delivering to them his last discourse prior to his betrayal; preparing them for their bereavement, and comforting them under prospect of coming trouble, he thus encourages them:—"Let not your heart be troubled—ye believe in God." So far, in "faith toward God," we have exactly the element here set before us in the text, and this faith they had as Jews. Something more, however, is essentially requisite for the disciples of Christ; and therefore Jesus adds—"Believe also in me," or "Ye believe also in me." The first source of comfort was common to the disciples and all their fellow-countrymen, as Jews—the second was peculiar to his little flock as his followers.

The formula—'Repentance from dead works, and faith toward God'—describes, we venture to think, some of the first principles of the doctrine of Moses rather than those of Christianity. No Jew,

so far as we can understand, could repudiate them ; but what Christian minister or Church of Christian times would adopt the formula, 'repentance from dead works and faith toward God,' as expressive of and exactly equivalent to 'repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ'? Might not the Arian and Socinian adduce the ordinary view of our text against Trinitarians, and plead successfully that the *divinity of Christ* and the *personality of the Holy Ghost*, having been omitted from "the" (so-called) "principles of the doctrine of Christ," as set forth in this inspired epistle, cannot be essential to the true faith of a Christian? We confess we do not see how Trinitarians could answer them, so long as they hold that this pretentious foundation contains "the principles of the doctrine of Christ."

This interpretation, too, of the passage so generally held by Expositors, must be considered highly favourable to the broadest of broad church views, sweeping away, as it does, from our creed every article peculiar to the Christian faith ! These considerations combined may move us to believe that 'repentance from dead works and faith towards God' are truly first principles of revealed religion as exhibited in the Old Testament, (styled Heb. v. 12,) "the oracles of God" their well known designation :—these are first principles of the faith of Patriarchal and Mosaic times rather than 'the first principles of the doctrine of' the Christian dispensation.

We pass on to the second couplet ; and in doing so we wish to suggest this consideration, (as a means of discovering the sense of the terms in each couplet,) that these must have been formed designedly, and not by hap-hazard ; that the component parts must have a connection, on account of which they were grouped in their respective pairs, some affinity between the subjects respectively.—As to repentance and faith, resurrection and eternal judgment, it will probably be allowed that they are joined together with the strictest propriety ; that in like manner in regard to the component parts of the middle couplet, there must be some compatibility, by reason of which they also are united and which we may therefore expect, with ordinary care, to discover ; then we shall be able to admire the wisdom, by which the sacred writer was guided to join together the two elements under consideration, rather than place either of them in conjunction with any other of the remaining elements of the foundation ; with for instance, faith in God of the first, or eternal judgment of the third couplet.

In order then to do justice to this, the second couplet, “the doctrine of baptisms and laying on of hands,” as in the authorised version, or the doctrine of washings and of laying on of hands as approved by some critics, we proceed to make a few remarks on the word translated ‘baptisms.’

Two words occur in the original of the New

Testament, which in the authorised version have been rendered by the word 'baptism;' one, *βάπτισμα*, occurs upwards of twenty times, and invariably in the singular number. This word is, without exception, used in all the epistles of the New Testament as well as in the Gospels, when the Sacrament of baptism is introduced; and while it is used in connection with other religious matters and on other occasions, it is never employed to express any of the ordinary processes of social or domestic life. The other word *βαπτισμῶς*, translated in our text "baptism" never appears throughout the New Testament, except in the plural number. It occurs but four times altogether in St. Mark's Gospel and in this epistle; twice in St. Mark's Gospel, and in 9th chap. of this epistle and tenth verse it is translated "washings," viz. meats and drinks and divers washings; but in our text, the remaining occasion of its use, the translation with strange inconsistency substitutes the word "baptisms" for the ordinary rendering "washings."

In making this change our translators seem to have in this instance supplied to English readers an exposition instead of a translation, and this is practically acknowledged by one or more learned commentators, for we find the word 'washings' taking the place of 'baptisms' in corrected translations.

Here then we have an admission of importance, that baptism, as a rite in any religious system, is

not necessarily the meaning of the word in this passage, that the washings may have nothing to do with baptism ; and that even if Christian or any other baptism be included in the meanings of the word, yet baptism in this passage may not convey the true signification of the word, the meaning of the inspired writer.

So strongly impressed were Schleusner and other critics by the fact that in the Christian Church we have but one baptism, while this word occurs only in the plural, that they refer the word translated 'baptisms' in the text only to the ceremonial washings of the Jews, in all cases where it occurs ; and they consider that *βάπτισμα*, (the other word used elsewhere in the Gospels, Acts, and Epistles, in the singular number), 'is the only appropriate term, by which the rite of Christian baptism is designated.'

Joined with the doctrine of washings is that of laying on of hands, and the meanings assigned to each are so numerous and opposite, that the utmost confusion seems to reign among expositors. The doctrine of washings, according to Dean Alford, is supposed to include "those various washings which were under the law, the baptism of John, and even Christian baptism ;" and the doctrine "of laying on of hands" is, like that of washings, so widely comprehensive that it will embrace (in the words of this learned writer) "the reference and import of all that imposition of hands which was practised

under the law, and found in some cases its continuance under the Gospel. By laying on of hands the sick were healed, officers and teachers of the Church were admitted to their calling, converts were fully admitted into the Christian Church after baptism, and, (adds the very reverend expositor), "there can be little doubt that it is mainly to this last that the attention of the readers is here called, as the writer is speaking of the beginning of Christian teaching." But this, you perceive, is really to assume that the writer speaks of Christian teaching, that the words "the first principles of the doctrine of Christ" are the true and proper translation of the original, and this is what we undertake to disprove.

We recognise a fitness in the junction of repentance and faith, in the connection of resurrection and eternal judgment. These commend themselves to our understanding; but where is the fitness, what the propriety in pairing the washings of Moses, John the Baptist, and Christ, with the laying on of hands to heal, to ordain, and (this is the main point) to admit converts to full Church communion? The meaning that is repudiated by Stuart and slighted by Alford, as unlikely and undeserving of disproof, seems however to our mind to exhibit that fitness for which we search in vain amid the perplexing expositions that so generally obtain. We do find washings such as those spoken of in the 9th chapter of our epistle, closely connected in

the services of the law of Moses with the laying on of hands.

In the Book of Leviticus, (the beginning of the doctrine of Moses), immediately after the rearing up of the Tabernacle, we read of the washing of the inwards of the victim, of the washing of the person of the Priest, and of the laying on of hands on the head of the victim.

Of these we frequently find mention in the law, and we can easily perceive the fitness of their being joined together in the sixth chapter of Hebrews, being convinced that the doctrine of these two ordinances does not signify all that anywhere throughout the pages of Holy Writ may be assigned to each of them separately, but that there is a doctrine inculcated in the washing of the priest and the victim and in the laying on of the hands of the priest or offerers, a doctrine of vital importance too, teaching that if the exterior of the victim must be without spot or blemish so must the inwards also be clean ; that the person also of the priest engaged in the duty of offering the victim must likewise be cleansed, ere he can present the blood that maketh atonement ; and that sin whereby the congregation or the individual is defiled, can be transferred only to the victim which is clean within, as well as externally without blemish.

Here, if we view this doctrine of washings and laying on of hands in the light of Jewish ordinances, there is no longer vagueness or confusion, but on

the contrary clearness and simplicity, fitness and connection. Here we have Moses faithful as a servant in the house of God, testifying in these ordinances the doctrine that was to be spoken afterwards in the fulness of time, the holiness, the separation, the perfect cleanness of our great High Priest, contrasted with the condition of the sinners whose nature he wears; the inward purity, the unblemished character of the victim offered by him once for all when he offered up himself. Otherwise, if we forsake this plain and simple view of the doctrine of washings and laying on of hands so likely to commend itself to the mind of Jewish readers, we may range from Genesis to Revelation and assign to each of these ordinances such significations as changing taste or lively fancy may suggest.

That the remaining couplet, 'resurrection and eternal judgment' were among the principles of the doctrine of Moses, were articles of Jewish faith, reckoned among "the first principles of the oracles of God," there can be little doubt. "I know that he shall rise again at the last day" said Martha, speaking of her brother. St. Paul testifies that the resurrection was "the hope of Israel," that they themselves allowed "that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust;" and, not to delay the worthies of the world before Christ, the great cloud of witnesses in the xith chapter of this epistle, bear witness, that the pious Jew did look for the resurrection of the

dead and eternal life ; and Jesus shewed the captious sceptics of his day how Moses taught "that the dead are raised," taught the resurrection by just inference and eternal judgment by implication. In passing we may call to mind the seventh of our Thirty-nine Articles, in which the clergy of the Church of Ireland confess that the old Fathers looked not only for transitory promises, they had everlasting life promised in the Old as we in the New Testament.

To conclude : We have established already, we think, in our first lecture, that the epistle was designed for the whole Hebrew nation and not only for a believing section of it, the Jewish converts to whom it was sent. In conformity with this view we have now proved we trust satisfactorily, these important points, that "the first principles of the doctrine of Christ" are not mentioned in our text, for that expression is a mistranslation, and that they are not identical with foundation materials enumerated in it ; but that these latter are "the first principles of the oracles of God" (Heb. v. 12), the foundation of the Jewish religion, the doctrine of Moses not of Christ Jesus our Lord ; that the subject our author declines to discuss is the sovereignty of Christ, the King of righteousness, the true Melchisedec. And moreover you have seen that the perfection in our text is that of Christ, who being made perfect became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him, pro-

claimed of God an High Priest after the order of Melchisedec.

May "the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the sheep, in the blood of the everlasting covenant perfect you in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory for ever. Amen."

LECTURE III.

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE.

“For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.”—HEB. vi. 4-6.

THIS passage of Holy Scripture has afforded matter for debate and vehement controversy both in ancient and modern times. It was used by the Montanists and Novatians to justify their erroneous practices; and in later days it has furnished a battlefield for the disciples of Calvin and Arminius.

The arbitrary interpretation invented of old by those of the Catholic or orthodox faith to serve a controversial object and meet the errors of those days is now universally rejected; but expositors of to-day do not appear to be happier than the ancient Church in their efforts at exegesis.

To understand this passage aright we must ascertain the connection between the end of the fifth and the beginning of the sixth chapters: a close connection is clearly indicated by the word *διό* (therefore). “Therefore leaving the principles

of the doctrine of Christ let us go on to perfection; or as we render it, "Therefore leaving the explanation of the sovereignty of Christ let us go on to his perfection." The first person plural, you observe, is used by the sacred writer, and it is assumed by expositors that this plural, "us," includes the people signified by the terms "ye" and "you" (occurring three or four verses before, toward the close of chapter v.) in conjunction with the writer himself, and that the people so signified are a Hebrew Christian church to which the epistle was sent, styled by commentators generally—'the readers of the epistle.'

The connection is supposed by Delitzsch to be as follows—"We *must* therefore assume that the plural in this passage belongs partly to the author alone (as v. 11, and ii. 5) and is partly inclusive of him and his readers, and that in the following way: Therefore, he would say (because a Christian cannot possibly remain always a child but must, if he fall not away, grow on ever to higher and maturer knowledge) let us endeavour to arrive at the state of the *τέλειοι*, that is, such maturity in knowledge as is capable of a right spiritual judgment, and such fulness of age as is requisite for a stedfast and worthy profession; and let us do this by my imparting instruction corresponding to the state referred to, and by your seeking to follow these instructions."

Dean Alford's explanation gathered from his

notes, and which is not so succinctly put, is to this effect—"The whole," he says, "is a *συγκατάβασις*" (a condescension) "of the writer to his readers: he with his work of teaching comes down to their level of learning, and regards that teaching and learning as all one work going on together; himself and them as bound up in one progress. Thus best," he proceeds, "may we explain the expressions which seem to oscillate alternately between writer and readers, and thus will *διό*, wherefore, retain its proper meaning" . . . "wherefore" (he adds) "seeing that we (you and I by communication) are in so low a state, babes instead of grown men, let us—leaving behind the word of the beginning of Christ"—"press on to maturity not laying again the foundation." These quotations from Delitzsch and Alford exhibit, in their broad features, the explanations of modern expositors; most of them with one accord in the passage before us (though tint or shade may slightly vary) present a picture of some Hebrew church, the members of which are the subjects of the severe reproof contained in the latter part of the fifth chapter, and they consider the language as hortatory and communicative, notwithstanding the two participial clauses in the first verse of the sixth chapter 'which can hardly be properly said of any but a teacher.' (Alford.)

We venture to think that it is the nation and not a Hebrew Church that is reproved, and we

suggest the following as the only consistent connection. The sacred writer proceeds to develop for discussion the great subject of which his heart is inditing. Of this subject, the priesthood of Christ, he has much to say, but he is struck with the difficulty of explaining the subject arising from the condition of those whom he reproveth. They were so faithless that they had become dull of hearing, and ignorant of what were the very first principles of the oracles of God which were committed unto them. They were in their second infancy, having now no organs capable of digesting the strong meat, and this from their own most culpable neglect of Moses and the Prophets. For these reasons our author will proceed to explain the perfection of Christ's priesthood, and will not lay again the foundation, that is, attempt to re-instruct in Moses and the Prophets, for it is impossible to renew again to repentance those who have fallen to the depth of crucifying afresh the Son of God, and putting him to an open shame.

Two arguments, of conclusive force to our mind, prove that the body reproveth is not any Church of Hebrew Christians, one derived from the condition and circumstances of that body, and another from the use of the first person plural not only in the text, but also in the context. We proceed to urge these arguments in their order: first, then for the condition and circumstances of this supposed Christian Church.

At the date of the epistle, such a Church, from the very nature of the case, must have consisted of earlier and later converts. Every year, and every month of each year, produced its successive change. As in other early churches, so in this. In addition to such ordinary increase of Churches as arises from the admission by baptism of the infant offspring of the members, there doubtless were, from time to time, fresh acquisitions by the reception of catechumens neophytes, up to the very date at which the epistle was sent to its destination. How then could the sacred writer in Heb. v. 11-12, address a Church so composed in these remarkable words: "Ye have become" (for the verb *γεγόνετε* you observe is in the perfect tense) "ye have become dull of hearing; for whereas for the time, (the length of time during which ye have been members of a Christian Church) "ye ought to be teachers, ye again have need that one teach you "what are the first principles of the oracles of God."—(Langé.) The time, according to Delitzsch, is "the whole time which has elapsed since the Hebrews first (*by hypothesis*) became believers in Christ. A period of such length that they ought on this account to be not only far advanced in knowledge of the truth for themselves, but also be teachers of it to others. How, we ask, was this possible for neophytes—for converts but lately received by baptism into the Church, or even for those newly admitted by the rite of confirmation

into full communion therewith? The length of time, from the date of the epistle, if we trace back, can have no common epoch. The points of time are as various as the dates of the baptisms of all its members. With regard to many, possibly to the majority, some expression as to the shortness rather than the length of time, would perhaps be more appropriate. If we adhere to the hypothesis that the people rebuked are the members of a Christian Church in the days of its youth, we must invent an additional hypothesis,—viz. : that for a series of years to which the phrase ‘the length of the time’ might be fairly applied, this particular Church had received no acquisitions through any of the usual channels, or haply a number so small in amount, that they were not entitled to influence the writer, as he administers such a scathing rebuke, the force and severity of which turns on the meaning of ‘the length of the time.’

But this Church (of Hebrew Christians *by hypothesis*) has become dull of hearing, has become guilty of deliberate backsliding. From the commencement of its existence, some thirty years before at most, it had been taught by faithful pastors ‘the elementary doctrine of Christ’ those so-called six articles of christian primary instruction, styled in the context ‘the foundation’; and now, the length of time notwithstanding, when its members should have been equal to the high and honourable task of teaching others, they have been so bent to backslide,

that they have returned to their original condition of ignorance as to Christianity, and therefore "are (in the words of Delitzsch) again in need of instruction, as to the fundamental principles of Christianity; because they have lost that very apprehension of those doctrines themselves, which is necessary for any further developement," and therefore for any progress towards 'perfection'. In passing I would make this remark; the wisdom that would invite to perfection, when the apprehension of the foundation (the doctrines necessary for any further developement) had been lost, is parallel to the wisdom of the man who, without a foundation, built his house upon the sand: upon no such doubtful ground does our author stand.

The extent of their wilful ignorance and incapacity and the enormity of their sin will be the more transparent, when we contemplate the advantages possessed by this church. Its members, by the ordinary hypothesis, have had (though they are not noticed here,) faithful ministers "whose faith" they were directed to "follow," who "watched for their souls," and who cannot be supposed to have been ignorant of their duty or of the spiritual necessities of the flock committed to their care. Doubtless these Pastors, as day by day they kept watch over and fed their flock, perceived the growing tendency to backslide and return to their primitive ignorance; and, anxiously watching for their souls, they must have given diligence to counteract this advancing

disease, so fatal to their spiritual health ; and so to imbue them with “ the principles of the doctrine of Christ,” that the church might revive and flourish ; but, now despite their constant care, their indefatigable labour “ in the word and doctrine,” their instant continuance in prayer, the propensity of this church to spiritual decline had baffled the skill and efforts of the physicians of their souls, and so utterly had they unlearned at length, the first principles of the oracles of God ; by their deliberate disregard of his ordinances and the ministry of the word, or by neglect and indifference, that they had reduced themselves to the condition of infants, taking “ the same rank in spiritual understanding that an infant does in worldly.”* What a lamentable relapse ! How desperate their case ! In this their state of second infancy, they cannot take the solid food of higher truth ; it would require more powerful digestive organs than they are now possessed of, for they have rejected those very first principles—the milk, through the reception and digestion of which they might have been gradually led to ‘perfection ;’ and yet it is to such a church that the writer of this epistle is by expositors represented as saying —“ Let us go on to maturity—to perfection !” What a demand, by such an exegesis, is made on our powers of belief !

Our author, according to hypothesis, thus

* Alford in loco.

addresses this Church:—‘you have become in need of milk and not of strong meat, therefore let us leave the milk which is indispensable for health and take to the use of solids—of strong meats, for the digestion of which our spiritual organs are at present utterly unfit. You have no foundation on which it would be safe to build, therefore let us, as wise builders, proceed to rear the superstructure ; you cannot comprehend the higher and more abstruse doctrines of the Christian faith, though from the length of time you ought to be teachers ; come then with me to the contemplation of truths, which both you and I confess to be altogether beyond your powers !!’

Surely the inspired writer never gave to babes in Christ (if such they were) or to any Church advice so dangerous:—He knew too well the inseparable connection between the foundation and its superstructure, between the commencement and subsequent progress.

Already then we have some reason to question the truth of the common hypothesis—that our author here rebukes a Christian Church. It is not probable that he “comes down to their level of learning” when he says “Let us go on to perfection,” nor forces them up to his, “binding himself and them up in one progress:” (Alford). Had the sacred writer entertained a hope that they would again learn the first principles of the oracles of God and that he might re-establish them in

the belief of those truths, in regard to which their ministers—the leaders “who spoke the Word of God to them,” had laboured in vain, would he not have adopted a line of conduct the very opposite to that supposed to be here laid down?

Doubtless he would act according to the method pursued in the case of the Corinthians, and Galatians,—he would address them thus—‘I will feed you with milk, not with meat,’ for ye are not yet able to bear it;—he would not mock by offering solids which to infants were certain death:—In a word, he would lay again the foundation before proceeding to the perfection of the structure,—he would seek to restore to their heart those truths, the loss of the apprehension of which had put a bar to further development.

Now to advance our second argument. As an effort is made to press the first person plural in our text into their service by advocates of the ‘communicative and hortatory’ view of our subject it is essential to examine its meaning. In the context, commencing at the eleventh verse of the fifth, and ending at the close of the eleventh verse of the sixth chapter inclusive the first person plural, ‘we’ or ‘us,’ occurs no less than six times: ‘Let us go on to perfection;’ and, “this will we do” (or ‘let us do’) “if God permit,” in the first and third verses of the sixth chapter; twice in the ninth verse, viz. “we are persuaded the better things concerning you, though thus we speak,” and in the eleventh

verse, "we desire that every one of you;" but in the fifth chapter also, immediately before the rebuke administered by the sacred writer, we have the first person plural thus,—“Of whom we have many things to say and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are become dull of hearing.” Now about the application of these four last mentioned instances there can be no question. In the one just quoted from the latter end of the fifth chapter, the first person plural “we” (in the words of Dean Alford) “is there introduced, not with any definite reference to any companions of the writer, nor intended to include the readers, which is here impossible, but as in many other places of the epistle merely indicating the writer himself, as so frequently in the writings of St. Paul.” It is also, you will see on reading the last three instances in which both the pronouns “we” and “you” occur, it is impossible (as admitted indeed by Alford) that the writer could include his readers with himself in the term “we.” The two remaining cases of the six are those in verses one and three preceding the text. Do these two then differ so completely from those in the midst of which they occur, that the first and three last are the pronoun ‘we’ of authorship, but the second and its companion “we” and “us” are communicative and hortatory. Their own admissions are strongly against the supporters of the hortatory and communicative use; for two participial clauses are found in the text, which are very serious

obstacles. These clauses are the following—viz., ‘leaving the principles’ and ‘not laying again the foundation.’ The participles in these phrases agree with the pronoun “us” in the first verse of the sixth chapter. With respect to the participial clause, “not laying again the foundation” it is confessed that it “can hardly be properly said of any but a teacher,” for in that clause ‘we have a current phrase to express the ordinary methodical procedure of the instructor who, in teaching, “first lays the foundation” and then builds upon it. Equally definite in its use is the clause—“leaving the principles,” etc. The participle “leaving” is “the usual word employed by an orator or writer, when he declines to speak of a subject which presents itself for consideration, in order to revert to or discuss another.”

With these admissions as to four of the six instances of this pronoun’s occurrence; and with the fact, that the participial clauses contain the words usually employed by orators, writers and instructors, in our favour, we persuade ourselves that there is in the pronoun ‘us,’ in the verses one and three, no “common reference to writer and readers,” but that it attaches by legitimate inference solely to the writer of the Epistle.

From these premises even without relying upon proof contained in the preceding lecture, it is our conviction that not a Hebrew church, but the apostatizing nation is rebuked, and that the sacred writer declares his purpose positively and nega-

tively,—positively that he will enter on the discussion of the perfection of Messiah's priesthood after the order of Melchisedec, and negatively that he will not attempt again to lay the foundation that has been swept away. This course he will adopt, if God permit : but for the negative portion of his purpose he proceeds to assign in the fourth and two following verses, *i.e.*, in our text his reason for this course, introducing it with 'γαρ (for)—a word "which" (according to Hermann's canon) "always renders a reason for a preceding opinion either expressed or understood."

We proceed now to consider our author's purpose in regard to the nation which at the time was consummating its apostacy from God, having unlearned the first principles of the oracles of God, and consequently continuing to reject the claims of Jesus.

Of the Hebrew nation multitudes including a great company of the priests, had become obedient to the faith ; but the nation, long ere the date of our epistle, had 'become dull of hearing.' Their awful condition, predicted by Isaiah, was fully developed at the advent of Messiah ; for in them, said Jesus, is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias which saith—"By hearing ye shall hear and shall not understand, and seeing ye shall see and not perceive ; for this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing." This desperate condition was of a permanent character, as appears

in the account of the interview between St. Paul and the Jews at Rome at the close of the Acts of the apostles—an interview which took place [you remember] shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the nation, and not long prior to the date of the epistle. St. Paul concludes the interview with the words of this prophecy, which assign the reason for the unbelief of the Jews and their rejection of the Lord's Christ. The nation, as our Lord asserts, did not believe Moses, and thus they had unlearned in an awful sense the "very first principles of the oracles* of God."

In the foundation of the spiritual fabric repentance appears to be the first or lowest course, and in the case of this nation "both sides of repentance" (to use the words of Delitzsch) viz., "turning away from sinful self-will and turning to the God of salvation" had given way—the decision arrived at, in consequence, by our author is expressed in the fourth and two following verses of the text. Let us endeavour to ascertain their fitness. It is impossible to renew again to repentance those (mark the historic tense of the participles in the Greek) who were once enlightened, who tasted the heavenly gift, became partakers of the Holy Ghost and tasted the good word of God and the power of the world to come, and fell,—crucifying

* Rom. iii. 2.

as they do the Son of God afresh and putting him publicly to shame.

It is no hypothetic case that is described by our Author, the actual condition of the nation is here portrayed. Those who were once enlightened and had received the benefits set forth in the fourth and fifth verses of our text, are the Jewish people and their rulers. Now, however great the multitudes of believers who were truly benefited and enlightened, the majority of the nation with its rulers rejected the proffered blessings, for they loved to sit in darkness, and we proceed to shew that the inspired penmen of Holy Writ have, from time to time, spoken of the people in a manner like that in our text. In Isaiah ix. 2, the following words occur—"The people that sat in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined." In this prophecy, fulfilled in the course of our Lord's ministry, or receiving part of its fulfilment, 'they that dwell in the land' is the equivalent of the term 'the people,' and 'on them,' we are informed, 'hath the light shined.' They are fairly described by the words in our text—viz., "those who were once enlightened." They were enlightened by Him, who coming into the world enlightened every man, though they did not see and perceive. Some saw the great light having the eyes of their understanding enlightened, while others closed their eyes though the light shone

on them. And if we look back from the date of the epistle, we have a period, that of our Lord's ministry, during which the people were once enlightened, and thus a simple explanation of "the length of the time."

In this epistle we meet other instances in which the nation is described in a manner similar to that in the fourth verse. To one let me direct your attention ; it occurs in the fourth chapter, in the following words : " Seeing then that it remains that some enter therein, and they* who were first preached to, entered not in on account of disobedience ;"—were not those described in this passage as guilty of disobedience, " all that came out of Egypt by Moses," or, in other words, the nation ? Yes, and in like manner those who were enlightened in Messiah's days, were the nation of the writer's time, which shut its eyes against the light.

But further we justify the exposition that the nation is described as having been enlightened and having tasted the heavenly gift, while only the faithful were cordial recipients of the light and its blessings, by the mode of expression in regard to the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on Cornelius and his company. A few on this occasion were actually converted to the faith ; yet, according to the historian, " the Apostles and Brethren heard that the nations had also received the word of

* Heb. xiii. 9 : " Those who walked in such observances are the whole people of God." Alford in loco.

God,"—"that on the nations was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost." How was this? A small company had received these blessings; and as this was an indication of God's willingness to bestow them on the nations, therefore the sacred writers do not hesitate to say that the nations were enlightened. Similarly some of the Hebrew nation had actually received the word of God, and the promises were "to them and to their children"—to the whole nation; consequently, in conformity with the *usus loquendi*, the nation is said to have been enlightened, and to have received the promised gifts. Cornelius and his company, in regard to the nations, were representative men; as the Hebrew Christians were to their own nation.

In our exposition we have attributed the actual reception of the blessings to one portion, the rejection and recrucifying of Christ to the other portion of the nation, and yet we do not speak of the believing or unbelieving sections, but of the nation in connection with such reception or rejection: and of this mode of attributing to the nation the acts of either section we have selected a remarkable instance from the Acts, (chapter xiii. 28, 29) in these words. "And as they found no cause of death in him, they requested Pilate that he should be slain, and when they had fulfilled all that was written of him they took him down and laid him in a sepulchre." Was it not the believing section of the nation, the disciples, who

took him down from the tree, and laid our Lord's body in the grave? Yet in the quotation from St. Paul's address in the synagogue of Antioch, the crucifixion by his foes and his burial by his disciples are indiscriminately ascribed to the nation. We ask only the same liberty to assign to the Hebrew nation the enlightenment and the re-crucifixion in our text, while these acts belong respectively to the believing and unbelieving sections: they appear to be contrasted in our text and its context; the unbelievers of the sixth verse with the faithful of the ninth, to whom our Author says—"we are persuaded the better things of you." Other examples of the use of synecdoche, Acts xxviii. 26, and its context for instance, will present themselves in your meditation on Holy Writ; and thus the exposition now offered may meet with your more ready acquiescence; but those already brought under your notice, suffice to prove that our explanation may be accepted, in conformity with the mode of interpretation adopted elsewhere by general consent.

Now let us enquire—Is not the view of this passage, which we advocate, in conformity with the author's illustration, namely:—"For land which drunk in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbage meet for them for whom it is also dressed, partaketh of blessing from God: but if it bear thorns and thistles it is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned."

To aid this enquiry it seems desirable to quote the judicious remarks of Delitzsch—‘The same phenomenon,’ he says, ‘meets us here as in the parables of Isaiah (v. 1-6, and xxviii. 23) and in those of the Gospels. The figurative character of the whole betrays itself by the confusion of the symbol with the thing symbolized, and expressions borrowed from the sphere of ethics being applied to that of nature.’

Keeping these remarks in mind let us proceed. The symbol employed to illustrate the text is land which drank in the rain coming frequently upon it. This is the condition of the land as a whole. The drinking in the rain that is frequently coming upon it, is an act prior to the hypothetic alternatives presented to us ; that is, whether the land bring forth fruit fit for those on whose account it is cultivated, or bear thorns and thistles,—its condition prior to both these alternatives is this, that the rain comes frequently upon it, and that it drank in that rain.

Delitzsch and Stuart hold that the land is the Christian Church ; Alford is of opinion that *persons*, who had loved Christ and are become his bitter enemies, who have become ‘such apostates from being such saints’ (to quote his words), are here represented ; we, however, cannot forget that the land, and the vine, and the fig tree were types or symbols of the nation—and naturally we think that the land being nigh unto cursing foreboded

the misery and destruction of the nation. Our author might, in conformity with his symbol, have addressed his country in the words of Israel's Lawgiver—Deut. xxxii. 1—'Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak, and hear, O land, the words of my mouth: my doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb.' Such were the spiritual advantages of the nation from Moses' time till the days of Christ and his Apostles; and yet their constant character may be summed in the words of the Christian protomartyr—"Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your Fathers" (the nation) "did, so do ye" (the nation). Therefore their end was to be burned. Jehovah looked that they—his vine and pleasant plant—should bring forth grapes, but they brought forth wild grapes. To them, as his fig tree, he came seeking fruit but found none,—as his land, but thorns and thistles were the produce—therefore they, (the nation), were nigh unto cursing. All this was, doubtless, true of Israel as a nation; but there was a remnant according to the election of grace, and among this remnant they to whom the epistle was sent, who in the context are thus addressed by the inspired writer: "But beloved," saith he, "we have been persuaded the better things concerning you." Their character was directly opposed to that of those described and reproached in the fifth chapter; these latter were bereft of repentance and faith, the former

were marked by faith, (Heb. x. 39), by work and love, (Heb. vi. 10), which God would not forget. Oh! what a contrast to the nation, which again had need to be taught, as in the day they came out of Egypt, the very "first principles of the oracles of God." The nation was darkness, but these were light in the Lord.

From its condition and circumstances, described in the Epistle to the Hebrews, we have endeavoured to prove, that our author rebukes not a Hebrew Church, but the Hebrew nation; it was through unbelief of Moses, "turning away from God," and "refusing him who speaks from heaven." In furtherance of this view, it has been our effort to show that the communicative and hortatory character ascribed to the pronoun "us" in our text, is incapable of being sustained, and thus to remove an obstacle which stood in the way of the true exegesis of our text. We have not as "best we may" to "explain expressions which seem to oscillate alternately between writer and readers;" we know of no such expressions in this epistle, but we see the wisdom with which the inspired writer justifies his line of conduct. He will not attempt again to lay the foundation which has been so thoroughly undermined by his nation, for he deems it impossible to renew again to repentance* from dead works and faith toward God, a people which

* Rom. ii. 4. The goodness of God . . . to repentance, *εις μετανοιαν σε αγει.*

was, while he wrote, crucifying afresh the Messiah—the Son of God, and putting him publicly to shame. “Christianity,” (to quote Butler’s telling “conclusion”) “Christianity, and its evidence had been fairly laid before them ;” and there was “no reason to think they would alter their behaviour to any purpose, though there were a demonstration of its truth.”

LECTURE IV.

THE HEBREWS' REST.

“There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.”—HEB. iv. 9.

IN this and the preceding chapter the sacred writer has carried on an argument founded on a portion of the 95th Psalm—the first of those psalms, which, according to the learned Bishop Horsley, form a prophetic song concerning the introduction of the First-begotten into the world: Each psalm, he says, has its proper subject, which is some particular branch of the general argument, the establishment of Messiah's kingdom. Our text is a deduction from the latter part of the first of these prophetic psalms.

Commentators, with few exceptions, are agreed that the psalm is prophetic, still awaiting a time to come, when the rest described by the Lord as “his rest” shall be entered into and enjoyed. Our text suggests two subjects into which we wish to enquire, (1) what is the rest that remaineth to be enjoyed? and (2) who are ‘the people of God’ for whom this rest remaineth?

We shall first endeavour to establish what to our judgment appears the true solution of each of these questions, and then we shall review the

opinions generally held in regard to them, and from which we are compelled to differ.

Great unanimity has hitherto prevailed as to the meaning of our text : Expositors and critics, with one consent, assert that the "rest" in question is eternal rest—the heavenly rest typified by the so-called rest in Canaan ; and that by "the people of God" is signified not the family of Jacob, but "that veritable Israel, who inherit God's promises by faith ;" in a word, the elect Church of Christ. If this be the meaning of the term it must be deducible from the premises, from the reasoning of the sacred writer on the quotation from the 95th Psalm—carried on, as we think, through the latter part of the third chapter and the greater portion of the fourth. Let us endeavour to examine impartially the connection between the premises and the conclusion, that we may assign to the latter its legitimate interpretation.

Before however we enter on this examination, a few preliminary remarks may be necessary. It is asserted, as though it were unquestionably true, that the epistle was designed primarily and principally for Christian readers—for those (originally indeed Hebrews, but now Christians) who received Jesus as the Messiah—the great Prophet who brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel ; and it is assumed that the object of the sacred writer is to prove a life of happiness after the resurrection. But it seems to have been over-

looked by expositors that a future life of happiness was a received doctrine—an article of faith with the house of Israel—(they did, you remember, allow that there shall be a resurrection of the dead both of the just and of the unjust, as St. Paul says, (Acts xxiv. 14); and in other places he speaks “of the hope of Israel,” and “of the hope of the promise made to the Fathers, unto which our twelve tribes . . . hope to come.” So fully indeed was the belief of the resurrection and the life received that Martha replied to our Lord, “I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.” That this was the Hebrew nation’s faith is testified by the Church in her Articles of Faith.

Most probably then the readers of this epistle, as Hebrews, had already received the truth of ‘a better resurrection,’ after the example of their forefathers (Heb. xi. 35); they now therefore as converts to Christianity, according to the received hypothesis, were already established in the belief of the resurrection and the life of the world to come. Can we then be induced to believe that the inspired author of the Epistle to the Hebrews undertook as his object to prove to the body of Hebrew Christians by a long and circuitous argument of a figurative character, from Psalms 95, a truth which as Hebrews they most probably, and as Christians, they certainly believed already—a truth which, if they should apostatize from Christianity, they would still carry back with them to Judaism? They knew and

were established in this truth or, if they required to be put in remembrance of it, could it not at once have been impressed on their minds by reference to some of the treasured words of Jesus, or by a declaration resting on the authority of apostolic inspiration.

How telling and concise the method adopted by our Lord to prove to the Sadducee a future life involving future rest for Abraham and his children ; and if a future state of bliss after the resurrection must be proved to Hebrew Christians, how much more cogent proof could have been adduced, e. g. from Psalm xvii. ' As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness ; I shall be satisfied when I awake in thy likeness,' or from Daniel xii. 2. ' And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life ' etc.

But against the received notion that our author is arguing for eternal rest after the resurrection, a further presumption arises from his determination not to lay again ' the foundation ' of the doctrine of ' resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment ' :— if in the third and fourth chapters the scope of his argument is to prove a post-resurrection rest, is not this substantially to lay again the foundation of the resurrection of the dead ; and yet in chapter vi. he emphatically declares that he will not lay again this foundation, this first principle of the oracles of God. This seems to have altogether escaped the notice of the authors of desultory expositions of this

epistle. Already then, as we examine our text in its context, it seems too large a demand on our faith to require of us to believe that the writer's object in Hebrews iii. and iv. is to prove from Psalm xcvi. that everlasting rest hereafter remains for all Christians who fall asleep in Jesus.

That everlasting rest after the resurrection is a truth of Christianity there cannot be a question ; but it is a very doubtful question whether this subject is here brought under our consideration. Who in the present day, would think of proving to a Hebrew convert the doctrine of eternal rest from Psalm xcvi. in preference to the brilliant light of the New Testament revelation ? True the first Hebrew converts had not the writings of the New Testament, but they had their equivalent in the inspiration of the Apostles, whose form of sound words had gone out into all lands—even to the ends of the world.

We now proceed to examine the context to which our text is allowed to be the conclusion. The peculiar expression in the first verse of Hebrews iv. arrests attention ; it seems to mark the close connection between the third and fourth chapters, a connection confirmed by the recurrence of the same words so repeatedly in these two chapters :—I refer to the expression—“ a promise being ” still “ left ” or remaining, “ of entering into his rest,” the latter words of which are so frequently reiterated. Now how does it appear that a promise is still actually left or remaining ? The word translated

'remaining' or "being still left," implies being left behind for others ; and Israel rejecting the offer of entering into God's rest in the days of Moses, had left the entering into it for others who should come after :—In the very terms by which the unbelieving generation is excluded, there is implied the expectation or the promise that a believing generation should enter into or enjoy the fulfilment of the promise—the rest of God : this would indicate that the phrase 'my rest' of Psalm xcv. quoted Hebrews iii. 11 and 18. into which as stated, Hebrews iii. 19, Israel could not enter because of unbelief, is identical with the rest mentioned in Hebrews iv. 1 ; and a promise of entering into this rest our author says is still remaining, and the good news thereof he asserts to have been preached to his readers, as well as to their ancestors in the wilderness.

Again, in the third verse of Hebrews iv. by adopting the rendering given by Ebrard, with the definite article he so properly inserts, we obtain the following as the translation of that verse—viz., 'for we enter into *the rest* as believers,' (or 'a company of believers,'—Delitzsch) 'as he has said—as I swore in my wrath if they shall enter into my rest.' But the rest here mentioned, 'the rest *aforesaid*' (according to Alford) refers to the phrase 'his rest' in the first verse of the fourth chapter—the phrase quoted from Psalm xcv. ; and we not only meet it in the context five times before we reach our text, but it occurs explicitly or implicitly about ten times from its

first introduction in chapter iii. Now is it not very clear that in the first and third verses of the fourth chapter, the 'rest' referred to is precisely the same—the rest recorded by David as that into which Jehovah swore that Israel should not enter, when they had despised the land? These words then determine the meaning of the term 'rest' in the first verse, as well as in the third, and they lead us to infer that so far this word must have, as uttered by Moses and recorded by David, and here, (Hebrews iii. and Hebrews iv.) quoted by our author, the same application in reference to the exclusion of Israel from the enjoyment of the promised rest in the land of Canaan through unbelief.

The view advocated in this discourse is greatly strengthened by an argument furnished by the sixth and seventh verses : the translation of these two verses now generally received treats them as but one sentence, and is as follows :—“ Since then it remains that some enter into it, and those who were formerly the subjects of its announcement entered not into it on account of disobedience, he again fixeth a certain* day, etc.’ In this sentence an entrance is twice mentioned : ‘ Some enter into it ; ’ a future entrance ; ‘ Those who were formerly the subjects of its announcement, entered not into it ; words which refer to the past entrance of which Israel refused to take advantage. Now we may with good reason ask—Has the word ‘ *enter* ’ two dif-

* See Alford, Delitzsch, al.

ferent significations in this sentence? And does the term 'it,' used in connection with '*enter*,' and signifying 'the' rest mentioned immediately before in the quotation from Psalm xcv., relate to a heavenly rest in regard to the future, but in regard to the past only to an earthly one? 'Some enter into it' is, to mean, some enter heaven after the resurrection: some (that is, the house of Israel) *did not enter into it*, is to mean, that Israel did not enter into the promised land—into rest in flesh and blood before death and resurrection! '*Enter*' must one moment refer to a nation with all its chattels going into the land of Canaan: and in the same sentence, though the writer gives no hint of a change of application it must signify the entrance of believing individuals of all time and of every nation into a state of rest in heaven!

It is added in the following verse that if Joshua had given them (*i. e.* Israel) rest, then God would not be speaking of another day. For what purpose is that added? Are we hereby taught that if Joshua had given Israel rest, then God would not in David's time be speaking of another day for heavenly rest hereafter! That God would not have fixed a second day throughout all future time for believers among mankind to attain to everlasting bliss! And do we learn from this verse that Israel's entrance into rest through faith, would have closed the door of grace and mercy against mankind. We are unable to accept such

modes of interpretation ; the entrance into rest, once refused but still remaining open, we understand to be but one—the rest, the enjoyment of which remains for the people of God, when the heart of his people—Israel, as of one man, shall turn to the Lord and the veil be taken away. And is not the same thing intimated in the seventh verse hitherto so utterly misunderstood, viz., ‘he again fixes a certain day’ ?

Then there had been a former day fixed ; and is not ‘*another day*’ in the eighth verse identical with the ‘certain day’ in the seventh, and for the same purpose as that for which the former day had been fixed ? But the former day was fixed in Moses’ time for Israel’s entrance into rest in the promised land, and the second day—the certain day again fixed,—a day, we think, of the same kind as the former, is, if we rightly understand the reasoning of our author, for the same purpose—for ‘the rest’ that was once declined, and for the same nation—a time predicted and now, we trust, not distant, when at length ‘the to-day’ of this prophetic Psalm xcv. shall ‘be proclaimed.’ To this the learned Ebrard unconsciously refers ; remarking on the prophetic word—‘to-day,’ “the Psalmist,” he says, “refers back to the time when Israel was called to enter into its rest, and when Israel neglected this call by its disobedience ; then he exhorts the Israelites, on what day they should hear the voice of God again,

to give a different response to it from what they did then, and to obey without delay." And then he adds this important comment, so nearly expressive of our view, viz., "the Psalmist therefore presupposes the possibility of Israel's being again placed in a situation analogous to what it was then and admonishes it not to forfeit again the entrance into the offered glory."

But again, is the rest in the context and in Psalm xcv. a heavenly rest beyond the grave, or is it to be enjoyed by the nation of Israel, always serving God on earth, as a nation, in holiness and righteousness (St. Luke i. 72-75) ?

We turn to Israel and to Israel's Lawgiver for an answer: both knew the terms of the dread sentence pronounced against the faithless generation ; we may fairly assume that they fully comprehended the terrible significance of Jehovah's oath. Is not the culprit nation, as it stands at the bar of its offended King, made to understand the full measure of His wrath ? Or, is sentence delivered as an enigma, which for the present it may not understand ? Is the convict to be kept in the anguish of suspense, awaiting a vengeance to be developed from depth to depth of misery ? Doubtless, the Lawgiver who pronounced the sentence, and Israel on whom fell its crushing weight, understood the nature of the burden. It did contain exclusion from rest in Canaan because of unbelief, but did Lawgiver or people imagine that it carried also in

its import exclusion from the rest in heaven? Impossible! If such had been its significance, and Israel through blindness had failed to see it, would not Moses who 'was faithful in all God's house,' have warned them of the wrath to come? Would he not have urged on them the duty of repentance and prayer, lest not only their limbs should fall in the wilderness, but their souls perish everlastingly? And should we not find him, as was his wont, making intercession that God's people might not be blotted out of the book of life? In this as in other great emergencies Moses makes most urgent intercession for the rebellious people. Hear him as he pleads: "Pardon, I beseech Thee, the iniquity of this people." To the prayer of their intercessor Jehovah answers: "I have pardoned according to thy word." And are we in the face of this response of grace and mercy, to believe that the generation doomed to die in the wilderness was consigned to despair as their everlasting portion? Can it be that Moses deprecates the pestilence and disinheritance—the temporal but not the everlasting woe! Is all this anxiety on behalf of Israel for the life that now is, without a moment's thought for the life to come! Is such heartless conduct consistent with the character of this holy man who preferred "to suffer affliction with the people of God?"

Away with such a libel on the character of this faithful servant of God, who himself 'had respect

unto the recompense of the reward.' Surely Moses would have pleaded for a reversal of the sentence, had he understood that according to the letter or spirit of Jehovah's oath Israel or that generation, had been condemned to death eternal, to exclusion from everlasting rest. We conclude then that the sentence was understood both by lawgiver and people, not in reference to the loss of rest eternal but only as excluding from God's rest in Canaan, on account of the absence at the time, of the element essential for the enjoyment of that rest; from the absence of a living faith within Israel's heart, which revealed itself in wilful presumptuous disobedience.

A passage in the life of Moses affords us a parallel and a strong support to our argument:— He had found grace in God's sight, glory and great honour were laid on him; Jehovah talked with him, as a man with his friend, and proclaimed his name before him; but he was on one occasion publicly guilty of the grievous sin of unbelief; and in his case too, as before in Israel's, Jehovah swore* that he should not go into that good land, or in David's inspired paraphrase, 'should not enter into God's rest.' In the court of God—the Judge of all, who is no respecter of persons, like case like rule doubtless held good, and Moses, though repeatedly he sought it, sought in vain a reversal of the stern decree. Yet he was not

* Deut. iv. 21.

excluded from the blessing of eternal rest ; we see him 'in glory,' with his blessed Master at the transfiguration, and this encourages us to believe that in the case of Israel the same gracious God, while he denied the six hundred thousand an entrance into the Lord's land, was so full of compassion and pity that he did not refuse the spirit of godly sorrow and true repentance and an entrance into rest eternal to such among them, as in their weary pilgrimage sought those blessings with earnest and unfainting prayer. In neither his own nor Israel's case does Moses appear to have discerned exclusion from eternal rest to be covered by the terms of the terrible decree ; in neither did he deprecate the fearful doom. Until then we are furnished with some proof to sustain the revolting dogma that those whom God condemned to die in the wilderness were also consigned by the same decree to exclusion* from everlasting bliss, we shall, in this case be content, in company with Moses, to be accounted guilty of unbelief by commentators.

In conformity with the foregoing explanation of the phrase 'my rest' is our exposition of the terms—"the people of God," which occur in the text, suggested probably to the mind of the sacred writer by the terms "We are his people" in Psalm xcvi. 'The people of God' was, to use the words of Dean Alford, 'the well-known designation of Israel—the covenant people.' How the unbeliev-

* See Stuart in loco.

ing portion of the Hebrew nation, at the date of the Epistle, would understand the phrase—'the people of God,' is, we presume, patent without one word of remark ; but how would the Hebrew converts understand these words—'the people of God'—household words, so familiar to their ears ? At that early period—the infancy of the Christian church, while the temple was yet standing and Judah was not scattered, phrases long established must have retained their antient meaning—these words had, for fifteen centuries, throughout the pages of Holy Scripture but one well-known signification—a signification attached to them in the Law and the Prophets, which commended itself to the understanding and affections of those who gloried in the title—and, undoubting as they were already, the conviction of the Hebrew Christians must, if possible, have derived additional confirmation from the fact, that in the eleventh chapter of this epistle 'the people of God' is used as the recognized designation of the house of Israel ; where Moses is described as 'choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.'

That the phrase under review was in our author's days among Jewish converts the well-known designation, not of the church comprising Jew and Gentile as converts to Christianity but of the Hebrew nation, appears from the use (by the apostle of the Gentiles) of substantially the same

designation for Israel. In his epistle to the Romans he asks this question—"Hath God cast away his people?" The saints of Rome—Jew, Proselyte, and Gentile—knew at once that by these words was signified the Hebrew nation.

Having established, as we believe, the true meaning of our text we proceed to review the commonly received interpretation. If the exposition of modern commentators is correct, we should expect the sense attributed by them to the words in our text which is acknowledged to be the conclusion, to be found in the preceding verses from which that conclusion is derived. If the 'rest' and 'people' in the conclusion have but one signification—an anti-typical, they cannot have the typical meaning in the premises:—It is assumed, however, that there are two rests and two peoples to enjoy them respectively; a typical people and their rest, an antitypical people and their corresponding rest. But if this be true, it should be clearly established that the sacred writer so designed, and it should be shewn where throughout the passage the typical sense is to prevail, and where the anti-typical;—and that they so harmonize that they play their parts respectively in the argument. If there be a typical rest before death and Israel as a typical people to enjoy it; and their antitypes, viz., a heavenly rest after the resurrection, and the so-called spiritual Israel or Christian Church to enter therein, it should be capable of demonstration. That such was the intent of our

author should not be left to the surmise of an expositor or the ingenuity of a fertile imagination.

We may take the view of the passage given in Dean Alford's notes, as the interpretation in its main features of expositors ; for however they may differ in the less important points of the argument they agree with him as to the meaning of the conclusion. In the beginning of chap. iv. (to quote the Dean's words) "it is to be observed that in the argument in this chapter the writer departs from the primary sense of the words *κατάπαυσίν μου*" (my rest) "in the Psalm, and lays a stress on *αὐτου*" (his) "making it God's rest, the rest into which God has entered." And he quotes these words of Estius—"Here by the promised rest he" (our author) "does not understand the land of Canaan concerning which, according to the letter the Psalmist speaks, but the heavenly country which that earthly rest mystically signifies." Adopting the foregoing, and commenting on the second verse of chap. iv. concerning the good tidings announced to Israel of old and to those for whose benefit this epistle was written, Dean Alford continues—"they (the good tidings) were *not the same in the two cases*, but the writer *treats them as the same*. To them" (that is to Israel) "indeed it was primarily the inheritance in the land of promise ; but even then, as proved below, the *κατάπαυσις μου*" (the expression 'my rest') "had a further meaning which reaches even down to us." According to

this explanation, the idea conveyed by the term 'rest' was primarily connected with the land of Canaan, having at the same time a further meaning, we suppose 'rest in heaven ; but in chap. iv. Canaan is made by expositors to disappear and heaven to take its place ; while a state of rest to have been enjoyed in this life by the Hebrew nation, passes by some occult process and without notice from our author, into a state of eternal rest to be entered into by the Church triumphant, in the life to come ; for not God's people—Israel—but the Church gathered from every nation is meant by " the people of God." But of all this the sacred writer says nothing ; he nowhere teaches the departure from the primary meaning ; on the contrary he treats, and without doubt designedly, the good tidings in the two cases, in Moses' day and in his own, as promising the same rest—the same inheritance to the same people Israel ; not the slightest hint is dropped in the context as to the presence of type and antitype. It is a discovery of expositors that the good tidings are not really the same in the two cases ! That here are type and antitype ! Did the inspired writer then know that they were not really the same, and yet treat the good tidings as the same notwithstanding ? If theologians persuade themselves that our author acted thus, it is only reasonable that some account should be given of a discovery so marvellous. If he treated the rest and inheritance and people as

the same, while he was quite aware that they were different, we naturally desire to ascertain the reason for a procedure so questionable, and to know how the discovery of such procedure has been made. We can assign good reason for his adoption of a course the very opposite in what concerned God's glory and the salvation of sinners, and such we are satisfied was the course he took; he knew the sense which these phrases "my rest" and "the people of God" had for a lengthened period, and doubtless he did no violence to their established meaning; he used them in their ordinary signification. The statement that things so different as these supposed types and antitypes, are treated as the same by an inspired writer is most dishonouring to him and dangerous to the faith, tending as it does to undermine our confidence in his honesty, our belief in his inspiration of Holy writ; and any exegesis which needs such an hypothesis for its support must be unsound and cannot endure the test of criticism; it must eventually fall before the assault of logic and unbiased judgment. Our author treated the past and the then present glad tidings as the same; and for this simple reason, because of the sameness in both cases of the promise and the people. How apposite the words of Tholuck:—"Few commentators have succeeded in clearly tracing out the connection of the ideas;" but still more appropriate those of Ebrard:—"The fault of this," he says, "belongs not to the passage, but

to the commentators, who have brought too much their own ideas with them, and have not had the self-denial simply to surrender themselves to the words of the writer."

We, therefore, rejecting figure or allegory, adhere to the primary sense of the words of our text throughout the chain of reasoning in the context, and understanding by "the people of God" his people Israel, and by "the rest" their happy service of God in the Lord's land and under his protection, *we* surrender ourselves to the words of the writer; and when Christian churches can bring themselves to restore this epistle to its rightful owners—the Hebrew nation, using its terms in the sense attaching to them in apostolic times, then the hand of the Lord may be with them and they may find in it a blessed means of leading Israel to the reception of the truth as it is in Jesus, unto their everlasting salvation.

Then at length shall Israel of Jesus say, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us : This is Jehovah; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation."

LECTURE V.

THE HEBREWS' COVENANT.

“Behold the days come saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the House of Israel, and with the House of Judah ; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt ; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not saith the Lord : For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord ; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts ; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people ; and they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord ; for all shall know me from the least to the greatest, for I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.”—HEB. viii. 8-12.

“THE great prophetic passage” quoted by our author, and to which we desire to direct your attention, “occurs in the third great trilogy of the Jeremianic collection of prophecies,” styled by Delitzsch “The Book of the Restoration.” It consists of chapter xxx. and chapter xxxi. of the Prophet Jeremiah. “The prophecies contained in these two chapters were given to Jeremiah when, after the conquest of Jerusalem, he had been carried in fetters, among other captives, to the standing quarters of Nebuzaradan at Rama. Committed at the same time to writing by the express command of God, these prophecies speak of the ultimate restoration of the whole people of Israel, of the second David, of Rachel’s lamentation at

Rama over her children carried away into captivity, and their future return; and lastly, of the new covenant which Jehovah will one day make with his people, based on a final and absolute remission of sins. The passage here selected from this chain of prophetic utterances, whose Messianic meaning admits of no evasion, begins with the stereotyped phrase in Jeremiah, *ἴδου ἡμέραι ἔρχονται.* (Behold days are coming). "Jehovah holds out the prospect of a new covenant to be made with the houses both of Israel and Judah, that is, with the whole covenant people." From the days of Jeremiah then the pious and contemplative Israelite must have been led to look forward to the introduction of a better covenant. The worldly-minded would magnify and adhere to the existing covenant. Its splendour of service, the gorgeous robes of the High Priest, the number of its Hierophants, its varied ceremonies, impressed the imagination, captivated the senses; but the spiritual Israelite, who felt the weight of that yoke, which neither he nor his fathers could bear, might perceive that the days of the Mosaic covenant were numbered, that it was waxing old, and that its removal was only a question of time.

Two questions here present themselves at once for consideration—the subjects of the covenant, and the blessings of the covenant.

We proceed to examine them in order. Unquestionably the Jew, from the exclusiveness of his

national cult, looked on his own people as the only subjects of this new covenant. To the Gentiles he would naturally say, "ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial in" this our covenant. But Christian churches, reformed and unreformed, contest the matter with the Jew, and seem to hold that this promised covenant is the Gospel or Christian covenant, that all the members of Christ, as heirs of the kingdom of heaven, are equally subjects of this covenant—that Jew and Gentile in common, on embracing the Gospel, forthwith inherit the blessings of this new covenant.

The Churches of England and Ireland, and all the colonial churches who use the English version of the Bible, set forth, in the summary of contents of the eighth chapter of Hebrews, these words, viz.: "The temporal covenant with the Fathers" is abolished "by the eternal covenant of *the gospel*." The Roman Church, in the note of her Rhemish Testament on the tenth verse, says—"The mutual covenant made between God and *the faithful* is that which was dedicated and established first in the chalice of his blood, called therefore the New Testament in his blood: and which was straight after ratified by the death of the Testator upon the cross," and the giving of God's laws into their mind, "and the rest following is fulfilled in the Church, and is the proper effect of the New Testament." In like manner the commentators appropriate this covenant to Christians as such. Alford, for instance, in his

note on the eleventh verse says,—“ Under the New” (Covenant) “ there is no more need for the believer to have recourse to man for teaching in the knowledge of God ; for the Holy Spirit which is given to all that ask, reveals the things of Christ to each, according to the measure of his spiritual attainment and strength of faith ;” and Delitzsch in his comment on this passage states, “ that in Christ Jesus our sins are once for all forgiven ; that we have nothing to do but to receive this forgiveness in humble faith ; and that when we fall into sin, the covenant foundation still remains, and needs not the repetition of legal sacrifices to give it fresh validity ;” and again, “ he is not speaking of Judaism and Christianity as merely historical phenomena, but of the two *διαθήκαι* ” (covenants) “ in their divine force and reality. Ever since the new covenant was established in the blood of Jesus Christ, the old covenant has had only a seeming existence and validity in the mind of Israel.” And in fact, as a rule, divines in treating of the gospel covenant hold that God has revealed this covenant promised by Jeremiah, and established it as the ground on which “ whosoever will ” may draw nigh to him and live ; that the believer should “ recognize in this covenant the charter of his privileges ;” that “ this covenant of grace, in other words, the gospel covenant, is that dispensation of God under which we live.” Such are the words of Goode, in his sermons on ‘ the better covenant,’—viz. : on our text.

At this conclusion the disciples of both the literal and allegorical schools of interpretation have arrived—the latter by the summary process of ignoring the restoration of Israel to the land of their fathers, and by assuming that, on their embracing Christianity, they would merge in the Church, ceasing to be a distinct people ; the former by other methods, less daring, and, in their opinion, more in accordance with the general tenor of Holy Scripture.

According, then, to these modes of interpretation the blessings of the gospel are identical with those of this covenant, because the covenants of Abraham and Jeremiah are supposed to be but one ; and if this identity could be established, then the subjects of this covenant are not only the family of Jacob, but all the nations of the earth.

To such an explanation of this covenant we are unable to subscribe. We believe it to belong exclusively to the family of Jacob—the people whom God has formed for his praise ; and if our exposition be correct, it will yet be fulfilled in that people.

Now we deny the identity of the covenants—the Abrahamic and that of Jeremiah ; and we proceed to assign our reasons.

In the seventh verse of this chapter our attention is drawn to a second covenant in these words:—‘For if that first’ (covenant) ‘were blameless, a place would not be sought for a second.’ The

term 'a second,' is, according to Alford and Langé, 'emphatic': it is, therefore, of great import in the chain of reasoning. Combined with it is the future tense in regard to the time of the making of this covenant; and further, the term 'new' is prefixed to this covenant,—a term which favours the impression that it was made known to Israel *later* than the Mosaic Covenant with which it is compared. As, then, it is 'a second' and 'a new covenant' in regard to the first, or Mosaic, and as, from the Prophet's stand point, the making of it is referred to the future, it seems certain that in the Prophet's day it was not a covenant in esse, but that Jehovah, while he promised a new covenant, had kept in his own power the time when, in after ages, it should be ratified.

The order, in regard to time, of the two covenants is clearly laid down, as we think, by our author; neither from the language of our text, nor from his reasoning have we any ground for imagining that Israel, on the announcement of the promise, had any suspicion that what the Prophet styles 'a new covenant' had, in ages before the Mosaic covenant, been promulgated and ratified, and that they together with their fathers had already an interest therein. A future inauguration then of this covenant must have been from the date of its promise, an object of hope and expectation in Israel.

Again, in the third chapter of the epistle to Galatians, we have the Mosaic covenant under the term

'the law,' in contact with the Gospel, or Abrahamic covenant, which latter, according to the received hypothesis, is the same as the new covenant in our text. These are St. Paul's words—viz., "and this I say, that the covenant that was confirmed or ratified before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul that it should make the promise of none effect." Here the Mosaic covenant, the law, is placed *second* in order of time, and the Gospel, or Christian covenant *first*. But if we follow the commentators of whatever school, this order laid down by St. Paul contradicts our author's order of the covenants ; for if that of Jeremiah is the Gospel covenant—that of Abraham, embracing not only Israel but all nations, then the Mosaic covenant (the *first* according to our author) becomes the *second*, and Jeremiah's, identified by expositors with the Gospel covenant, becomes *the first*, while in our context it is styled "a second," in regard to that of Moses, emphatically "a second."

Had the Gospel covenant been only *promised* to Abraham expositors might defend their position ; but the covenant to the father of the faithful, embracing all nations, and therefore Israel among them, was *ratified* by God in respect of Christ, four hundred and thirty years before the Mosaic. The covenant, on the other hand, promised by Jeremiah, was not till Christ came, ratified by Jehovah. These are then three distinct covenants—the Abra-

hamic, the Mosaic, and the Jeremianic. Two of these, one to Abraham, and the other to Moses, had been made long before the days of Jeremiah; and his utterance quoted by our author, concerned a *third* covenant to be made at a future period, but correctly styled in regard to the Mosaic covenant "a second," as only these two belonged peculiarly to the house of Israel. It remains for the advocates of the identity of Abraham's covenant with that of Jeremiah to reconcile, consistently with their principle, the statement of our author with that of St. Paul. Holy Scripture is so clear as to the ratification of Abraham's covenant, while Jeremiah's was still unmade, that some proof stronger than bold assertion, as to their identity, is absolutely required.

Leaving the order of the covenants, let us now examine two words applied to the 'second' covenant. In Heb. viii. and Heb. xii. it is styled 'new' in the English version; but for this term 'new' two epithets of very different significance occur in the original. They may be contemplated, the one under the aspect of time, the other under that of quality. In chapter viii. the covenant is called 'new' under the aspect of quality, and in this respect it is relatively new; and if indeed it is the covenant made to Abraham, then it is new in quality when compared with the Mosaic, while it is pre-Mosaic as to age, and therefore not 'new' if contemplated under the aspect of time.

But it is under the aspect of time that this covenant is called 'new' in Heb. xii. 24, by our author—'ye are come . . . to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant.' The word νέος, ('new') in this quotation, is defined by Delitzsch as 'that which has just come into existence, and is full of fresh life;' with Ebrard it means that which is 'young—still absolutely new in respect of its existence, and has not yet existed long.' The two terms are compared, and their difference is clearly shown in the Archbishop of Dublin's useful work on synonyms. According to him 'new' in Heb. xii. is 'that which has more recently come into existence,' and 'the covenant of which Christ is the mediator is a διαθήκη νέα, as compared with the Mosaic covenant given nearly fifteen* centuries before; it is a διαθήκη καινή as compared with the same, effete with age, and from which all vigour, energy and strength had departed, (Heb. viii. 13).'

Now the term καινή (new) being used in Heb. viii. to distinguish a covenant of which Christ is mediator, a most favourable opportunity offered not only to show the difference of it from the Mosaic, which our author took advantage of, but also its identity with that of Abraham, of which he has not availed himself, but on the contrary he has deliberately used another word for 'new,' νέος, in Heb. xii. instead of that in Heb. viii. which Jeremiah employed, teaching by its use that the cove-

* Archbishop Trench says "2000 years."

nant of which he speaks had but recently come into existence.

The foregoing arguments, if they prove the difference between the covenant made to Abraham, and that promised by Jeremiah, raise a presumption that the subjects of it may not be the same—and we now proceed to show that the family of Jacob, and not all nations, are the subjects of this second or new covenant.

The text, which is free from the florid and tropical, describes the subjects of the new covenant in an explicit manner, in the following sentence:—
“This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel.” Can any statement be more clear? Is it possible that by ‘the house of Israel,’ we are to understand ‘all the nations of the earth’? The expression ‘the house of Israel’ is of very frequent occurrence in Holy Scripture—we meet it fifteen times in Jeremiah, and more than a hundred times elsewhere: and, if in not one other instance it signifies ‘Jew and Gentile,’ or ‘all the nations,’ then it seems to follow, that they cannot be meant in our text, but that by the house of Israel the family of the Patriarch Jacob must be intended. And this is so clear, it is admitted, that there must have been a surrender of the question, had not this phrase been presented to us, in Heb. x. 16, slightly changed in form. In Heb. viii. it is, “This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel;” but in Heb. x., “This is the covenant that I will

make with them." To the uninitiated reader it would not, we imagine, occur that between these two extracts there was any material difference ; but learned expositors consider that, in the extract from Heb. x. which you have just now heard, the original prophecy is so expanded that it is made to embrace the Gentile as well as the Jew. 'Instead,' says Delitzsch, 'of the $\tau\omega \delta\iota\kappa\omega \text{ 'Ισραήλ}$ (to the house of Israel), retained at Heb. viii. 10, we find $\pi\rho\delta\varsigma \alpha\nu\tau\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ ' (to them) here,' (in Heb. x.), 'the prophecy being thus raised above its national limitations and, as it were, universalised ;' and Dean Alford, in his wake, boldly and without qualification avers that 'here the prophecy is taken out of its national limits and universalised.' The prophecy is '*as it were* universalised,' in the judgment of the one, but with the other it 'is universalised.' Now is it not a sufficient answer to such assertions to say that 'the simple reason for the abbreviation is that the author of the epistle wished to give his citation in the briefest possible form?'"* But the context will shew that by the verbal alteration no substantial change in sense was intended, for he reminds us that the Holy Ghost promised forgiveness of sins after he had said 'this is the covenant that I will make with them :' therefore these words, as given in Heb. x., convey exactly in substance what the Holy Ghost had said before, viz. : 'this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel.' The change

* Delitzsch, vol. i., p. 307, Clarke, Edinburgh.

of expression, then, was not made to open the covenant to all nations, but simply for the sake of brevity.

But a comparison of the blessings of the promised covenant with its supposed fulfilment, likewise tends to prove that it does not extend beyond the house of Israel. Preparatory to this comparison a few remarks must be made on the covenant itself, and some slight improvements in the translation suggested. This second covenant is founded on better promises than the first. Which be they? 'The first* more excellent promise is this, that in the place of the external obligation to the letter, and its bondage which excites opposition, will henceforth stand the inward divinely implanted knowledge of the will of God, forming a new bond of communion between the Lord and his people;' agreeably to the words of the prophecy, viz.:—
"putting my laws into their mind, I will also inscribe them on their hearts, and will be unto them for a God, and they shall be unto me for a people."

'The second more excellent promise is that, as the result of manifold divine inward revelations, a true knowledge of God will become universal, a common possession of his people.' "And they shall not teach every one his fellow citizen, and every one his brother, saying, know the Lord; because all shall know me, from their least unto their greatest." All will know the Lord, i. e., will

* Delitzsch in loco.

be inwardly διδακτοὶ θεοῦ (taught of God) 'and need no outward teaching.'

'The third more excellent promise, which constitutes the basis of this new covenant, is, that all sins will be done away by the prevenient grace of a free pardon: For I will, saith God, be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins (and breaches of the law) will I remember no more.'

To duly appreciate the blessings of the covenant we must correct some expressions, in which the meaning is not fully brought out, and to which expositors, it seems to us, have not had sufficient regard. The word twice translated 'every man' is in the singular, and is more correctly rendered 'each man;' and in the phrase, 'know the Lord,' the verb being in the singular, the translation should shew this, and the phrase should therefore be translated, 'know thou the Lord.' It would appear then, if our text is identical in meaning with the covenant of Abraham, that each man, every individual of all nations, will be inwardly taught of God, and will have no need of 'outward teaching,' nor, (it seems to follow), of any teaching ministry.

This prophetic covenant, we are asked to believe, is in process of fulfilment day by day. The church which is being gathered from all nations is supposed to be in the enjoyment of its blessings. 'The age,' it is said, 'in which we at present live is the dispensation of the Spirit, in which God has communicated Himself by the highest revelation and

in the most intimate communion of which man is capable ; no longer through creation, no more as an authoritative voice from without, but as a Law within—as a spirit mingling with a spirit. This is the dispensation of which the Prophet said of old, that the time should come when they should no longer teach every man his brother, and every man his neighbour, saying, “ know the Lord,”—that is, by a will revealed by external authority from other human minds,—“ for they shall all know him, from the least of them to the greatest.” And a very learned divine* in our own Church writes thus :—The Apostle “ testifies that the gospel, which he was commissioned to preach, is the fulfilment of the great promise of ancient prophecy, even the New Covenant, in which God has engaged Himself to sway His people, not by terror, but by gratitude and love ; to graft in their hearts an unfailing principle of cheerful obedience ; and to constrain them to a willing conformity to His will by manifesting Himself unto them in His true character as a God ready to forgive ;” and in proof that St. Paul’s gospel and this new covenant, as stated above, are the same, our text from the ninth to the twelfth verse is adduced. Now it is true that the covenant to Abraham confirmed of God in Christ is daily receiving its fulfilment ; yet abundant proof is within reach, forbidding us to believe that the blessings of the new covenant to the house of Israel

* The Bishop of Ossory.

are enjoyed by any of the nations of the earth. In every Christian nation are not 'the evil ever mingled with the good'? Have they not been so mingled from the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ? And if, without opening history's dark page, we survey the nations of christendom to-day, with the thunders of the fiercest war yet ringing in our ears, to which of them can we point triumphantly, and say, therein are fulfilled the promises of this new covenant, for this nation has God's laws inscribed on its mind and engraved on its heart; its citizens, each one from the least to the greatest, have learned to know God, so that they need no outward teaching, fraud and violence have disappeared, vice is a thing unheard of, lust and passion are subjugated, envy and slander have fled, and the tongue, that unruly member which is set on fire of hell, is cooled and tamed: this nation's swords were long since beaten into ploughshares, its spears exchanged for pruning hooks. Nay, are not all the Christian nations at this moment forging warlike instruments of most deadly power? and this because the laws of God are not engraven on their hearts. And is it not because, in every Christian nation, without exception, facts are so irreconcilable with the promises of this covenant, that efforts are made to tone down the strength of its expressions, and that we are gravely told that "the words are not to be urged to a literal explanation."*

* M. Stewart in loco.

If this prophecy may not be treated as the potter's clay, nor its language frittered away, that it may suit an imaginary fulfilment, this covenant, like the Mosaic, belongs to the house of Israel, and not to all the nations ; and it proclaims in terms which cannot be mistaken that, when the sins of that family are forgiven, then they shall no longer, as in the Mosaic dispensation, need to teach each man his brother, saying, know thou the Lord ; and why ? because they all shall know Him, from the least to the greatest. In the words of Isaiah—" thy people shall be all righteous," and, as so often promised, " Jehovah will be their God, and they shall be his people."

Now let us suppose, as it is predicted in Jer. xxx. and xxxi., the house of Israel restored, that He who scattered Israel has gathered them into their own land, that the laws of God are inscribed on their minds, and engraven on their hearts, so that each one knows the Lord:—what would then be the state of the House of Israel, what the blessedness of that nation ? " In such a state there would be no such thing as faction ; but men of the greatest capacity would of course, all along, have the chief direction of affairs willingly yielded to them, and they would share it among themselves without envy. Each of these would have the part assigned him to which his genius was peculiarly adapted: and others, who had not any distinguishing genius, would be safe, and think themselves

very happy, by being under the protection and guidance of those who had. Public determinations would really be the result of the united wisdom of the community ; and they would faithfully be executed by the united strength of it. Some would in a higher way contribute, but all would in some way contribute, to the public prosperity : and in it each would enjoy the fruits of his own virtue. And as injustice, whether by fraud or force, would be unknown among themselves, so they would be sufficiently secured from it in their neighbours. For cunning and false self-interest, confederacies in injustice, ever slight, and accompanied with faction and intestine treachery ; these, on the one hand, would be found mere childish folly and weakness, when set in opposition against wisdom, public spirit, union inviolable, and fidelity on the other ; allowing both a sufficient length of years to try their force. Add the general influence which such a kingdom would have over the face of the earth, by way of example particularly, and the reverence which would be paid it. It would plainly be superior to all others, and the world must gradually come under its empire ; not by means of lawless violence, but partly by what must be allowed to be just conquest ; and partly by other kingdoms submitting themselves voluntarily to it throughout a course of ages, and claiming protection, one after another, in successive exigencies. The head of it would be an universal monarch in another sense than any

mortal has yet been ; and the eastern style would be literally applicable to him, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him. And though, indeed, our knowledge of human nature, and the whole history of mankind, shew the impossibility, without some miraculous interposition, that a number of men, here on earth, should unite in one society or government, in the fear of God and universal practice of virtue ; and that such a government should continue so united for a succession of ages : yet admitting or supposing this, the effect would be as now drawn out. And thus, for instance, the wonderful power and prosperity promised to the Jewish nation in the Scripture, would be, in a great measure, the consequence of what is predicted of them ; and the people should be all righteous and inherit the land for ever: were we to understand the latter phrase of a long continuance only, sufficient to give things time to work. The predictions of this kind, for there are many of them, cannot come to pass, in the present known course of nature ; but suppose them come to pass, and then, the dominion and pre-eminence promised must naturally follow to a very considerable degree." This graphic passage from Bp. Butler gives a lucid exposition of the blessings promised. When the covenant is accepted by the acknowledgment of Jesus as their Messiah, then the house of Israel will be Jehovah's people, He will be their God,

“and they shall not know sorrow any more at all.”
Jer. xxxi. 12.

If the arguments laid before you, my Brethren, are sound, they conduct us to the conclusion that this new and second covenant belongs only to the family of Jacob, and they loudly call on us to renounce the system of appropriating to ourselves, by the misinterpretation of Holy Scripture, the blessings which are theirs. May we, and all who call themselves Christians, be led by the Spirit to confess our manifold sins against the house of Israel, to restore to them such prophecies as are their rightful possession, and, content with the mercies vouchsafed us in Christ, henceforth to bless the house of Jacob, and pray for the peace of Jerusalem.

LECTURE VI.

A TYPICAL ALTAR.

“ We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat who serve the tabernacle, for the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp; wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come. By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of lips giving thanks to his name. But to do good and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.”—HEB. xiii. 10-16.

EIGHTEEN centuries have gone by since this epistle was written, and yet an exposition of this passage (in its bearing on the doctrine of the church so important), which can be considered simple, consistent, and satisfactory, has not been supplied by expositors.

They are much perplexed about the connection of the first three verses of our text. According to one* ‘ the ensuing context, from hence to the 17th verse, seems abstruse, and the reasonings in it not easy to be apprehended. But expositors,’ he says, ‘ do overlook the context and attend only unto the exposition of the parts of it severally by themselves.’ With Bloomfield—‘ This is a passage which, owing to the recondite nature of the metaphors employed,

* Owen.

involves no little difficulty,'—and he adds, 'much depends on the connection of v. 10 with vv. 9 and 11.' But on the contrary Tholuck seems to deny any important connection between vv. 9 and 10; for commenting on the latter verse, he says—'The asyndeton here gives a greater emphasis to the thought.' At issue with these is Dean Alford. To the question, 'What is the connection with v. 9?' he replies,—'If I regard it aright, it is not only not done away, but established in its proper light by our interpretation of *βρώματα*.' (meats).

The tenth verse is, we are persuaded, the pivot on which turns the true interpretation of this passage. If, then, we can arrive at the meaning of this verse, there will be little to embarrass us in explaining the context.

The following paraphrase exhibits, we trust, an impartial view of the explanation of the most esteemed commentators:—"We Christians," say they, "have an altar or sacrifice or meat—the sacrifice of Christ, of which they who serve the Tabernacle have no right to eat spiritually or sacramentally, and these being debarred from eating or partaking, we Christians have, by just inference, a right to eat of this altar or sacrifice here spoken of, and are commanded to do so." This, we hope, will be found a fair statement of the view accepted by learned writers such as Delitzsch, Tholuck, and Alford.

From such views we dissent; they are founded,

we believe, on an erroneous assumption, which mystifies the whole passage, and by its absurdity affords to a very corrupt branch of the Christian Church a vantage ground from which it cannot be successfully assailed.

Let us recall the tenth verse. 'We have an altar of which they have no right to eat who serve the Tabernacle.' Here several subjects of enquiry at once are suggested—viz.: who have this altar? or who are meant by the term 'we'? what is signified by this altar? why have they who serve the Tabernacle no right to eat thereof? what is the nature of the eating mentioned? and who are they who serve the Tabernacle?

We proceed to ascertain the answers to these questions, ascending from the last. Then we shall be prepared to say who are meant by the term 'we' in the phrase, 'we have an altar;' for it is error here, that has engendered error throughout the exposition of the whole passage.

Who then are they 'who serve the Tabernacle'?

Stuart with others (e. g., Whitby) is of opinion that they are 'such as continue to be disciples of Judaism, or turn back from Christianity to Judaism, and thus renounce the blessings procured, by the death of Christ, for believers.' Some, as Schlichting and Hoffman, 'have maintained that by this designation Christians are meant as the Priests of the New Testament.' 'An audacious interpolation of thought,' according to Delitzsch, and 'alien to the

whole spirit of the New Testament Scripture.' Such explanations have not met with general acceptance, and it seems at length to be all but universally acknowledged that 'those who serve the Tabernacle,' are none other than the Priests of the house of Aaron. That this is the true meaning of the phrase can be inferred from another place in the epistle itself; for what was the Tabernacle? Was it not the shadow of heavenly things? Those then 'who serve the Tabernacle' are identified with those 'who serve the shadow of heavenly things;' for in Heb. viii. 4, 5, we read of 'Priests who offer gifts according to the law, who serve the shadow of heavenly things.' Such then, beyond question, is the meaning that any Hebrew, in our author's day, whether Christian or unbeliever, would have attached to the phrase—'those who serve the Tabernacle.' Thoughts, then, so strange and recondite as those of Stuart, so 'monstrous' and 'alien to the spirit of the New Testament' as those of Hoffman, could never have arisen in the minds of readers in Apostolic times. It must, then, have been admitted that the expression under review is a true designation of the Jewish Priesthood.

In connection with the Priesthood, who are partakers of the Altar, comes the word—'eat:' 'They who serve the Tabernacle have no right to eat.' Can we ascertain the sense in which the word 'eat' is here used, whether in a spiritual or literal? We must not hastily decide; for the meaning of

this word is intimately connected with the true exegesis of the passage. Now you remember that in the preceding verse these words occur,—‘It is good that the heart be established with grace, not with meats.’ Here we have the mention of meats, whether they be sacrificial, or such as are regarded as clean or unclean for food ; and there is presented to us in these words a very decided opposition between grace and meats. The meaning is not that the heart may indeed be established by either grace or meats, but that it is *best** (as the Rhemish and Vulgate say) that the heart be established by grace. This surely is not the meaning of the sacred writer ; his meaning is clearly this—that the grace of God and the precepts concerning meats (which may and which may not be eaten), mutually exclude one another as means of establishing the heart. These latter, even when in full force under the Old Testament, had no spiritual and salutary influence on the heart, and therefore stand in direct contrast with ‘grace.’ But these meats suggest that, as they were eaten in a natural sense, so in the next, the tenth, verse the word ‘eat’ is employed in the same sense ; and calling to mind how constantly ‘eating,’ in its natural sense, is connected with the Jewish Priesthood, we are persuaded that any Jew who met with our text would at once conclude that the eating from which those who serve the Tabernacle are here spoken of as excluded, must be an eating

* Rhem. Test. in loco. Vulgate ‘optimum.’

in the natural or ordinary sense of the word. With this the expositors of the unreformed western churches agree : from it the writers of the reformed churches differ. Now, while we shall shew presently that the interpretation of the unreformed churches is untenable, we candidly confess that they are right in taking this word 'eat,' in the tenth verse, in its primary and natural signification.

Let us see if it is possible to give to the word 'eat' in this verse a spiritual signification. 'To eat' in this sense is to believe ; and the command to both Priest and people was that they should believe on him, whom God had sent, that is, on Christ Jesus. Now we learn that 'a great company of the Priests were obedient to the faith ;' in other words that they ate or partook of what expositors call 'our altar,' as the altar in the tenth verse is styled by them. It was their duty thus to become obedient to the faith ; to eat the bread that came down from heaven, even his flesh, which the Son of Man gave for the life of the world. If, then, this great company of the Priests by the very act of believing the gospel, did eat of 'our altar,' how can it with truth be said that 'we' Christians 'have an altar, of which those who serve the Tabernacle have no right to eat' ! It is as much as to say—Jewish Priests have no right to believe in Christ ! Such is the absurdity that results from understanding the word 'eat' in a spiritual sense. To avoid

such absurdity, then, we take the word in its natural signification.

We now advance to the enquiry, why 'they have *no right* to eat who serve the Tabernacle.' In considering this portion of our subject it is requisite to call attention to the important fact, that they who serve the Tabernacle are by this phrase described in their official character—as a class, and that their state or habit of mind, as individuals, is not brought under our notice, or called in question. Whether they may have been obedient to the faith, or may have rejected Jesus, cannot be learned from the text or context. All that concerned the writer and the readers of the epistle is stated in the text, viz.: that the Priests, as such, have no right to eat of an altar, which commentators assume to be 'our altar' or sacrifice. Now the reason assigned by our author why 'they have no right to eat,' is very clearly and succinctly stated. They who serve the Tabernacle have no right to eat of this altar, for the bodies are burnt by divine command—"for the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the High Priest for sin, are burnt outside the camp:" and this in compliance with the Mosaic Law (Lev. vi. 30) which says, that "no" such "sin offering" "shall be eaten; it shall be burnt in the fire." The benefits, you observe, of the sin offering are not questioned, but even the Priests have 'no right to eat' or carnally press with their teeth this sacrifice—not because they reject

Him who ordained it, but because they believe Moses—thus the eleventh verse without the aid of the twelfth furnishes the reason. But such simplicity does not suit, and the twelfth must by some means be linked to the eleventh, that both combined may give the reason, in conformity with the prevailing exegesis. The introduction of a few new words, and the change of others, turn the author's reason into an illustration. Let the expression, '*for the bodies,*' become '*for just as the bodies,*' let '*wherefore Jesus also*' be changed into '*even so Jesus,*' and at the end of the twelfth verse add, that the Priests 'have no right to eat' or partake of the Christian's sacrifice '*inasmuch as they wilfully reject Christ,*' and then these verses will, it is thought, furnish a connection with the tenth '*as clear as day,*' and may be paraphrased thus:—"The Priests* of the law, representing the people of the law, have no right to partake of our altar; for just as the bodies of those legal victims, whose blood the High Priest brought into the sanctuary for atonement, were, without the priests enjoying any portion of them, burned without the camp, even so was Christ, their antitype, corporeally destroyed outside the gate of Jerusalem, the Priesthood and people of the Jews having no participation in His sacrifice, inasmuch as they had wilfully rejected Him."

You now perceive what liberties are taken with the author, how faint the resemblance between the

* Delitzsch and Alford in loco.

text and the commentators' paraphrase ! And you agree with us, we trust, that the Priests 'have no right to eat' of the sacrifice, only because it was, as a sin offering, burnt by divine command.

Reserving further remarks until we have ascertained the meaning of the altar, we now proceed to consider that term, hitherto so perplexing. The various meanings ascribed to the altar in the tenth verse may be thus summarized.

There are those (as Schlichting and even Tholuck) who say that no distinct idea was before our author, but that he used the term *altar* merely to help the figure which he was about to introduce: others understand by the altar Christ himself: some again interpret it to be the table of the Lord, at which the Lord's supper is eaten: some the heavenly place, where Christ now offers the virtue of his blood to the Father for us: and others, e. g., Delitzsch and Alford, think that it is the cross of Golgotha on which our Lord suffered. Now whatever was the meaning of the word as used by our author, must be the meaning which we should attach to it; and it can scarcely be maintained that while Jerusalem, with its temple and altar, was still standing, the word *θυσιαστήριον* (altar) had any one of the meanings now ascribed to it. Certainly the lexicons do not assist expositors, by attaching even one of these fanciful significations. What, then, did the sacred writer wish his readers to understand by the word? Several reasons

combine to shew, that the word was used by him in its ordinary sense ; in which a Jew, whether a believer or not in Jesus as the Messiah, would have employed it. The previous use of the word, in this Epistle, in its ordinary sense, raises a presumption, that our author now uses it in the same sense. In Heb. vii. 13, when speaking of the Priest after the order of Melchisedec, he expresses himself in these words,—‘For he, of whom these things are spoken, pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar,’ i. e., *served the tabernacle*. Furthermore, the use of the word altar, in the same sentence (and that a short one) with the Tabernacle and its Priests, who gave attendance at its altar, points in the same direction. Moreover, if we recollect that in the New Testament this word occurs at least twenty times, and that in every other instance it means, beyond dispute, the ordinary material structure called an altar, is not the conviction forced on us, that in this passage too it can have only the same signification ? Again, it is asserted, and justly, that from the* position of *θυσιαστήριον* (altar) in the Greek, it will not admit of an emphasis, and much importance must not be attached to it. Now remember that the altar is used for the sacrifice thereon, and it follows legitimately (does it not ?) that you cannot emphasize the sacrifice, since you have asserted that the word altar, which represents it, occupies

* Note on Alford in loco.

an unemphatic position. And, looking to the sacrifices of the great day of atonement, of which Messiah's is the antitype, and weighing well this fact, that the bodies of these sacrifices were not consumed on the altar (for it was not outside the camp), can we refuse to admit that the altar here spoken of, is an altar in the ordinary acceptation of the word? We then take the altar for the Jewish sacrifice of the great day of atonement, and we understand our author—a Jew—to say, not 'we Christians,' but 'we' Jews 'have an altar;' and it shall be our aim, in the remainder of this lecture, to prove that our author's meaning is—'we' Jews 'have an altar,' (the sacrifice of the great day of atonement), 'of which they, who serve the Tabernacle,' (our priests,) 'have no right to eat.'

Now we beg you to observe that the Jewish nation is spoken of in 9th verse; for those who walked in the observances referred to therein, it is admitted, 'are the whole people of God under the Old Testament dispensation.'* Would not the writer then, including himself and his readers in the nation, speak most naturally of the nation by saying,—'we have an altar, whereof they who serve the Tabernacle have no right to eat,' appealing in the next verse to that cardinal sacrifice of the nation,—the sacrifice of the great day of atonement? Doubtless he would shew, not that the meat or sacrifice of Christians was (as Alford,

* Alford in loco.

Tholuck, and others teach) more excellent than that of the Jews for establishing the heart, but that the unprofitableness of meat might be learned from the law, and that grace not meat was efficacious for the purpose. Now our author might have put his argument with cogency in this form,—“The bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought in by the High Priest for sin into the Holies, are burned outside the camp ; therefore we Jews have an altar, of which the Priests have no right to eat ; consequently whatever benefit they derive therefrom is by grace and not by meats or eating. His argument in this shape would have been conclusive ; but, as his object was to connect the type and anti-type, he adopted the order in our text. Those who forsake the ordinary sense of altar, are reduced to an ad absurdum of the following sort,—‘We Christians have an altar—the sacrifice of Christ—in *our* Church, whereof they who serve the Tabernacle have *no right* to eat spiritually (though bidden by God to eat, i. e., to believe), for they have their sacrifice in their own church, whereof they have no right to eat literally (being forbidden of God to eat what by His command is burnt). The Priests burn their own sacrifice in their own church in obedience to the will of God, therefore they cannot spiritually eat of the sacrifice in our church !’

It has been assumed by expositors of this passage, that a contrast exists between the class denoted by the subject of the verb in the phrase “we have

an altar," and the Jewish nation or church represented by those 'who serve the Tabernacle;' and if such contrast or antithesis could be established, then indeed this class, so denoted in verse 10, would probably be Christians; but the fact that in the 10th verse the term 'we' is only the expression, in our language, of the plural first person of the verb, 'have' (ἔχομεν), will convince, that no antithesis is intended. Had it been our author's intention to establish an antithesis, he would have expressed, in the Greek of verse 10, the word which in that language answers to the term 'we' in ours—but as he has omitted it, we know that a contrast is not designed. The structure then of the tenth verse is, by the omission of the Greek for the term 'we,' adverse to the application of it to Christians.

But the taking ἔχομεν (we have) to mean the Jews, has been supposed to raise an "almost insuperable" difficulty in the interpreting this passage; for "in verse 14 the subject of the same verb" (it is said) "is clearly 'we Christians.' So also ἔξερχώμεθα in verse 13, and ἀναφέρωμεν in verse 15." Now we admit without hesitation that the subject of ἔχομεν (we have) in the 10th verse and of the verbs referred to in the thirteenth and two following verses, is manifestly the same; but then the question remains,—is their common subject—'we Christians,' or 'we Jews'? We venture to say that the difficulties, supposed to embarrass our

view, are as nothing in the face of those which encompass the application of ἔχομεν (we have), to Christians.

The following remarks will suggest to the reflecting most serious difficulties in the way of admitting 'we Christians' to be the subject of the three verbs in question, and tend to establish 'we Jews,' as the subject, both of them and of the verb 'we have,' in the tenth verse:

The three verbs occur in the following three verses,—“Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here we have not a continuing city, but we seek the one to come. By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of lips confessing to his name.” The verbs in these three verses we shall take in their order. The first enquiry then is—Does the verb ἐξέρχόμεθα (let us go forth) so clearly require—'we Christians,' as its subject that it may not, consistently with the context, take—'we Jews'? Elsewhere in this Epistle, *e. g.*, Heb. iv. 14, 16, x. 22, 23, professing Christians are by commentators supposed to be addressed with exhortations encouraging them to draw near to the throne of grace through the High Priest of the Nation,—Jesus; but a different compound of the verb is then used; and we might reasonably expect that here too, if the objects of the author's exhortation be 'we Christians,' the same verb προσερχόμεθα (let us draw near) rather

than ἐξέρχόμεθα (let us go forth) would be adopted—and this especially, since the status of the Christian seems to be quite inconsistent with the use of the exhortation—‘Let us go forth.’ The status of the Christian, as set forth in the Epistle to the Galatians is this—‘I am crucified with Christ,’ and correspondingly in Heb. xii., ‘ye are come, or ye have drawn near . . . to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant.’ If then the Christian is already come to Jesus and crucified with Christ, then the Christian is already without the gate, (for Christ crucified is outside the gate,) and cannot consistently be exhorted to go forth without the gate, as though he were yet within,—but the Jew, who is unbelieving, is clearly within the gate; and by what word more suitable than ἐξέρχόμεθα (let us go forth) could the sacred writer invite him ‘to go forth unto Jesus* without the gate’?

Much argument and effort have, throughout the epistle, been employed for the purpose of winning to Christ the author’s brethren according to the flesh; and at the very opening of it the Jew† is directly addressed: when abundant proof, then, that Jesus is the Messiah, has been given, what is more natural than that once more he should seize an opportunity, at the close of his letter, to exhort them that they should go out to Him, who, ‘that

* Heb. xiii. 13. Bp. Kenrick. Note.

† Heb. i. 1, Alford in loco.

He might sanctify the people'—the nation, 'with His own blood, suffered without the gate!'

And for this purpose what tact in his method! In the context, both before and after, the second person plural of the verbs in the imperative mood is used, for there Christians, who recognize his authority is addressed;—but here a change to the first person plural is made, and a milder form, or mood, is adopted designedly, because he now turns to address those,—who are not without the gate,—who do not acknowledge his authority. If then Christians are already outside the gate while the Jews are yet within, does not the invitation—'Let us go forth' seem inapplicable to the former, but most suitable to the latter? The Jews then, and not Christians, are clearly the subject of the verb *ἔξερχώμεθα* (let us go forth) in the thirteenth verse.

Again the subject of the verb *ἔχομεν* (we have) in the tenth and fourteenth verses is unquestionably the same; but what evidence is there from the context to shew that *Christians* rather than *Jews* are denoted by the subject of the verb in these verses? The fourteenth verse is this,—'for here we have not a continuing city, but we seek the one to come.' Surely it would embarrass us with "insuperable difficulty," were we to attempt to prove that only Christians, and not Jews, profess, that here they 'have not an abiding city but are looking for the one to come.' Holy Scripture does not teach that this fourteenth verse embodies

a new and peculiar article of the Christian, as distinguished from the Jewish, faith. The Psalmist confesses himself to be 'a stranger and a sojourner as all his fathers were,' and in the eleventh chapter of this epistle the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, for whom God we are taught, prepared a city, are said all to have died in faith confessing that they were strangers and pilgrims on the land, what does this mean, but that they all said—'We have here no abiding city, but we seek the one to come. This verb ἔχομεν,—('we have') then, in the fourteenth verse does not require *Christians* for its subject, but may with propriety mean 'we Jews' have not an abiding city.

In like manner we consider that no difficulty arises from supposing our author to exhort the Jews in these words,—viz., 'By Him therefore let us offer to God the sacrifice of praise.'

From passages of the Old Testament acknowledged by the Jews to belong to Messiah, he had proved the title of Jesus to be their expected Prince—that Jesus is the High Priest, who by one offering has perfected for ever them that are sanctified; most naturally then would he exhort his people to flee for refuge to Jesus, to employ the offices of the great High Priest, who has passed through the heavens, and to present through Him the offerings, (the antitype of the legal,) the sacrifice of praise (*θυσίαν ἀνέσσεως*) to God continually—the fruit of lips confessing to His name. Thus

our author, if we understand him aright, makes in his love for his nation, a final and vigorous effort to compel those, that are bidden, to accept the promised mercy in Jesus.

The result of our argument may be paraphrased thus—‘It is a good thing that the heart be established with grace not with meats, in which they who walked’ (the whole people of God under the Old Testament dispensation) ‘were not profited.’ We have this truth beneath the surface of the law. From the day that Moses reared the Tabernacle, ‘we have an altar of which our Priests have no right to eat’ (the sacrifice of the great day of atonement, whose benefits must be of grace and not of meats, or eating), for the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the Holies by the High Priest, are burned outside the camp; wherefore Jesus, that (in fulfilment of that type) he might sanctify the people with his blood, suffered outside the gate. Let us therefore (not eat our sin offering, but accept by faith its benefits of grace and) go forth to him without the camp bearing his reproach, &c.

We trust it may now appear to you, on a dispassionate review of this subject, that we have disencumbered our text of those ‘recondite and abstruse metaphors,’—those ‘insuperable difficulties,’ with which it has been heretofore supposed to be embarrassed; and that we have furnished a solution which, though novel, is nevertheless,

reached by sound argument and just criticism,—a solution at once simple, consistent, satisfactory, and in full accordance with the analogy of the faith.

Bringing these lectures to a close, let me commend to you, my brethren, the principle on which they are founded,—the principle that this Epistle was designed for the whole Hebrew nation, composed, as it was, of believers and unbelievers in Jesus as the Messiah. On this principle we are able to reconcile passages in it, that otherwise seem strangely at variance one with another, and we can as we present the New Testament to the Jew, say—that in it, as in the Old Testament, the same pre-eminence on earth is promised to his nation; that while we preach Jesus, the Messiah,—“a light to lighten the Gentiles,” both New and Old Testaments proclaim Him to be “the glory of His people Israel.”

May He, in his goodness and love, have mercy upon the Jews, and take the veil from off their hearts, to the honor and glory of His name.—
Amen.

NOTES.

NOTE A. ON LECTURE I.

THE following extracts from Dr. M'Knight's Commentary, will enable the reader to decide whether the Lecturer is justified in the statement that the Preface and the Commentary of Dr. M'Knight, are contradictory to each other.

M'Knight's Commentary, Chap. ii. 15: "Took hold of the seed of Abraham, that is, of believers of the human species."

Chap. ii. 17. "The sins of the people; not the people of the Jews, but the people of God of all nations, whether Jews or Gentiles, called in the foregoing verse 'the seed of Abraham.'"

Chap. viii. 7: "The first covenant is that which God made with the Israelites at Sinai by the publication of the Law, the second must be that which was made with mankind in general, by the publication of the Gospel. Accordingly, the publication of the Gospel was foretold, Jer. xxxi. 31, under the idea of 'making a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah.'"

Chap. viii. 8: "Wherefore 'the house of Israel' in this prophecy, as distinguished from 'the house of Judah,' must, I think, be the spiritual seed of Abraham among the Gentiles, called 'the Israel of God,' Gal. vi. 16."

NOTE B. ON LECTURE I.

Heb. ii. 1-4: "On this account it behoves us to give heed more abundantly to the things heard (by us) lest haply we be diverted from them," (slip by and lose, Delitzsch: flow by or

drift away from them, Langé), "for if the word which was spoken by means of Angels was made binding, and every transgression and disobedience received a just (a fitting, Delitzsch) recompense of reward, how shall we" (emphatic, including Christians in general, all who have received the message of salvation in the manner specified) "escape if we have neglected so great salvation, the which having begun to be spoken by means of the Lord, was confirmed unto us by those who heard it, God also bearing witness to it, etc." (Alford.)

The practical inference in the foregoing passage is so closely connected with Heb. i. 1-2, that they must be explained, the one passage in consonance with the other, both being referred to Christians, or both to the nation. The use made of Heb. ii. 1-4, in connection with the Pauline authorship of the Epistle renders the true exposition the more important. Without, however, entering into a discussion of the authorship, the following question is worthy our enquiry: Can this passage be legitimately explained only of Hebrew Christians, or of Christians in general (Alford, al.) to the exclusion of the Hebrew nation, or may it find its true explication in his own people, who rejected Jesus (as the Messiah) and made light of the great salvation to which he called the family of Jacob?

The passage has been compared with the second verse of the first chap. of St. Luke's Gospel; there is, however, a remarkable dissimilarity between Luke i. 1-2 and Heb. ii. 1-4; yet this has been overlooked. In St. Luke the expression, "those things which have been most surely believed" (or fulfilled) "among us" (i. e. you and me, and all members of the Church of Christ, Alford) indicates that his Gospel was written for those who already professed Christianity, "that they might know the certainty of those things in which" they had "been instructed," (or catechetically* taught.) What a contrast between this and the language of Heb. ii. 1-4, "the things which were *heard by us!*" In this phrase there is no reference to the result—to the effect produced on those who heard; the

* See Alford in loco, and Lectures on Church Catechism by Bishop of Carlisle.

words (Acts xxviii. 24), "some believed the things which were spoken" (or heard) "and some believed not," may be applicable in the case of these hearers; and Acts xxviii. 24, but not Luke i. 1-2, seems a parallel to Heb. ii. 1.

But the exhortation, "we ought more abundantly to give heed," or turn our attention "to the things heard," does not seem to describe exclusively the class for whom St. Luke wrote; these were Christians by profession; they had then previously heard, and had professed "to give heed" to the things heard concerning the "great salvation." These preliminary steps had been taken, but they had proceeded on to a profession of faith.

The Acts of the Apostles, in the use of *προσέχειν* (to give heed) assists in the elucidation of Heb. ii. 1-4. Luke (Acts xvi. 14), in the narrative of Lydia's conversion, uses the word—saying "whose heart the Lord opened that she" (*gave heed* or) "attended to the things" (heard by her) "which were spoken by Paul." She was listening, and (when the act of God—*διήνοιξεν*, took place) she gave heed and then believed. The same word occurs in Acts viii. 6, crowds were listening, and then 'gave heed unto those things which Philip spake,' and then numbers who 'gave heed' "believed* Philip preaching concerning . . . the name of Jesus Christ." The use then, of this word *προσέχειν* (to give† heed) in this context does not favour the supposition that only Christians are referred to. Again the phrase "lest at any time we should let them slip" is admittedly a mistranslation. The original fairly gives the following, "lest" (not at any time, but) "haply (or anyhow) we lose them," or "lose possession of them by failing to lay hold" (see Delitzsch): and this translation shews that as in the case of

* If this place (of Philip's preaching) was Sychem, the narrative John iv. will fully account for the readiness with which the people received the proclamation of Christ. Alford in loco.

† "A felicitous translation: so Titus i. 14. The verb *προσέχειν* does not imply 'fidem adhibere' (Heinr), and is certainly not synonymous with *πιστεύειν* (Krebs. Obs. p. 204), either here or elsewhere (Acts viii. 6, 11, ch. xvi. 14, al.), but simply indicates a prior and preparatory act, and is, as it were, a mean term between *ακούειν* and *πιστεύειν*." Bishop Ellicott on 1 Tim. i. 4.

Lydia and the Samaritans, they to whom the passage under discussion refers had need to give heed, if they would lay hold of so great salvation.

Another point requires notice. From the use of the historic tense in reference to 'recompense of reward' it seems evident that temporal punishments, and not those in a future state, were appealed to, and it is not improbable that in like manner the judgment from which there is (as implied) no escape, may be the destruction* of the city, and the off-casting of the people foretold by our Lord, that the future punishment may be like the past, though exceeding greatly in degree. It is thus that probably Jews, arguing from the past, would understand the writer. He, it is confessed, was a Jew, and wrote 'as a Jew to Jews;' (Alford) and does he not use the terms "us" and "we" (Heb. i. 2, Heb. ii. 1-3) as identical? 'We' (Heb. ii. 3) is emphatic (Alford); and are not these terms antithetic to 'the Fathers'? The latter are the ancient, the former ("we" and "us") are the nation of the writer's time; might he not, then, (even if an Apostle, but suppressing his office) join himself with his nation, as he hints at a judgment nigh at hand (see Heb. xiii. 14; see Del. & Alf.) though he could not, if he avowed his Apostleship, write in the *communicative* style to a young Christian Church? If the author might so write as a Jew to the Hebrew nation, then the arguments in the first Lecture are not weakened by Heb. ii. 1-4, and also the "passage of the epistle which appears to speak most strongly against its Pauline composition," can no longer be employed for that purpose.

It may not be amiss to remind the reader of the inconsistency of expositors (Alford, al.) who interpret the terms 'we' and 'us,' (Heb. ii. 1-4) of Christians in general, while they adopt the opinion of Estius and Grotius expressed in Lec. I. The sacred writer, they hold, studiously avoids any notice of the calling of the Gentiles, while he addresses Christians in general, as gathered both from the Gentiles and the Jews!

* ἀμελήσαντες. Matt. xxii. 5, Heb. ii. 3, "having made light of," or "neglected," and Matt. xxii. 7, "destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city."

NOTE C. ON LECTURE I.

Heb. iii. 1: This verse is the only place in the New Testament where *holy* is joined with 'Brethren:' (see Alford's note on 1 Thess. v. 27, and Tischendorf's N.T.) It is closely connected, as the term 'whence' or 'wherefore' indicates, with the preceding chapter. Alford and others think that "the use of the word" *Brethren* "reminds them of that brotherhood in and because of Christ, of which he" (the writer) "has before spoken." And he is doubtful "whether the idea of common nationality is here to be introduced." But as in Heb. ii. 1-4, there is nothing that requires the passage to be understood of Christians rather than of the Hebrew nation, so in Heb. iii. 1, a candid examination of the verse in connection with the foregoing chapter (from which in any impartial exposition it cannot be viewed apart) may convince the reader that the nation (including believers and unbelievers in Jesus as the Messiah) has at least as strong a claim on the term *Brethren*, as Christians have.

In the preceding chapter there are in Alford on *σπέρματος Ἀβραάμ* (Abraham's seed) the following excellent remarks:—"We must not here understand *mankind*, as some have done; nor again with others can we suppose the spiritual seed of Abraham to be meant (Gal. iv. 27, Rom. iv. 11, f. 16), because as Bleek well remarks, the present context speaks not of that into which Christ has *made* those redeemed by Him, but of that *out of which* He has *helped* them. *The seed of Abraham* then means the Jewish race, among whom Christ was born in the flesh, and whom He did come primarily to help; and the peculiarity of the expression must be explained with Estius,—"*Gentium vocationem tota hac epistola prudenter dissimulat, sive quod illius mentio Hæbreis parum grata esset, sive quod instituto suo non necessaria*": and with Grotius,—"*Hæbreis scribens satis habet de illis loqui; de gentibus aliter loquendi locus.*" In conformity with this exposition Alford admits that in the same verse *τῶν λαῶν* (of the people) is to be understood as signifying the 'Jewish people.' If then the seed of Abraham means not the spiritual seed (all Christians,) but the Jewish race, and 'the people' doth not refer

to any but the Jewish race, does it seem improbable that, in in close connection with these phrases, the terms *holy brethren* should mean the living generation of this Jewish race? 'The people' are 'the people of God'—their peculiar designation, (Alford) and a 'holy people;' (Old Testament passim) and if 'holy' is not elsewhere applied to the term *brethren*, is it not worthy of remark that it is here joined with *brethren* in immediate connection with the people of God, and the seed of Abraham in their national character? If the people are holy how natural that a Jew addressing that people should say—'Holy Brethren'! While Christians are styled 'saints,' 'faithful brethren,' they are in no case addressed as 'Holy brethren': Doubtless the phrase is applicable to Christians as much as to the 'holy nation,' but from the context it seems to the lecturer to refer to the Jewish race, combining within it, as it did, the believing and the unbelieving in Jesus as the Messiah.

The invitation, moreover, to these brethren is to *apply their mind* to the claims of Jesus, as the Apostle and High Priest of the sacred writer's confession ('our confession'—'The plural pronoun not with any definite reference to Timothy or other companions of the writer, nor intended to include the readers,' but 'merely indicating the writer himself, as so frequently in the epistles of St. Paul') as it appears to the author, and the word translated '*consider*' tends to shew that the Brethren are the Jewish people. In Heb. vii. 4, and Heb. xii. 3, two different words are translated '*consider*,' but here another word, *κατανοήσατε* occurs; (*κατά* emphatic. Langé. Mark with attention, contemplate earnestly. Moll.) It 'denotes the turning of the *νοῦς* (the mind) to an object.' In the Sept. it is used in connection with Eve and the tree of knowledge; Joseph says to his brethren "to see (*κατανοῆσαι*) the nakedness of the land are ye come,"—in the hostile character of spies. Similarly it is used by Moses (Num. xxxii. 8, 9), and by St. Luke (Acts vii. 31), as he describes Moses drawing near to *behold* the burning bush. It is employed (1 Kings, iii. 21) in connection with the mother of the living child, in whose bosom, while she slept, the dead child had been laid:—"When I had *considered* him in the morning

behold he was not my son." *Consideration* led from doubt and uncertainty to the belief of the truth, and the sacred writer invites his holy brethren to consider that they may acknowledge the claims of Jesus.

Further proof that the holy people may be addressed as holy brethren arises from the fact that they, like those bidden by the king to the wedding (Matt. xxii. 3) were partakers of an invitation. If they were Christians and none other, the very fact of their being such presupposes not only that they were partakers of a heavenly calling or invitation, but that they had also accepted it. To remind those of whom the sacred writer says "We are not of them who draw back, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul," that they were partakers of a heavenly calling seems at least superfluous; a missionary having addressed Gentiles could say ere they professed the faith and were baptized,—Ye are partakers of a heavenly calling—but if they were holy brethren in the sense of Christians, of whom the writer was persuaded things accompanying salvation, then partakers of a heavenly calling was already contained in the terms holy brethren; but the second term of the address (*κλήσεως ἐπουρανίου μέτοχοι*) 'partakers of a heavenly calling' carries us back to Heb. i. 1, and Heb. ii. 3, "The *καλῶν* thus referred to is the Eternal Son, through whom God has now spoken, who came from heaven and is returned thither," (Delitzsch). The Son of God, as the prophets before had done, spake to the nation (Heb. i. 1) and the Jews whether they would accept, or whether they would finally refuse, must be reminded that they were partakers of a heaven-sent invitation; and that if they neglected it (made light of it) they did so at their peril.*

NOTE D. ON LECTURE I.

Heb. iii. 9 and 13. In a note on Heb. iii. 1, an attempt has been made to shew that it may bear a national signification, and not, as hitherto supposed, a church meaning. Heb. iii. 13, may also be viewed in the same national light. "You and your

* Matt. xxii. 5-7.

fathers," "We and our fathers," are expressions of very frequent occurrence in Holy Writ, and especially in the Old Testament. How did the Jews of the sacred writer's day understand such expressions? Let St. Stephen reply (Acts vii. 51-52), "As your Fathers did, so do ye, &c." "Ye" plainly means the nation of the Proto-martyr's day: and in like manner in the antithetical expressions "You" and "your Fathers" ought to be each viewed nationally, the "You" as much so as "your Fathers." And doubtless the Jewish nation, whose Rabbins interpreted the Ninety-fifth Psalm of the Messiah's days, must have thus understood "to day if ye hear," and "when your fathers." The writer and the Hebrew Christians too would probably from early training so understand the 9th and 13th verses, and unless good reason to the contrary were given, we should conclude that after they became Christians they adhered to the original explanation. Viewing the quotation from Psalm xcv. as having regard to the nation, and thus comprising the believing and apostatizing sections, the Lecturer suggests a translation which the learned readers will allow him to lay before them.

"Take heed, brethren (i. e. ye, the nation) lest in any of you (the nation) there be an evil heart of unbelief in apostatizing from the living God (by rejecting Jesus the Messiah) but exhort one another until (*ἄχρις οὖν*) the to-day[†] (of the Psalm—the day of entering into the rest) be named or proclaimed [that from among you (as contradistinguished from your fathers) no one be hardened by deceit of his sin, for we (the nation) have become partners* of Christ (Ps. xlv. 7) if we hold fast our former (national) confidence unto the end (the coming of Messiah),] when it is said, (or in the expression) "to day if ye hear his voice harden not your hearts as in the provocation." (vv. 13-15). Thus "the to-day" and "the end," and the hearing of Jehovah's voice would be contemporaneous, and still future, awaiting the beginning of the sabbatism that remains for "the people of God," (the Hebrew nation when its heart shall turn to the Lord).

* Heb. iii. 14. "Parteners of Crist."—Wickliff.

NOTE A. ON LECTURE II.

Heb. vi. 1. Wickliff's Translation, "Therfor we bringynge in a word of the bigynnyng of Crist be we borun to *the perfection of hym.*"

Alford in his remarks on Heb. vii. 28, says, "The E. V. has obliterated both sense and analogy with Heb. ii. 10 and v. 9 by rendering *τετελειωμενον* 'consecrated.'" It is surprising that he did not add Heb. vi. 1 to Heb. ii. 10 and v. 9, for both sense and analogy are here too obliterated by the omission in the E. V. of the definite article which gives the sense of his to the word "perfection"—The Lecturer had an opportunity of consulting Wickliff's Translation in July, 1872, and had the pleasure to find Heb. vi. 1 rendered as above by Wickliff.

NOTE B. ON LECTURE II.

THE HEBREWS' BELIEF OF A RESURRECTION.

Extract from Joseph Meade's 4th Book (folio) p. 981, touching our Saviour's proof of a resurrection from Ex. iii. 6.

"I doubt not but you have felt some scruple (as well as others) at our Saviour's demonstration of the resurrection in the Gospel, Matt. xxii. Mark xii. God said to Moses in the bush, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob: God is not the God of the dead but of the living. Ergo Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob must one day rise again from the dead. How doth this conclusion follow? Do not the spirits of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob yet live? God should then be the God of the living, though their bodies should never rise again. Therefore some Socinians argue from this place, that the spirits of the just lie in the sleep of death until the Resurrection. Or might not the Sadducees have replied, the meaning to be of what God *had been*, not of what he *should be*? viz., that he was that God who had once chosen their Fathers and made a covenant with them; I am the God that brought Abraham out of Chaldee, who appeared to Isaac and Jacob whilst they lived, &c. But how would this then make for the Resurrection? Surely it

doth. He that could not err said it. Let us therefore see how it may.

I say, therefore, the words must be understood with supply of that they have reference unto; which is the covenant that the Lord made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in respect whereof he calls himself their God. This covenant was to give unto them and to their seed the land wherein they were strangers (mark it). Not to their seed or offspring only, but to themselves. Vide loca. To Abraham, Gen. xiii. 15, and ch. xv. 7, and ch. xvii. 8. To Isaac, Gen. xxvi. 3. To Jacob, Gen. xxxv. 12. To all three, Ex. vi. 4, 8, Deut. i. 8, and ch. xi. 21, and ch. xxx. 20. If God, then, make good to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, this his covenant, whereby he undertook to be their God, then must they needs one day live again to inherit the promised land, which hitherto they have not done. For the God that thus covenanted with them, covenanted not to make his promise good to them dead but living. This is the strength of the Divine argument, and irrefragable; which otherwise would not infer any such conclusion.

And this to be our Saviour's meaning may appear, in that the Jews at that time used from these very places thus understood to infer the Resurrection against the Sadducees out of the Law. As it is to be seen expressly of two of them (Ex. vi. 4, Deut. xi. 21) in the Talmud פִּרְקַתְּךָ, ubi in Gemera sic habetur, Traditio Rab. Simai; Quo loco astruit Lex Resurrectionem mortuorum? Nempe ubi dicitur, Atque etiam constabilivi fœdus meum cum ipsis, ut dem ipsis terram Canaan. *Non enim dicitur vobis sed ipsis.*

Iterum rogârunt Sadducæi Rabbi Gamalielelem, (*Preceptor fuit Pauli Apostoli*) undenam probant Deum mortuos resuscitaturum. Non quiverunt usque dum producerent ipsis istum versum, Quam terram juravit Dominus patribus vestris se daturum illis. Hinc constat Legem testificari Resurrectionem mortuorum.

Note, therefore, that when in a two or three of these places it is added, and to thy seed, or their seed after them, the word "after" is not to be referred to give (as if it were, I will give it to thy seed *after* I have given it to thee) but to seed; as,

thy seed after thee, that is, to thy posterity, which should come out of their loins. For that the offspring is in beginning after to the beginning of the parent.

To persuade this conceit by stronger testimonies than of Rabbins, I pray compare with that which hath been said, the 8th, 9th, and 10th verses of Heb. xi., adding to them the 13th, 14th, 15th, and 16th verses of the same chapter, in the last of which you need not stumble at the epithet *ἐπουρανίου*—heavenly, because it notes not only that which is *in heaven*, but that which is from heaven, *de cælo*; as it is said, v. 10. They looked for a city, whose builder and maker is God.

NOTE A. ON LECTURE III.

Διὰ τὸν χρόνον signifies (Alford) ‘on account of the length of the time’ (Heb. v. 12) and *διὰ τὴν ἔξιν* is thus explained—“who by virtue of their (long) habit have their organs of sense exercised with a view to distinction of good and evil.” (Heb. v. 14).

The reader is requested to consider whether “the length of the” time and “their long habit,” do not suit the ancient Hebrew people rather than an infant Hebrew church. The *νήπιος* and *τελείοι* of Heb. v. 13, 14, seem to point to the respective ages of the nation. (Hosea xi. 1). *τελείοι* (1 Chron. xxv. 8) = *διδάσκαλοι* (Heb. v. 12), and very probably may have this meaning in Heb. v. 14.

NOTE B. ON HEBREWS vi. 4.

Τους ἀπαξ φωτισθέντας, has been explained as descriptive of the Jewish people, in Lecture III; in like manner *οἱ ἀποστρεφόμενοι* seems to refer to the nation, and both *οἱ πολλοὶ* and *οἱ περιπατήσαντες* are descriptive of ‘the whole congregation’ and ‘the whole people of God’ under the Old Testament dispensation. Such examples may be of use to the reader in his forming a judgment on the subject proposed in the Lecture.

NOTE A. ON LECTURE IV.

“The introduction of the First-begotten into the world. A prophetic song consisting of six parts: namely, Psalms 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100.

These six Psalms form, if I mistake not, one entire prophetic poem, cited by St. Paul in the Epistle to the Hebrews, under the title of the Introduction of the First-born into the world. Each psalm has its proper subject, which is some particular branch of the general argument, the establishment of Messiah's kingdom. The 95th Psalm asserts Jehovah's Godhead and his power over all nature, and exhorts his people to serve him. In Psalm 96th all nations are exhorted to join in his service, because he cometh to judge all mankind, Jew and Gentile. In the 97th Psalm, Jehovah reigns over all the world, the idols are deserted, the Just One is glorified. In the 98th Psalm Jehovah hath done wonders, and wrought deliverance for himself. He hath remembered his mercy toward the house of Israel, he comes to judge the whole world. This, I think, clearly alludes to a restoration of the Jewish nation. In the 99th, Jehovah seated between the Cherubim in Zion (the visible church), reigns over all the world, to be praised for the justice of his government. This Psalm alludes, I think, to a reign of Jehovah in Zion, subsequent to the restoration of the Jewish nation, when Moses, Aaron, and Samuel, are to bear a part in the general worship. In the 100th Psalm, all the world is called upon to praise Jehovah the Creator, whose mercy and truth are everlasting." (Bishop Horsley on the Psalms.)

NOTE B. ON LECTURE IV.

" 'In the original passage, 2 Sam. vii. 14, 15, it is expressly said that the non-fulfilment of the condition might prove indeed a *suspension*, but never a *withdrawal* of the promise which cannot possibly fall into abeyance for ever;' (Hengstenberg), and again the question returns: When has the promise been fulfilled? for fulfilled it is generally asserted to be. Thus the same learned commentator whom we have just heard speak so well of the perpetuity of the promise, says here: 'This Psalm teaches the Church to hope in times when nothing is to be hoped for; the rather, as the hope expressed in it concerning the revivification of David's kingdom *has been so gloriously* fulfilled in the manifestation of Christ.' But how? An earnest of it, indeed, has been afforded in the birth of Christ, such as Abra-

ham had of the promise made to him, when he saw Isaac born, and the great difficulty to faith in it was thus removed. But at the same time, so far was the coming of Christ from the revivification of David's kingdom, that then, if ever, the hopes of it seemed to be extinguished with the desolation of Jerusalem and dispersion of her people—the emphatic day of her visitation, as He designated it. For surely the acknowledgment of Christ by an election from the Gentiles, to fill up the gap made by Israel's rejection, is not Christ's reigning over the house of Jacob, nor his wielding the sceptre of that throne which is His as 'Son of David.'—De Burgh on Psalm cxxxii.

NOTE C. ON LECTURE IV.

Extract from commentary of Delitzsch on Isaiah xi. 6-9. (T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh.)

“When the Son of David enters upon the full possession of His royal inheritance, the peace of paradise will be renewed, and all that is true in the popular legends of a golden age be realized and confirmed.” Del. p. 285.) And this is to be expected, for Isaiah xi. 6-9 “is a prophecy,” the realization of which is to be expected on this side of the boundary between time and eternity, and, as Paul has shown in Rom. viii., is an integral link in the predestined course of the history of salvation. (Hengstenberg, Umbreit, Hofmann, Dreschler). Such are some of the remarks of Delitzsch on the verses of Isaiah xi. immediately preceding verse 10. In p. 287, the same learned writer prepares the way for his ideas in regard to the ‘rest’ mentioned in verse 10. He says:—“The *land of Israel*” (as he understands “the earth,” v. 9), “the dominion of the Son of David in the more restricted sense, will be from this time forward the paradisaical centre, as it were, of the whole earth,—a prelude of its future state of perfect and universal glorification (ch. vi. 3, ‘all the earth’). Then he proceeds to comment on v. 10, and in his remarks thus expresses himself in regard to the ‘rest’ mentioned in that verse:—“But when he who had been concealed in the root of Jesse as its sap and strength, should have become the rejuvenated root of Jesse itself, (cf. Rev. xxii. 16). He would be exalted from this lowly

beginning l'nēs 'ammin, into a banner summoning the nations to assemble, and uniting them around itself. Thus, visible to all the world, He would attract the attention of the heathen to Himself, and they would turn to Him with zeal, and His menuchâb (rest or place of rest) i. e. the place where He had settled down to live and reign (for the word in this local sense, compare Num. x. 33 and Psalm cxxxii. 8, 14), would be glory, i. e. the dwelling-place and palace of a king whose light shines over all, who has all beneath His rule, and who gathers all nations around Himself."

NOTE A, ON LECTURE V.

Heb. viii. 7-13. Scott's Commentary.

"This prophecy was fulfilled in the conversion of multitudes of Judah and Israel, in the primitive times of the Gospel, and it foretells the future conversion and restoration of that people; but it is also fulfilled to all the spiritual Israel, who are really 'a holy nation,' as Israel according to the flesh was relatively. And it can be said of no other company, that they 'all know the Lord.'"

NOTE B.

Mant and D'Oyly's Commentary.

"Yet it is here to be noted that this new covenant was also confirmed by God in Christ unto the fathers of old, before that which he made with the Israelites at their coming out of Egypt; yea, even from the beginning. See Gen. iii. 15, Rom. iv. 13, Heb. xi. 2, &c." The above are samples of expositions—so called, that have too long prevailed among the Churches.

NOTE A. ON LECTURE VI.

The Altar in Heb. xiii. 10 is not the Cross.

Some commentators satisfy themselves that the altar in v. 10 is the cross on which our Lord suffered; but this error, like many others, has sprung from a total misunderstanding of the passage from the 9th to the 16th verse, inclusive: a further argument, in addition to those in the Lecture, arises from the place where our Lord suffered, and from the word translated 'burn,' when in v. 11 it is said 'the bodies' . . . 'are burned without the camp.'

When once each year the blood of beasts was brought into the Sanctuary, their fat was burned on the brazen altar,—the altar of the sin-offering, their blood was sprinkled on the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat—i. e. on the altar of incense; but “the bodies of those beasts”—were they burned on an altar? The Hebrews had but two altars—that of incense in the holy place, on which bodies were never burned, and that of the burnt offerings, upon which only the fat of those beasts was burned. A reference to Lev. xvi., where is given the account of the proceedings of the High Priest and his fellows on the great day of atonement, shews that they were burned outside the camp—probably where the ashes were poured out, Lev. iv. 12, but unquestionably not on an altar, for the only two altars for the services of the Hebrew ritual were within the Tabernacle that stood in the midst of the camp. Now these sacrifices were types of the sacrifice of Messiah, who in conformity with the type was destroyed (Matt. xxvii. 20) outside the gate.

But further the choice of the word translated ‘burned’ in the expression, ‘are burned outside the camp,’ if we refer to Lev. xvi. is very remarkable. In that chapter the word ‘burn’ in the E. V. occurs thrice, but it would not strike the English reader that two very different words are employed in the Heb. to express what in verses 25, 27, 28, is expressed in the E. V. by the one word ‘burn;’ yet so it is, for in the 25th verse the word in the Heb. is one constantly employed for burning incense or fat on an altar, while the word in verses 27 and 28 is never used to express the services of the altar, i. e. sacrificial services, It is used to signify the burning, not of incense, but of spices at a funeral, or of making bricks; or destruction such as the burning of a city, (e. g. Jer. xxi. 10). Now if the mind of the reader suggests that the Epistle to the Hebrews was written in Greek, the answer is that the same contrast between the words in Lev. xvi. is found in the Greek as well as in the Hebrew, and that the word *κατακαίω* in Heb. xiii. 11, translated ‘burn,’ corresponds with the word in the Sept. translation of Lev. xvi. where the burning outside the camp is directed, but not with the burning on the altar, v. 25. A remarkable instance of

careful discrimination in the choice of the Hebrew and Greek words for 'burn,' occurs in the books of Kings, Jeroboam, (1 Kings xiii.) stands at the altar he has built to burn incense, but at that moment a prophetic utterance declares that by a son of David, named Josiah, two acts should be performed, viz.: that the Priests who burn incense on that altar should be offered thereon, and that men's bones should be burned upon it. Here the same distinction as to the words translated 'burn' prevails; the word signifying the burning of men's bones is that which is never used to express the burning on an altar, but which is employed to describe the destruction of the sin-offering outside the camp, and when nearly three centuries have rolled past, Josiah fulfils the prophecy; the altar, the high place, the grove, the priests bones are burned. In the account of these transactions (2 Kings xxiii.) in each of the four instances where the term 'burn' is used, the Hebrew word is that which describes the burning of the victim outside the camp (Lev. xvi.) and which is never used in Holy Writ for burning the incense, the fat, or the victim, on the altar. The same discrimination, the Lecturer believes, has been scrupulously observed by the Sept. translators; and it is worthy of notice that in the modern translation of the New Testament into Hebrew there is no deviation from the rule that prevails in the Old Testament, for in the Hebrew translation of Heb. xiii. 11 from the Greek, it is the word for burning outside the camp that is used. The place then and the word employed clearly shew that the altar in the context of Heb. xiii. 9-16, is not the Cross of Calvary.

NOTE B. ON LECTURE VI.

"THE ALTAR WHICH WE HAVE," (by Archdeacon Stopford. Hodges, Foster & Co., Dublin) and "CHRIST HIS OWN ALTAR," (by Samuel, Lord Bishop of Carlisle. Wm. Hunt & Co., London).

These expositions of Heb. xiii. 10 breathe an excellent spirit, and are very valuable for their faithful testimony on behalf of the sister Churches of Ireland and England against Sacerdotalism, but the exposition in the sixth of these Lectures shews their utter failure as logical and critical expositions. The fact

that the term* 'we,' on which such stress is placed by these authors, is not antithetic to the term 'they' in the tenth verse, is fatal to their explanations.

To explain Heb. xiii. 10, it must be considered, as in the Lecture, with the preceding verse as well as with what follows. It is only thus that we can arrive at a legitimate conclusion as to the real meaning of the inspired authors.

A SAMPLE OF PASSAGES IN THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS RECONCILABLE ONLY ON THE NATIONAL HYPOTHESIS.

Heb. v. 11-12. Ye *are become* dull of hearing. "Ye again have need that some one teach you the rudiments of the beginning of the oracles of God," (Rom. iii. 2, Psalm cxix. 172, &c.)

Heb. xii. 25. "For if they did not escape" . . . "much more *we*" (shall not escape) "who are turning away from him" (God, see Alford) "who speaketh from heaven."

Heb. vi. 9-10. "But we *are persuaded* concerning you, beloved, the things which are better, and akin to salvation" . . . "*your work and love* . . . in having ministered to the saints, and still ministering."

Heb. x. 39. "But we" (emphatic) "*are not of backsliding* unto destruction, but of faith unto (the) preservation of" (the) "soul."

If the prevalent exegesis be correct. i. e. that the epistle was written for Christian readers, and to some Christian Church, expositors should shew that such passages as the above are capable of reconciliation. On the national hypothesis the one class of passages belongs to the body of the nation which is turning from God by the rejection of His Christ, the other attaches to "the remnant according to the election of grace."

* The term 'we' is not expressed in the original.



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